

Policy Committee Task and Finish Groups

Terms of Reference

Nature and biodiversity working group

Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee

1. Purpose

- 1.2 The Council's Constitution outlines that Task and Finish Groups may be appointed by Policy Committees as appropriate to assist in the completion of their duties, save that each Policy Committee may have no more than one appointed Task and Finish Group at any time.

The purpose of such Task and Finish Groups is to examine in detail specific issues or aspects of policy, procedure or service, according to their remit. These groups do not take any decisions but inform the deliberations of the Policy Committee. They should provide regular progress updates to meetings of the Policy Committee

Details of the scope of this Task and Finish Group are set out in Section 4.

2. Membership and attendance

- 2.1 Membership is drawn initially from the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy committee. This may be the whole Committee or some of the Committee. When not the whole committee, membership of the Group will be proportionate to the political representation on the committee.

The Nature and Biodiversity Task and Finish Group will consist of:

- 5 Elected Members and include 2 from the Labour Party, 2 from the Liberal Democrats party and 1 from the Green Party
- The Group will include at least one of the following members of the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee:
 - Chair
 - Deputy Chair
 - Group Spokesperson
- Councillors from each party will be appointed based on the topic for review. Members of the group may have a special knowledge or interest in the subject being considered.
- The Group may co-opt non-voting members who are not elected Members of the Council to assist in its consideration of an issue. This could include other council officers and representatives of other agencies for specific items.

- 2.3 Chair:

Task and Finish Groups will require a Chair to lead the review, chair meetings and report on progress. The Chair should be appointed based on the topic for review and can either be appointed by the parent committee or at the first meeting of the Task and Finish group.

2.4 The Task and Finish Group will be supported by officers from the relevant directorate. Officers will provide relevant material and take action notes for the Group.

2.5 Task and Finish groups do not meet in public session and are not subject to the Access to Information Requirements.

2.6 The Group will be accountable to the Communities, Parks and Leisure Committee and report on progress against the work programme to investigate the measures taken to improve biodiversity and nature recovery and any policy development in this area.

2.6 Behaviours:

- Members of the Group will be polite and respectful and encourage constructive debate across the range of issue.
- Prepare for each meeting by reading briefings and fact sheets relevant to the task and finish group purpose.
- Request further information to help shape thinking where it is practicable to provide this within the constraints of the timetable set out for the group
- Members of the Group will request that certain issues are considered by the Group where this is practicable within the constraints of the timetable set out for the group
- Members will liaise with their relevant political parties in advance of the meetings and be empowered to provide advice within the remit of the task and finish group

3. Meeting Frequency and Format

3.1 4/5 meetings will be held. Meetings will take place fortnightly and last for 2 hours. Meetings will be in person where practicably possible or online. Additional meetings can be requested by Group Members by exception and will be facilitated where practicable with the time constraints of the Group

3.2 The Task and Finish Group will seek to bring its work to a conclusion and submit a report to the Policy Committee by June 2023

4. Scope of the Task and Finish Group

4.1 The Group has been established to look into actions taken to date across the Council with regards to the nature emergency declared by full council in June 2021. The group will meet regularly for a time limited period to collate a report of actions being taken and any policy development in this area.

4.2 Specific Functions

- The Group will have oversight of the investigation of measures taken to improve biodiversity and nature recovery and any policy development in this area
- Raise awareness and share information about policies, strategies and, plans related to improving biodiversity and nature recovery.
- Feedback to the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee with findings about actions taken to date with regards to actions taken to improve biodiversity and nature recovery and set out the proposed approach to ensure that nature recovery and the environment are considered throughout the Council in decisions and policy setting going forwards.

4.3 Meeting work programme:

1. Setting the scene and understanding the challenges
 - a. What has been done to date?
 - b. The policy context – The Environment Act aims to halt species decline by 2030. All our statutory duties/targets/policies will speak to this target and will require strengthened policy and teams that are resourced, trained, empowered, and motivated to achieve this.
 - c. What would a Council wide approach look like?
 - d. Who will set the agenda for nature and the environment in the Council for the city?
2. Understanding the links to the climate change agenda and Local Plan
 - a. How has tackling climate change been approached in SCC
 - b. What can we learn from the response to the climate change emergency?
 - c. How does our approach to the nature emergency link to the local plan?
3. Who are our key partners in the city and region
 - a. What is their role?
 - b. What are their strengths/weaknesses?
 - c. What are we required to 'own' as a Local Authority, what can we look to our partners to do?
4. How have other authorities organised themselves around this agenda?
 - a. What are the internal structures/decision making processes?
 - b. How have they championed the agenda and what can we learn?
5. Future approach and options

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