



Council – 4 November 2021

Notice of Motion – Nature Emergency.

Notice of Motion from Councillors P K Jones, A S Lewis, R C Stewart, D H Hopkins, M C Child, E J King, L S Gibbard, A Pugh, R V Smith, R Francis-Davies, M Thomas & A H Stevens

This Council notes with alarm the urgency to take strong, relevant, and immediate measures to counter and minimise the scale and impacts upon mankind and wildlife of human-caused loss of biodiversity and global climate change.

The Council also notes the failure of countries globally (including the UK) to meet nearly all of the UN sustainable development goals, including for biodiversity, set in 2010, now to be reviewed at the COP 15 in October in Kunming, China – Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems (IPBES).

We are facing a combined and inter-related local and global climate and ecological disaster, with 17% of species in Wales at risk of extinction. But we can change this by putting nature into recovery, which will also help to tackle climate change . On 30 June 2021, the Welsh Government was one of the first parliaments in the world to declare a nature emergency. Climate Change Minister, Julie James, MS, announced that ‘Restoring nature and mitigating the impact of climate change are top priorities for this government’.

Swansea Council declared a climate emergency in June 2019 and has since been developing a Climate Change Action Plan for the Council and for Swansea as a whole in collaboration with Swansea Environmental Forum and other stakeholders.

This Council recognises that biodiversity loss is every much as serious to our future survival as climate change – Nature contributes so much to our world, both in practical ecosystem service terms – carbon sequestration, fresh-water management, soil management, air pollution control, shade, cooling and flood prevention, food plants, medicines – and also in terms of natural beauty affecting mental health and well-being.

We therefore propose that, in support of the Welsh Government’s declaration of a nature emergency, the Council declares a nature emergency and commits fully to preparing and delivering a Nature Recovery Action Plan to be implemented in tandem with the developing Climate Action Plan.

Much work is already being done:

- The Council has included a corporate priority well-being objective for nature recovery in its Corporate Plan for 2020-2022.
- It has supported the delivery of the ‘Working With Nature’ objective in the Swansea Public Services Board Well-being Plan.

- The Council has established a Climate Change and Nature Programme Board and a Steering Group to ensure that both issues are fully taken into account across all Service areas plans and projects.
- We have appointed a part time Biodiversity Officer, to work in collaboration with all Council Services, to ensure compliance with our Environment (Wales) Act biodiversity duty and to monitor and record progress, as well as providing advice and support for the preparation and delivery of a Section 6 Action Plan.
- We provide a lead role in co-ordinating and supporting the Local Nature Partnership (LNP), which has over 97 members from local wildlife and other organisations wishing to contribute to nature recovery.
- We also employ a temporary part time LNP officer who will co-ordinate the preparation of a Local Nature Recovery Action Plan.

However, whilst there is much good work being done and much progress being made, **we need to do more.**

The scale of the challenge requires increased prioritisation, additional commitment, and resources to ensure that we meet our targets to reverse the decline of biodiversity.

Specific actions could include:

- Maintaining and strengthening our corporate priority for Natural resources and Biodiversity including Climate Change.
- Refreshing the Swansea Climate Charter to become an integrated Climate and Nature Charter.
- Extending the terms of reference and membership of the current steering group on climate change to include nature and biodiversity and become the Climate Change and Nature Steering group .
- Continuing to work collaboratively with the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) and other key networks across Wales to make more space to enable nature to become abundant again. The LNP includes active nature conservation NGOs, such as RSPB, the Wildlife Trusts, Plantlife and Buglife as well as statutory agencies and research bodies, such as Natural Resources Wales and Swansea University.
- Increasing our work with local community groups and schools to facilitate the widest possible engagement of Swansea residents in maintaining and enhancing local wildlife.
- Seeking further support from UK and Welsh governments to provide us with the necessary powers and resources to ensure that we are empowered to maintain and enhance biodiversity.
- Seeking resources to provide sustainable long term core revenue and capital funding, thus enabling us to build the capacity and resources to plan and deliver long term strategies and initiatives for nature recovery (rather than relying on short term grant funded projects).

This Council resolves that:-

- The Council declares a nature emergency and creates a Climate Change and Nature Action Plan
- The Council extends the terms of reference and membership of the current Climate Change Programme Board and the Climate steering group to become

the Climate Change and Nature Programme Board and respectively the Climate Change and Nature Steering Group

- The Council refreshes the Climate Change Charter to become an integrated Climate and Nature Charter
- The Leader of the Council writes to both the UK Prime Minister and to the First Minister for Wales requesting extra resources and powers to enable the Council to deliver upon a fully-fledged and integrated Action Plan for Nature and Climate Change.

Acronyms

IPBES – Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems (body of scientists equivalent to the membership of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)).

LNP – Local Nature Partnership – all-Wales body of organisations working for nature

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

RSPB – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds