

South Derbyshire Ecological Emergency Advisory Group

Terms of Reference (TOR)

Background

In September 2023, South Derbyshire District Council declared an ecological emergency in response to the threats posed to wildlife and ecosystems.

The declaration recognises the essential role that nature plays and provides a statement of intent, to enhance and restore our natural landscape, local wildlife, rivers, streams, water resources, habitats and trees and resist the destruction of such habitats through a considered and sustainable local planning policy. This motion will see the Council add ecological considerations, together with any implications, alongside those for climate, sustainability, and nature recovery in our new Council Plan as strategic priorities embedded within all areas of council engagement. The Council will continue to collaborate with our communities, businesses and other organisations, existing networks, and partnerships to improve ecological literacy, encourage greater biodiversity, increase local sustainable food production to protect food security, tree planting and management.

Purpose

The purpose of setting up the Advisory Group is to understand and identify the themes and actions required in the Ecological Strategy and action plan. The Group will enable cross-service collaboration in creating, maintaining, and actioning the plan.

The Ecological Emergency Working Group has been formed under the membership of the Corporate Sustainability Group and will report into the CESG at each meeting.

Definitions

Chair: The Chair is the appointed chair of the Environmental and Development Services Committee and manages the meeting.

Quorum: The minimum number of Members required to be present to make the proceedings of a meeting valid.

Secretary: Admin Officer Support for the effective organisation, management and recording of the meetings.

Terms of Reference (TOR): Is a document that outlines the tasks, duties, and meeting expectations for a specific group.

Aim

To develop a working group including objectives/KPIs that deliver against the Council Plan key aim “improve biodiversity in the District. and meet our ecological commitments” through the development of an ecological Strategy.

Objectives

Produce an Ecological Strategy for the Council that:

1. Develops evidence and knowledge to support development of the Ecological Strategy.
2. Identifies key themes to base the plan around.

3. Addresses all key ecological issues and concerns.
4. Includes all relevant services across the Council to ensure furthest possible reach.
5. Is fully costed and fully resourced (as far as possible, and at a best estimate).
6. Is regularly reviewed and discussed by Members of the group to ensure continuity of effectiveness.
7. Is measurable and reportable.
8. Integrates best ecological practice into each area of the council's activity, allowing SDDC to lead the District by example
9. Demonstrates our commitment to the Ecological Emergency Strategy to support the Action Plan for Nature and the Climate Strategy and its objectives
10. Supports and influences action by partners and through partnerships
11. Supports and enables action by citizens

Meeting Frequency

Meetings will be held bi-monthly, every 6 weeks. Additional meetings can be held at the discretion of the Members to meet the responsibilities of the working group/advisory group. The Group may also agree to conduct out- of-session reviews and endorsement or approval of item(s), where appropriate. Out-of-session decisions should be documented and included in the next scheduled group meeting. An annual schedule of meetings will be agreed upon and distributed to all Members at the start of each financial year.

Decision Making

Wherever possible the committee will make decisions via consensus.

Quorum

Quorum of this meeting shall not be less than 50% plus 1 of total membership. Where quorum is not met, the meeting will still take place. No decisions are able to be confirmed without a quorum, in this instance decisions are required to be carried over to the next meeting for finalisation.

Group Membership

- Stephen Taylor (Councillor)
- Angela Archer (Councillor)
- Amy Wheelton (Councillor)
- Kerry Haines (Councillor)
- Peter Watson (Councillor)
- Executive Director
- Head of Cultural and Community Services
- Parks and Green Spaces Manager
- Biodiversity Officer
- Climate and Environment Officer
- Head of Operational Services
- Planning Policy Officer (Sustainability)

Meeting Conduct

- The agenda will be circulated, by the Secretary, five working days prior to the meeting.

Terms of Reference

- The meeting minutes will be circulated, by the Secretary, following the meeting.
- All members are invited to actively participate in meetings.

Document Evaluation

This document will be reviewed and updated annually or following substantial changes to group structure, relevant legislation or regulation.