

## **Future Management Structures of Lough Neagh**

“The Council recognises that the recent spread of toxic blue green algae on Lough Neagh is of major concern to the residents of Belfast. Over 50% of Belfast’s water comes from Neagh. Many people will have seen many recent reports that the Lough is dying. Lough Neagh is largest lake in these islands and has been described as hyper- eutrophic - in other words the Lough suffers from nutrient enrichment mainly from human sewage and agricultural run-off both directly into the Lough and the wider water catchment.

This severe deterioration in water quality is the latest in a number of problems ranging from extractive industries, invasive species, and the depletion in the numbers of fish and birds. If Lough Neagh was a person, it would be described as having multiple organ failure. Over decades the current management and ownership structures have proven incapable of dealing with these complex problems

For such a strategic asset and its importance for drinking water, fishing, culture, recreation and biodiversity, Lough Neagh deserves a more effective form of ownership and a management structure that works in the public interest to deal with these multiple problems.

It is the Council’s view that the public acquisition of Lough Neagh is sought from Lord Shaftesbury, including acquiring the bed of the Lough. Furthermore, the Council supports a new legal right of nature for Lough Neagh that guarantees a model of ownership that protects the rights of Lough Neagh to exist and evolve. Finally, the Council recognises that public acquisition of Lough must involve in the future participation of the Lough Neagh communities in any future decision making for the Lough.”

Proposer: Councillor Brian Smyth

Seconder: Councillor Anthony Flynn