

The Right of Nature

Proposed by Councillor Smyth,

Seconded by Alderman Copeland,

“This Council notes the legal and social movement globally for the ‘Rights of Nature’, which aims to strengthen protections for people, place and planet.

It believes that ‘Rights of Nature’ can help inspire an innovative rethinking about how to create regenerative, not extractivist, economies while also making human and other living communities safer, stronger and more resilient.

The positive work already being done by Council staff and groups on the climate emergency and biodiversity crises are commendable, but we recognise the need for a rights-based approach to nature.

It is proposed, that over the next twelve months, the Council will collaborate with civic society to explore what rights of nature mean for the people and economies of the region and to investigate how Rights of Nature could be expressed in community plans, corporate plans, improvement objectives and other strategic frameworks. In particular, the Council will, in the next twelve months, hold community workshops and work with the local community and stakeholders to draw up a Declaration for the Rights of Nature for the City, to be brought back before the Council for adoption.

It is also requested that a report, authored in collaboration and with input from the local community be brought to the Council in relation to embedding ‘Rights of Nature’ as a keystone concept into the Council’s operational practices, planning processes and long-term decision making.

Mindful of our mutual environmental obligations under the Espoo Convention, we call on all councils in Northern Ireland to also explore ‘Rights of Nature’ for their Council areas.”

(To be referred directly to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee)