

Dear Council Leader,

01489 774400

I am writing on behalf of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust following Winchester City Council's recent adoption of its [motion](#) recognising natural capital as strategic infrastructure.

We welcomed this decision and are encouraging councils across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to consider bringing forward similar motions within their own authorities. A collective commitment from local councils would send a strong signal to the Hampshire and Solent Combined County Authority that nature should be recognised as a strategic asset underpinning sustainable growth, climate resilience and community wellbeing.

As the Combined County Authority develops its Local Growth Plan, future Spatial Development Strategy and long-term investment programmes, there is a significant opportunity to ensure that the natural environment is recognised not as a constraint on development, but as essential infrastructure that supports prosperity, reduces future risk and enhances quality of life.

Nature provides critical services that underpin our economy and communities. Healthy rivers, aquifers, wetlands, soils, woodlands and coastlines support water security, flood management, food production, climate resilience, public health and recreation. They reduce costs, mitigate risks and provide benefits that would otherwise require substantial engineered solutions and public expenditure.

At the same time, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight face growing pressures from climate change, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, pollution, wildfires and flooding. These challenges cross local authority boundaries and require a coordinated strategic response.

We believe Winchester's motion provides an excellent model for councils wishing to champion this agenda and influence the future direction of regional policy and investment. We therefore encourage your authority to bring forward a motion similar to Winchester's and join a growing number of councils in calling for:

- Formal recognition of natural capital as strategic infrastructure.
- Stronger integration of nature recovery and climate resilience into local and regional growth planning.
- Nature-based solutions to be recognised as essential investments in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight's future prosperity and resilience.
- The Combined County Authority to embed natural capital within its Local Growth Plan, Spatial Development Strategy and investment decisions.

By adopting similar motions, councils across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight can help establish a shared regional position that recognises healthy natural systems as fundamental infrastructure, alongside transport, energy and digital connectivity. Together, local authorities can help shape a future in which economic growth, thriving communities and a healthy natural environment are planned and delivered hand in hand.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and support your authority should you wish to explore bringing forward a motion similar to Winchester's.

Yours sincerely,
Niamh Tickner
Planning Policy and Campaigns Officer

[For a wilder Hampshire and Isle of Wight](#)