

SUBJECT:	DEFORESTATION FREE CHAMPION COUNCIL
MEETING:	FULL COUNCIL
DATE:	12TH DECEMBER 2024
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	COUNTY WIDE

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 That Council recognises the threat that tropical forests face and commits to better understand how Monmouthshire County Council could be contributing to deforestation, by signing the Deforestation Free Champions Charter and committing to develop an action plan which outlines how we will reduce our impact on deforestation and raise awareness of the issues in our communities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Council sign up to the Deforestation Free Champions Charter (see Appendix 1).

2.2 That officers develop and implement an action plan setting out the steps that we will take as Deforestation Free Champions both to understand and reduce our impact on tropical deforestation and to champion the importance of these issues in our communities. We have already taken some of these steps over the last year in collaboration with Monmouthshire's young people.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Tropical forests are essential to life on Earth. They absorb vast amounts of carbon, produce oxygen, maintain the water cycle, and play a significant role in maintaining the global climate. Tropical forests are hotspots for biodiversity and are home to around 80% of documented species as well as millions of people.

3.2 The world's tropical forests are under threat. Demand for commodities such as beef, soy, palm oil, cacao and coffee drives deforestation in forests like the Amazon. In the process, one of our best defences against the climate crisis is being destroyed – an area nearly six times the size of Wales every year!

3.3 We are all part of the deforestation economy - it's in the food we eat, the products we buy, the fuel in our vehicles. When we think of the term *deforestation free* (DF), it's very difficult to completely remove all risk of deforestation as it is so embedded in our economy, but we can take practical actions that help to significantly reduce that risk, like using ethical certifications, circularity approaches and reducing waste.

3.4 Welsh charity Size of Wales have been working with pupils from 4 Monmouthshire primary schools, Osbaston, Kymin View, Raglan and Undy, to help pupils to understand how Wales contributes to deforestation and to look at the school menu to identify foods which may be

contributing. Students that have moved on to secondary school in Monmouth Comprehensive and Haberdasher’s Monmouth Schools have continued to engage with the campaign and are pushing for deforestation free menus in these settings too. The work that the pupils have been doing has sparked the interest of Welsh Ministers, celebrity chefs and presenters and was even mentioned at the New York Climate Week! (see [The power of policy – how to put sustainable food on the public plate - YouTube](#) from 7m48)

3.5 Size of Wales has also collaborated with the community group ACE Monmouth who have taken on the deforestation free campaign as one of their own pillars of work, managing a regenerative farming mentoring scheme part funded by Size of Wales, MCC, Wye Valley Natural Landscapes which has led to the establishment of a growing ‘regenerative farming’ community online group and the elimination of soy from the animal feed chain at Lower House Farm in Chepstow. Size of Wales and Haberdashers Monmouth School have also collaborated with Great Trewen Farm in Llangrove (just over the border but a milk supplier to Monmouth/Haberdashers) to eliminate soy from their animal feed supply too.

3.6 The following video summarises progress to date. [Deforestation Free Monmouthshire | Sir Fynwy Dim Datgoedwigo - YouTube](#) Signing the Deforestation Free Charter and developing a Deforestation Free Action Plan will be the next steps to help Monmouthshire County Council continue our Deforestation Free Champions journey.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

4.1 Becoming a Deforestation Free Champion contributes positively to the Globally Responsible goal of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, as well as a Resilient Wales and a Prosperous Wales. There are no negative impacts on the wellbeing goals. Involvement and Collaboration have been intrinsic to the decision to become a Deforestation Free Champion, as the Council have listened to and involved young people in the decision, and worked closely with the Size of Wales, local Fairtrade Town groups and community groups like ACE Monmouth. The decision also embeds Long Term thinking and Prevention as a way of working, since preventing deforestation will make a significant difference to reducing climate change and protecting Indigenous communities now and for the long term.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

	Option	Pros	Cons
1	Do not consider whether we are contributing to deforestation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less work • No potential for additional cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not meet the Globally Responsible goal • Does not consider the impact of our procurement decisions on climate and nature • Does not lead by example • Ignores the voice of the young people that Size of Wales have been working with • Does not align with the S6 Biodiversity duty

2	Consider deforestation free procurement in an ad hoc way as opportunities arise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May contribute in a small way to the Globally Responsible goal • Less additional work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't look at our procurement choices in a systematic way • Does little to lead by example
3	Sign the deforestation free charter and develop and implement an action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to the Globally Responsible, Resilient, Healthy and Prosperous wellbeing goals • Considers the impact of our procurement decisions on climate and nature and future generations • Contributes to our Sustainable Procurement policy and Local Food Strategy • Sets an example to other organisations • Has the potential to influence suppliers • Listens to the voice of our future generations • Positions MCC at the forefront of climate action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deforestation free alternatives may cost more • Some staff capacity required to develop and deliver the action plan

On the basis of the options appraisal above, Option 3 is considered to be the most socially and environmentally responsible, with pros outweighing the cons.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 The Deforestation Free Charter requires the Council to review and report on progress in one year. It is proposed that we review progress in March 2026 at the end of the next full financial year.

7. REASONS:

7.1 Monmouthshire County Council recognises that the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act requires us to work towards the Globally Responsible wellbeing goal. Considering our impact on tropical forests is an important part of working towards this goal. In addition, the Council has declared both Climate and Nature Emergencies, and exploring ways in which we can reduce our contribution to tropical deforestation will benefit both climate and nature, help our young people to be ethical, responsible citizens and help us to “think globally, act locally”.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 Work to date has taken place within existing staff resources. The chickpea korma that has been developed by the pupils as an alternative to chicken korma has been costed as cheaper per portion. However some deforestation free alternatives to items that we purchase may have a

financial impact. If this is the case, then any changes will be subject to the usual financial and procurement considerations.

9. CONSULTEES:

SLT

Cabinet

Size of Wales

Procurement Officer

Catering Manager

Food Engagement Officer

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Deforestation Free Champions Charter and Action Plan

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