



I would like to make a Freedom of Information request to the council with respect to the implementation of the 'biodiversity duty' of the 2021 Environment Act.

1. The duty requires public authorities to undertake a first consideration by January 1 2024. Did the council produce its own first consideration report or document by that date? If so, I would like to make a request for any such report or document.

1. The council has not produced a first consideration report or document. We have however been considering what we should do as part of the enhanced biodiversity duty as part of our local plan review, which commenced in late 2022 with an initial Issues and Opportunities engagement involving stakeholders and residents. More recently there has been a further engagement exercise on our Options and Preferences for the local plan in late 2023. Further information can be found here:

[Local Plan](#)

There has also been continuous engagement with stakeholders and partners throughout this period such as Natural England and Lancashire Wildlife Trust. All the engagement has included discussions around what our priorities should be for biodiversity in our new local plan.

The council has also taken a proactive approach to Biodiversity Net Gain, implementing the NPPF policy on new developments prior to the mandatory system being in place and now as part of the Greenheart Landscape Recovery Scheme looking at delivering offsite BNG on council owned land.

2. How many meetings did council officials and elected politicians undertake with respect to the first consideration?

3. The duty asks that public authorities "must agree...policies and objectives as soon as possible after [January 1 2024]". I would like to request information about how many meetings have been undertaken by council officials and ministers to that end in addition to individual summaries of those meetings.

2/3 None. However as stated above under question 1 to meet our requirements under the biodiversity duty we have been considering how the new local plan will need to respond with regards to the borough's biodiversity.

4. Has the council agreed policies and objectives related to the duty? If so, I would like to request a summary of those policies.

4 Our policies and objectives will be agreed as part of our local plan review. In parallel to this there will also be a number of priorities and objectives that the council will need to have regard of and take account of that will be agreed as part of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Greater Manchester. Council officers have been engaged throughout the drafting of the LNRS and assisted with its co-production. A draft is due to be published in early autumn for public consultation. The council has also been working in partnership with Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Forestry England on the Greenheart Landscape Recovery Scheme which will enhance biodiversity on 43 sites across Wigan. Wigan Greenheart was selected by Defra as one of the first 22 projects in the country and will support us to make a real step change for nature recovery throughout Wigan and Leigh. This will involve long term landscape scale Further information on the Greenheart Landscape Recovery Scheme can be found here:

[Wigan Greenheart Landscape Recovery](#)