



Further to your information request FOI/EIR 24/25-147, please find your question and our response below.

**Request:**

With respect to the implementation of the 'biodiversity duty' of the 2021 Environment Act.

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

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

**Response:**

*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.*

Yes. Available here:

<https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Conservation%20and%20Enhancement%20of%20Biodiversity%20Step%20One%20Consider%20Jan%202024.pdf>

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

In developing the above linked report, a number of informal meetings and exchanges took place during 2023, varying from explaining the principle of what needs to be done as well as what the report should say. Two such meetings included a wide range of elected politicians, though these were not public meetings and no minutes recorded.

*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.*

No specific meetings have been held on this issue that was primarily about the duty, but there have been numerous and ongoing discussions around nature conservation and nature recovery, all of which, when taken together, are relevant to meeting our statutory duty.

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

There is no statutory template or timeframe as to what should be published to meet this part of the duty. Nevertheless, for a broad overview of our actions which we believe contribute to

meeting the duty outlined, please see this webpage:  
<https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/content/nature-recovery>

From that page in particular, see  
<https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/East%20Cambs%20NRN%20-%20Final%20-%20Aug2022%20-%20low%20res.pdf>

And more broadly, see Agenda item 10 of this very recent committee, which established the council's medium term strategy for nature as well as an annual list of nature recovery actions for 24/25, which again assist us in meeting the duty.

<https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/meetings/finance-assets-committee-270624>

This concludes your request FOI/EIR 24/25-147.

If information has been refused, please treat this as a Refusal Notice for the purposes of the Act.

If you disagree with our decision or are otherwise unhappy with how we have dealt with your request in the first instance you may approach [foi@eastcambs.gov.uk](mailto:foi@eastcambs.gov.uk) and request a review. A request for review must be made in no more than 40 working days from the date of this email.

Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome you have a right under s50 of the Freedom of Information Act to appeal against the decision by contacting the Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow SK9 5AF.