



I am requesting the following information related to the Biodiversity Duty:

1. A record of your first considerations of what action to take for biodiversity, which was due to be completed by 1 January 2024.

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:

www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/Consultations/Future-plan/Planning-for-the-Future-to-2040.aspx

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.

2. Any policies and objectives for biodiversity which were agreed as soon as possible after this

Our policies and objectives will be agreed as part of our local plan review. There will also be several priorities and objectives that the council will need to 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.

3. How many hectares of priority habitat you have identified for restoration or creation in the next five years

The council has been working in partnership with Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Forestry England on the Greenheart Landscape Recovery Scheme which will enhance biodiversity on 44 sites across Wigan delivering 1446 total hectares of habitat identified for restoration or creation over the next 20 years through the sale of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain units to developers, voluntary Biodiversity Net Gain units to private companies and Natural Flood Management outcomes to water companies and local beneficiaries. Wider Carbon credits may also be available to a range of audiences. 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. Further information on the Greenheart Landscape Recovery Scheme can be found here:

<https://defrafarming.blog.gov.uk/2023/12/18/wigan-greenheart-landscape-recovery-an-industrial-past-and-a-thriving-future/>