

REPORT TITLE: Biodiversity Duty Reporting (2022 – 2025)

To: Cabinet 16 December 2025

Cabinet Member: Cllr Martin Smart, Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Space and City Services

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

Director Approval: Director James Elms confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for decision.

1.	Recommendations
1.1	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Approves the content of the draft Biodiversity Duty Report for final document design and publication by the statutory submission deadline of 20th March 2026.
2.	Purpose and reason for the report
2.1	<p>To introduce the new Biodiversity Reporting Duty to Cabinet and seek approval for the first report covering 2022 to 2025 to be submitted to central government and be published on our website.</p>

3.	Alternative options considered
3.1	None. Submission of a Biodiversity Duty Report is a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 2021.
4.	Background and key issues
4.1	<p>The Environment Act 2021 requires all local authorities and local planning authorities in England to publish a biodiversity report detailing actions they have taken and plan to take to comply with their statutory biodiversity duty. The end of the first reporting period is the 1st January 2026.</p> <p>The Biodiversity Duty Report (Appendix A) accompanying this paper follows the DEFRA template to report on actions undertaken since the adoption of our Biodiversity Strategy in 2022 through to the end October 2025.</p> <p>The report also covers proposed future actions following a 2026 midterm review of the Biodiversity Strategy to ensure alignment with recent initiatives including the submission of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy LNRS).</p>
5.	Corporate plan
5.1	<p>A key priority of the Corporate Plan (2022 to 2027) is:</p> <p>:</p> <p>Leading Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030</p> <p>The report highlights our last 4 years of action identified within the Biodiversity Strategy to meet this priority.</p> <p>Future actions are also described to continue this work, including a Biodiversity Strategy</p>

	and action plan midterm review in 2025/26
6.	<p>Consultation, engagement and communication</p> <p>The completed action described within the report were supported through consultation of the Biodiversity Strategy prior to its adoption in 2022. Individual projects have also included bespoke consultations on concept, specific design or site management options.</p> <p>Going forward the proposed future actions will be included in the review of the Biodiversity Action Plan that is seeking approval for public consultation in January / February 2026 at December Cabinet 2025 and is on the Forward Plan for Cabinet approval in March 2026, alongside the new Climate Change and Urban Forest Strategies.</p>
7.	Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact
7.1	The publication of the report is a statutory requirement that will inform central government and our communities of our commitments and actions to meet our Biodiversity Duty and declared biodiversity emergency. It will highlight the considerable works we have undertaken over the last 4 years since adoption of our Biodiversity Strategy through collaboration across services, with partners and communities.
8.	Implications
8.1	Relevant risks
	Failure to submit a Biodiversity Duty report within the legislated timescale would be in contravention of the Environment Act 2021
	Financial Implications
8.2	There is no new financial implication to the City Council from a decision to approve submission of the Biodiversity Duty report to central government.

	Ongoing and proposed projects detailed within the report will be funded through existing staff, revenue and capital budgets or relevant external funding. Where projects require additional funding, these will be bought forward as Project Proposals to establish and secure the necessary approvals and resource before committing to delivery.
	Legal Implications
8.3	Reporting on our Biodiversity Duty is a new statutory function, established under the Environment Act 2021.
	Equalities and socio-economic Implications
8.4	<p>Draft assessment found that the report and associated actions will have overall positive equality impacts across Cambridge's communities.</p> <p>The actions promote equitable access to nature, health and wellbeing benefits, and inclusive community engagement. No negative or disproportionate impacts were identified, and equality outcomes will be monitored through annual reporting.</p>
	Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications
8.5	The overall impact of delivering the Biodiversity Duty Report future action plan is assessed as being moderately positive in terms of reducing impacts of climate change and enhancing biodiversity.
	Procurement Implications
8.6	There are no procurement implications for supporting the recommendation.
	Community Safety Implications

8.7	There are no community safety implication for supporting the recommendation.
8.8	<p><i>Checklist – Impact of the decision</i></p> <p>Financial: No new funding is required to support submission of the Biodiversity Duty Report</p> <p>Legal: Submission of the report will fulfil our statutory duty under the Environment Act 2021</p> <p>Climate Change, Biodiversity & Sustainability: Delivered and proposed actions within the report will have a positive impact through increase of canopy cover, carbon capture, boosting biodiversity, reducing storm water flooding and contributing to health and wellbeing</p> <p>Crime and disorder / Community Safety: No direct impacts from supporting the submission of the Biodiversity Duty Report. Specific projects will consider and embed mitigation through consultation and good design.</p> <p>Discrimination and Equality: The Biodiversity Report includes specific actions to address inequality in access to natural green space and champion the health and wellbeing benefits of regular access to nature.</p> <p>Human Resources: Submission of the Biodiversity Duty Report does not require new posts, though it does highlight the need for sufficient resource to be prioritised to collaborate on future delivery and monitoring of our actions.</p> <p>ICT: No additional ICT resource implications</p> <p>Property: City owned land is included as priority sites for nature recovery within the draft Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Many of these have existing designations (City Wildlife Site, County Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserve) for their existing nature value. Officers are reviewing site management plans and exploring opportunities to deliver actions in support of the LNRS and our Biodiversity Duty.</p> <p>Procurement: No procurement implications are associated with submission and publication of the Biodiversity Duty Report</p> <p>Customer Service: The Biodiversity Duty Report provides a clear summary of actions for nature recovery that can be communicated to our communities through our web pages, social media and Cambridge Matters.</p>

	<p>Communications, Consultation & Engagement:</p> <p>No additional consultation is required from the decision to support submission of the Biodiversity Duty Report. Going forward identified proposed projects will be consulted on through the midterm Biodiversity Strategy review and individual project consultations.</p> <p>Our values and Target Operating Model (TOM): The Biodiversity Duty Report highlights example of how we have will continue to ‘enable partners, communities and the council to achieve outcomes together’ in line with the TOM approach to collaborative working.</p>
9.	<p>Background documents</p> <p>Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985</p>
9.1	<p>https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reporting-your-biodiversity-duty-actions</p> <p>https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/11066/biodiversity-strategy.pdf</p>
10.	<p>Appendices</p>
10.1	<p>Appendix A – Draft Biodiversity Reporting Duty</p>
	<p>To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Guy Belcher, Biodiversity Manager, tel: 01223 458532, email: Guy.belcher@cambridge.gov.uk</p>