

Blaby District Council

Cabinet Executive

Date of Meeting	23 March 2026
Title of Report	Enhanced Biodiversity Duty This is not a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan
Lead Member	Cllr. Ben Taylor - Leader of the Council
Report Author	Executive Director - Place
Strategic Themes	Enhancing and maintaining our natural and built environment

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 The Enhanced Biodiversity Duty (EBD) was introduced under the Environment Act (2021). It requires all public authorities in England to consider how to actively conserve and enhance biodiversity. Defra requires all Local Planning Authorities and Local Authorities to report and publish what actions have been taken, and are planned, to meet the EBD.
- 1.2 This report outlines the Council's EBD position, confirming the actions already undertaken to contribute towards biodiversity and what additional actions are planned for the future.

2. Recommendation(s) to Cabinet Executive

- 2.1 Consider and approve the publication and submission of the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty report to Defra, no later than the 31st March 2026.
- 2.2 Delegate any post submission actions required by Defra to the Executive Director Place in consultation with the Leader.
- 2.3 Receive progress updates on the actions identified from the Climate Change Cross Party Working Group.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 Defra require the publication and submission of the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty report.
- 3.2 To ensure clarity of decision making
- 3.3 To consider the introduction of further actions in the interest of Climate Change.

4. Matters to consider

4.1 Background

The Environment Act 2021 strengthened the Biodiversity Duty required of public authorities. Under the Duty, Blaby District Council has a statutory obligation to consider what it can do to both conserve and enhance biodiversity. This duty ensures the Council integrate considerations about improvements to biodiversity throughout our policies and procedures.

Blaby District Council has a long legacy and strong track record of protecting and enhancing our natural environment. Biodiversity is a central priority for the council, considered across departments, and forms a core part of the Blaby Plan. This commitment is supported by biodiversity being included in several core policies, including the Climate Change Strategy 2020-30 and the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2024-34. The council welcomes the requirements arising from the Environment Act 2021 as an opportunity to build upon our historical achievements and reinforce our ongoing action for biodiversity across the district.

Under this new duty, the Council is required to prepare and publish an Enhanced Biodiversity Duty report that outlines the Council's approach to conserving and enhancing biodiversity. Defra have advised that the report needs to include the following:

- A summary of the policies and objectives in place, and actions taken, to comply with the Biodiversity Duty
- Plans to comply with the Biodiversity Duty in the next reporting period
- Details on the consideration of other relevant strategies
- Details on BNG, including actions carried out to meet BNG obligations, details of biodiversity gains arising from BNG plans.
- Any other information Blaby District Council "considers appropriate" for inclusion in the report.

In addition, the Blaby EBD report includes ideas and opportunities for making further improvements in the future. These improvements either align with existing strategies or are ideas that have been identified through the production of the EBD report. The EBD report actions will be overseen by the Climate Action Group which will feed into the Climate Change Cross Party Working Group, chaired by Cllr Breckon.

The preparation of Blaby's EBD report has been undertaken with the support of Land Use Consultants (LUC) an independent environmental consultancy who have worked with a wide range of local authorities across the UK. LUC have worked with BDC to gather relevant information that has informed the EBD report. A copy of the report can be found at appendix A.

Defra have confirmed that subsequent EBD reports must be produced within five years of the previous reporting period.

4.2 Proposal(s)

Cabinet is asked to consider the content of the EBD report and approve its publication and submission to Defra. The actions identified will then be monitored through the internal governance structures outlined above and reported back to Cabinet.

4.3 Relevant Consultations

The work undertaken did not require external consultations.

Engagement with a wide range of internal teams has ensured the content of the report is a representational view of the organisation's approach to meeting the enhanced biodiversity duty.

4.4 Significant Issues

No issues are reported.

4.5 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities and there are no areas of concern.

5. Environmental impact

5.1 A Net Zero and Climate Impact Assessment (NZCIA) has been carried out and no adverse impacts identified.

A copy of the NZCIA can be found at Appendix B.

6. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

6.1 No additional costs will be incurred as a consequence of the publication and submission of the EBD report to Defra. All actions that are identified within the report can be delivered within existing budgets.

There will be a cost to engage consultants to review the report in the future, however this will be taken into consideration in budgets for future years as appropriate.

7. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

7.1

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
Should the Council choose not to submit the EBD then it will not be meeting its statutory responsibilities.	Approve the submission of the report to Defra and monitor progress of the identified actions.

8. Other options considered

8.1 It is a requirement of Blaby District Council to publish and submit the EBD report to Defra. There are no other options available.

9. Appendix

9.1 Appendix A – Enhanced Biodiversity Duty report

9.2 Appendix B – Net Zero and Climate Impact Assessment

10. Background paper(s)

10.1 There are no background papers.

11. Report author's contact details

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