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New Government Guidance on Biodiversity

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Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 there is a duty on public authorities in England to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy or decision making. Conserving biodiversity can include restoring or enhancing a population or habitat.

English public authorities including town and parish councils should be able to show their duty to have regard for conserving biodiversity if they have identified ways to integrate biodiversity when they:

Develop policies and strategies and put them into practice.

Manage the planning system.

Manage:

their land and buildings

woodlands and nature reserves

gardens, parks and public open space

community amenities e.g. sports grounds and cemeteries

waste and pollution

energy and water

wood and plant products

Develop infrastructure, such as roads, buildings or flood defences.

Make decisions about procurement.

Implement economic, environmental and social programmes.

This duty has been reinforced under the Environment Act 2021, and **government guidance** asking for councils to complete their first consideration of what action to take for biodiversity by 1 January 2024 and agree policies and objectives as soon as possible afterwards was published on 17 May 2023.

[Click here to view the updated SLCC Environmental Planning Guidance.](#)

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