Freedom of Information Act Request

Reference: F17/0224
Response Date: 21 September 2017

Thank you for your request for information. Your original request to Maldon District Council has been replicated below, together with the Council's response:

I would like to request the following under the Freedom of Information Act 2000:

What steps the Council has taken to meet its section 40 duties under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to 'have regard... to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'.

In relation to conserving biodiversity and the planning system, Maldon's Local Development Plan was approved by the Secretary of State on July 21st 2017. The plan makes provision for the conservation of biodiversity as part of the development management system specifically in Policy N2 Natural Environment and Biodiversity, but also in Policy N1 Green Infrastructure Network and Policy S1 Sustainable Development.

In May 2016, the requirements for supporting information on biodiversity as part of validation requirements was enhanced to include specific need for a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for all applications where the proposals may have an impact on wildlife and biodiversity and for an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey to be carried out where protected species or priority species are known or have the potential to be present. Specific reference was made to BS 42020: 2013 Biodiversity Code of Practice for Planning and Development

Maldon District Council has worked with Essex Ecology Services Ltd over the past year (2016/17) to support our responses in relation to planning applications and biodiversity and had a Service Level Agreement with Essex Wildlife Trust to gain access to Protected Species Datasets. Maldon District Council is in active talks with Essex County Council Place Services to identify ways that Essex County Council can support us in relation to ecology issues going forward.

All major development is required to provide biodiversity enhancements of some sort as part of their proposed development.

The total amount spent by the council on promoting biodiversity in the last year for which data is available.

Approximately 25% of the Countryside & Coast Officer's (Major Applications) time is spent on biodiversity issues in relation to planning matters, directly or indirectly.

Minor Works support by EECOS for 2016/17 amounted to £1800. Access to Protected Species Datasets supplied by EWT amounted to £2400 for same period.

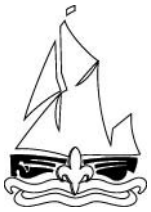
Approximately 10% of the Countryside & Coast Manager's time is spent on biodiversity - this includes the following:

- ***Liaison with local NGOs, landowner advice, liaison with Police & Wildlife Crime officer, public/resident enquiries for specific issues/concerns.***
- ***Attendance of networking/conferences e.g. Greater Thames Seal Working group, Kent & Essex IFCA liaison, regional coastal forum and green space groups.***
- ***C. £6k of "Countryside Operations" budget for Biodiversity improvement related projects***
- ***On-site maintenance through Parks & Countryside service gives consideration to conservation, wildlife and biodiversity improvement.***

How much the Council plans to spend on promoting biodiversity in the coming year.

Maldon District Council is looking to appoint a specialist consultant to help us develop a Green Infrastructure Strategy to support the recently approved Local Development Plan. This Strategy will look at landscape, amenity, access and greenspace issues as well as biodiversity.

In addition to above, Maldon District Council has a new initiative from July 2017 of community engagement and particularly practical conservation volunteers. Working in part with Trust for Conservation Volunteers, but Maldon District Council is fully funding a full time post c £27k pa. a Key target within this role will be Biodiversity conservation and promotion/education/engagement with the resident and visiting public.



The name and contact details of the officer responsible for promoting biodiversity within the council (if there is no such person, please provide the name and contact details of the officer responsible for managing the Council's green spaces).

Maldon District Council does not have an Ecology Officer but the Countryside & Coast Officer (Major Applications) comments on biodiversity issues in relation to planning matters. The Countryside & Coast Manager has overall management responsibility for Maldon District Council's green spaces. Greenspace in all new development coming forward is intended to be managed by separate management companies. On all the strategic sites and many of the other major sites, the developer is required to provide a management plan to guide the management of new greenspace including in relation to biodiversity.

Countryside & Coast Officer (Major Applications) - Catherine Bailey catherine.bailey@maldon.gov.uk, tel: 01621 865836.

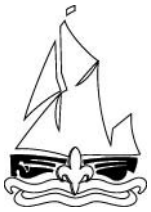
Countryside & Coast Manager - Matt Wilson matt.wilson@maldon.gov.uk, tel: 01621 876275.

If you are not satisfied with our response to your request please let us know. If we are unable to resolve the matter quickly then you may wish to pursue this through the Council's complaints procedure and request that an internal review be undertaken. A request for an internal review must be submitted within two months of the date of the receipt of the response to your original information request. Complaints should be made in writing to the Council at Princes Road, Maldon CM8 5DL or by email to Complaints@maldon.gov.uk or by using the form available on the Council's website at http://www.maldon.gov.uk.

If an internal review is undertaken and you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision at the following address:

The Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF
Tel 01625 545 745 Fax 01625 524 510 - Email: enquiries@ico.gsi.gov.uk.

Committee Services
Maldon District Council



Telephone: 01621 854477
E-mail: committee.clerk@maldon.gov.uk