

The Church Commissioners for England is developing a net zero carbon strategy for its land investments as it delivers on its Respect for the Planet responsible investment strategy.

The Church Commissioners regularly assesses its £9.2 billion endowment for environmental impact to deliver on its responsible investment strategy announced earlier this year.

The Church Commissioners has worked with leading environmental investment consultants to identify the carbon emissions, sequestration and natural capital profile of its rural, strategic land and timber investment portfolios, which account for about 15% of the fund. The investment team will now begin developing a net zero strategy for these assets that will leverage and protect natural capital and encourage collaboration with our tenants in particular as relevant stakeholder groups.

The protection of biodiversity is a priority for the Church Commissioners and was a key area highlighted in the Commissioners' new responsible investment strategy, as outlined in its first sustainability report published in June. Its approach to natural capital and climate change includes creating a coalition of investors seeking to engage major public companies on nature loss and achieving net zero by 2050 across its investment portfolio, including its land assets.

Harry Ashman, Engagement Analyst at the Church Commissioners, recently spoke with Environmental Finance about the Commissioners' approach and on steps it is taking to target biodiversity loss. Harry commented: "It is part of our efforts to ensure the biodiversity crisis is treated alongside and with as much urgency as the climate crisis."

Harry added: "Since the industrial revolution, society has been on a steady march towards forgetting that we are utterly reliant upon nature to survive and thrive. We must understand how ecosystem services can be a driver of value and positive impact."

The Church Commissioners is committed to operationally meet a 2030 net zero target, in line with the ambitious goals set by the General Synod, and also to support the transition of the real economy to be net zero by 2050. In 2020 the Commissioners committed to having a net zero investment portfolio by 2050, noting that to create real world change, whole sectors have to be supported through a major transition.