



BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

For Essex Local Planning Authorities



Written collaboratively by Essex County Council, Colchester City Council, Tendring District Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council, Epping Forest District Council and Braintree District Council.
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This draft will be updated and amended as secondary legislation, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and further guidance is released. Whilst interim guidance at this time and subject to change, a Supplementary Planning Document will be produced and adopted once all guidance and legislation is available.

1. Introduction to the document

This Document adds further detail on how policies contained within the development plan, the Environment Act 2021 and government guidance and are to be implemented within Braintree District and will be used to provide guidance on specific sites or issues.

The delivery of biodiversity net gain that will be achieved through development will result in more and better-quality biodiversity than would otherwise be possible.

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide an overview and guidance on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The content of this document is designed to help developers, planning applicants, LPAs, decision makers, and landowners by summarising guidance on planning for and delivering BNG, signposting to detailed guidance, and setting out the Council's expectations for BNG.

This document outlines:

- What is Biodiversity, BNG, and its importance.
- Legislation and political drivers.
- Biodiversity Metrics.
- BNG good practice principles.
- Links to other planning
- Summary of the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

Throughout references are made, with links where appropriate, to other guidance that can help to direct and enhance development design to ensure that BNG opportunities are incorporated from the beginning of the planning process.

2. Biodiversity Net Gain

2.1 What is Biodiversity and Biodiversity Net Gain?

Biodiversity is the variability among living organisms from all sources including, terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part: this includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems (Convention of Biological Diversity).

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development, land and marine management that leaves biodiversity in a measurably better state than before the development took place (Natural England). BNG is additional to existing habitats and species protections. Intended to reinforce the mitigation hierarchy, BNG aims to create new habitats as well as enhancing existing habitats, ensuring the ecological connectivity they provide for wildlife is retained and improved (Natural England).

2.2 Why Now?

2.2.1. The Climate and Ecological Crisis

The Environment Act 2021 introduced mandatory BNG legislation. This is because we are in a climate and ecological emergency. For climate change, the science tells us that to avoid catastrophic effects we need to limit the increase in global temperature to 1.5°C. Mitigation measures are required to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit global temperature rise. However, even with efforts to limit the cause of global warming, further climatic changes are inevitable in the future and the UK will need to adapt to the growing risks from climate change. Co-ordinated action from all sectors, national and local governments, and individuals is needed to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

A UK State of Nature Report 2019 demonstrated that not only are we dealing with a climate crisis, but also an ecological crisis. The UK has lost almost half its biodiversity since the 1970s and sits near the bottom of the Biodiversity Intactness Index¹. We have lost 97% of wild meadows, 26% of mammals are at risk of extinction and 22% of seabird species have declined. The greatest drivers of this change include urbanisation, intensification of agriculture, woodland management, pollution, and climate change. UN Sustainable Development Goal 15 calls on us to “recover sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.”² BNG will tackle the loss of nature by ensuring that new developments are designed to provide habitats that can increase biodiversity within its area.

¹ <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/our-science/data/biodiversity-indicators/what-is-the-biodiversity-intactness-index.html#:~:text=The%20Natural%20History%20Museum%20has,bottom%20of%20the%20G7%20countries.>

² <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

2.3. The Benefits of BNG

The Benefits of Biodiversity Net Gain			
For Developers	For Planning Authorities	For Nature	For the wider population
<p>Green neighbourhoods</p> <p>BNG can help create greener neighbourhoods, that are more attractive places for people to live, work and do business.</p>	<p>Multifunctional benefits</p> <p>BNG can have multifunctional benefits such as, providing spaces for education, active travel, mental health and well-being, and physical health.</p>	<p>Bigger, better, and joined up habitats</p> <p>Providing more bigger, better, and joined up habitats in which wildlife can thrive. BNG will enhance the condition of existing habitats as well as creating new habitats.</p>	<p>Food security</p> <p>Increasing environmental stability through biodiversity net gain could help the future of the agricultural industry, and therefore food production.</p>
<p>Desirable places to live</p> <p>Development sites will be more attractive with the addition of BNG, making places more desirable to live in. It will also enhance their reputation, with possibilities to become examples of best practice.</p>	<p>Contribute to wider targets</p> <p>BNG can help LPAs achieve other targets, such as bringing investment to the local economy, place-making, improving air quality and flood resilience.</p>	<p>Supports nature recovery</p> <p>BNG is a mechanism to support the delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The LNRS identifies locations to create or improve habitat most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment.</p>	<p>Soil health</p> <p>For farmers, using their land for biodiversity net gain, increasing biodiversity can result in increased soil health, pest control, nutrient cycling and it could also prevent runoff to waterways.</p>

The Benefits of Biodiversity Net Gain			
For Developers	For Planning Authorities	For Nature	For the wider population
<p>Contribute to other plans</p> <p>Developments that deliver BNG, particularly onsite, as evidenced through biodiversity gain plans, can concurrently contribute towards the delivery of other requirements as part of the planning application process. For example, BNG delivery can contribute towards a successful construction environment management plan (CEMP), Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA), and landscape and ecological management plan (LEMP).</p>	<p>Job creation</p> <p>Increased natural capital assets, creating green jobs.</p>	<p>Provision of ecosystem services</p> <p>Ecosystem services demonstrates further the benefits of nature. Ecosystem services include but not limited to soil formation, nutrient cycling, water cycling, pollinator, regulation of water, air and soil quality, climate regulation and more.</p>	<p>Resilience to climate change</p> <p>BNG can help mitigate climate change through the restoration and protection of nature. E.g., additional woodland can help sequester more atmospheric carbon.</p>
<p>Increased demand for areas</p> <p>Financial benefits for developers through BNG delivery. For example, increased demand for an area and potential raised property prices.</p>	<p>Greener neighbourhoods</p> <p>BNG can help create greener neighbourhoods, that are more attractive places for people to live, work and do business.</p>	<p>Enhancing existing spaces for nature</p> <p>BNG contributes towards nature recovery by enhancing and uplifting existing habitats and spaces for nature.</p>	<p>Community resilience</p> <p>BNG can help communities adapt to climate change by increasing resilience to extremes of weather, including heatwaves and flooding.</p>

The Benefits of Biodiversity Net Gain			
For Developers	For Planning Authorities	For Nature	For the wider population
<p>Combining requirements</p> <p>BNG delivery can be combined with other requirements for developers. For example, SuDS and Public Open Space (POS) requirements. These can also be delivered through high-quality green infrastructure which is multifunctional and accessible.</p>			<p>Direct Impact on people</p> <p>BNG can benefit people directly, when communities can enjoy the high-quality natural surroundings either by BNG being achieved within the development footprint or when a biodiversity offset increases people's access to, or views of, nature.</p>

2.3.1. Benefits of BNG for Braintree District Council.

Successful delivery of BNG can help to deliver Braintree District Local Plan policies, for example: on enhancing existing wildlife sites, Green Infrastructure, protecting/enhancing landscape, Climate Change adaptation, managing flood risk, can all be directly, or indirectly achieved through BNG.

BNG can contribute to wider targets in Essex:

- Increase natural Green Infrastructure (GI) from 14% to 25% by 2030 (ECAC). Increase Natural Green Infrastructure from 14% to 25% by 2030 (Target set by the Essex Climate Action Commission; an independent body which advise on how best to tackle the climate challenge).
- Enhance the resilience of the Essex landscape.
- BNG will ensure consistency across the county through measurable assessment methods of biodiversity.
- BNG will support the delivery of Nature Recovery Targets, which will contribute to a wider range of environmental targets, both nationally and locally.
- Through supporting the delivery of the Essex LNRS, BNG will be contributing to the formation of the England-wide Nature Recovery Network (NRN). The NRN is a national network of wildlife rich places to increase and restore nature, of which BNG will be key to its gradual formation and delivery.
- BNG and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) are interconnected; the LNRS will identify where action to achieve net gain will have the most impact for nature recovery and encourage action in these locations through the way net gain is calculated via the biodiversity metric (see strategy significance multiplier in section 3.2.). Read more detail on the LNRS in section 4.0.
- The interconnected nature of BNG and the LNRS will have strategic benefits, across LPAs, and county boundaries, benefiting biodiversity and nature across landscapes at both local and national scale- BNG is, by nature, cross-boundary.

3. Planning Requirements and Legislation

3.1 Overview of BNG related legislation

3.1.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2021 and Environment Act, 2021

The concept of BNG was introduced in the first iteration of the NPPF (2012). This was advanced by the Environment Act, 2021, which brings mandatory BNG into law. This means that all new developments will be required to deliver a minimum 10% increase in biodiversity. Local Planning Authorities have the discretion to go beyond 10% and require a higher percentage BNG if they so choose.

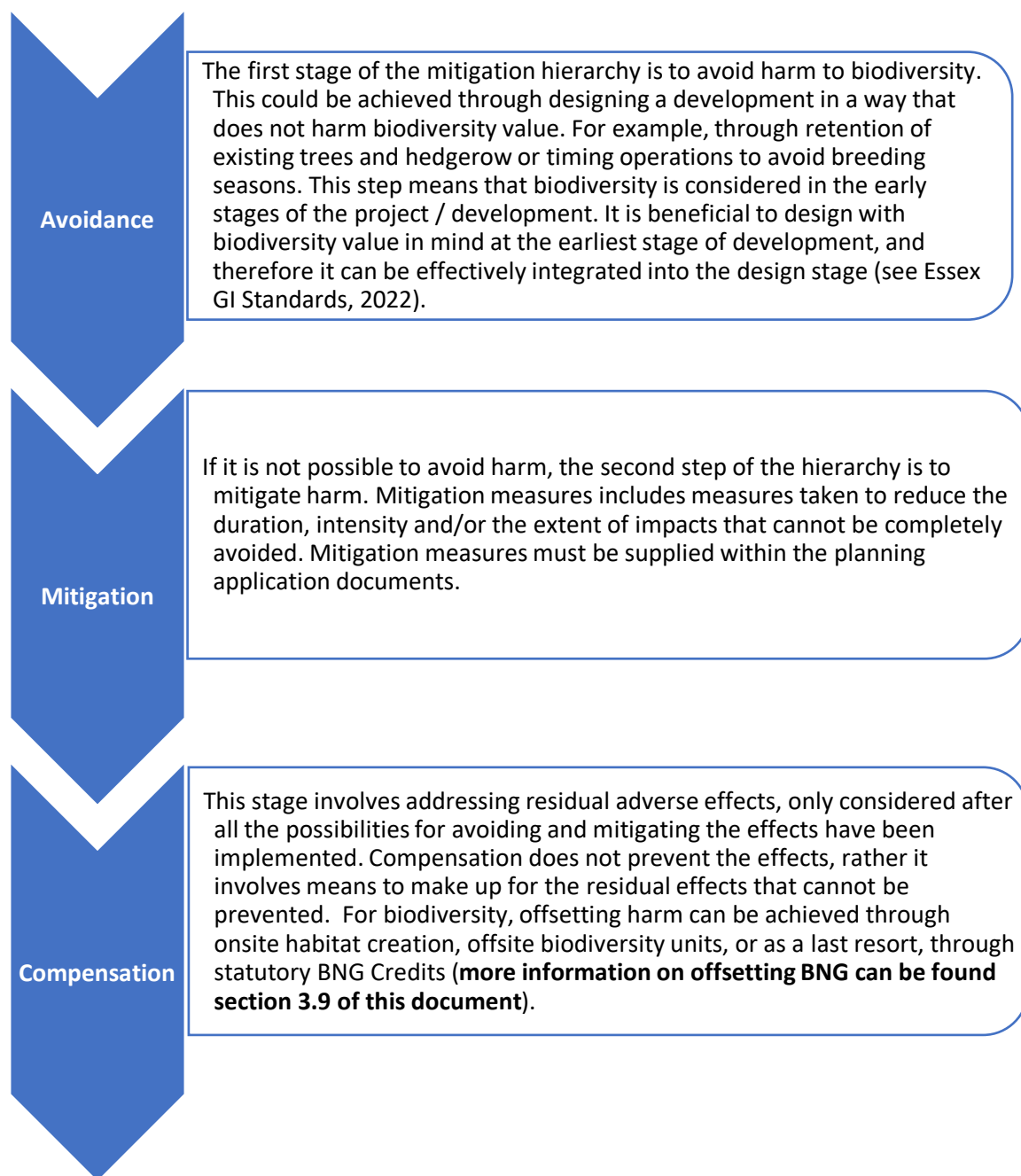
This will become mandatory for major sites in January 2024 (exact date is to be confirmed), and for small sites in April 2024. This will be a condition of planning permission in England as per section 98 of the Environment Act 2021 for relevant developments.

3.1.2. Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain

BNG, in its initial implementation following January 2024, is a different way of designing a development scheme to leave the natural environment in a better state than it was found. In accordance with the Environment Act 2021, BNG is a means for creating or enhancing wildlife habitats and ecological features through applying the mitigation hierarchy in conjunction with development to deliver improvements for biodiversity. The Council advises applicants to engage with an ecologist at an early stage and facilitate collaboration between the ecologist, landscape consultant and design team at the earliest stage in the design process. It is difficult to retrofit biodiversity net gain so the earlier an applicant engages with an ecologist the easier it is to achieve biodiversity net gain.

3.1.3. Mitigation Hierarchy

The Mitigation Hierarchy is the principle that environmental harm resulting from a development should be avoided, mitigated adequately or, as a last resort, compensated for. The mitigation hierarchy must be applied. BNG is additional to existing biodiversity protection.



3.2 The Biodiversity Net Gain Metric

3.2.1 Introduction to the Metric

A biodiversity metric calculation should be submitted as part of the planning application. The requirement of schedule 14 (7A) of the Environment Act 2021 is that the development may not begin until a biodiversity gain plan is submitted and approved by the LPA. As part of the gain plan, a metric calculation must be included that demonstrates a minimum of 10% gain. Whilst the current legal requirement is for this to be secured through a legal agreement (s106 agreement/conversation covenant), it is recommended that a metric

calculation, and evidence for BNG it is submitted as early in the planning process as possible. This will encourage a best practice approach and ensure that development proposal sites have integrated BNG into the design, meaning it is less likely to be refused on grounds of lack of information. Early integration will also help to deliver on-site BNG.

The Biodiversity Metric is a biodiversity accounting tool that can be used for the purposes of calculating BNG. The biodiversity metric is a habitat-based approach used to assess a site's value to wildlife. The metric uses habitat features to calculate a biodiversity value. Habitats should be classified using the UK Habitat classification system. The metric calculates how a development will change the biodiversity value of a site. The metric calculates the value as biodiversity units. The biodiversity metric uses changes in the extent and quality of habitats as a proxy for nature, and calculates the habitat found on a site before and after development. New applicants must use the latest version of the Biodiversity Metric.

Four key factors underpin this comparison:

- Habitat size (area or length)
- Condition
- Distinctiveness (based on the type of habitat and its distinguishing features, e.g., consideration of species richness and rarity)
- Strategic Significance (value given to habitats located in optimal locations or which meet local objectives for biodiversity in the as identified within a local plan, strategy, or policy. Once established, identification can be achieved through the Local Nature Recovery Strategy)

To use the biodiversity metric calculation tool, applicants will need to know:

- The types of habitats on-site and off-site
- The size of each habitat parcel in hectares
- The length in kilometres if it is linear (rivers and streams, hedgerows and lines of trees)
- The condition of each habitat parcel
- The strategic significance of where biodiversity uplift will be achieved.
- The number of trees and sizes of the trees

Post-development biodiversity units are calculated using the above key factors and these additional risk factors: temporal risk (time taken for a created or enhanced habitat to reach target condition); and delivery risk (difficulty in creating or enhancing habitat). Off-site habitat creation also requires the factor spatial risk (distance of habitat creation or enhancement from the development or location of land use change).

3.2.2. Strategic Significance Multiplier

Within the metric calculation, there is a multiplier for strategic significance. This means that certain sites, locations, and habitats are given a higher value, and therefore allocated higher biodiversity units based on their strategic significance.

High = Where the location has been identified within a local plan, strategy or policy as being ecologically important for the specific habitat type or where that habitat has been identified as being locally ecologically important.

Medium = Where there is no relevant plan, strategy or policy in place, professional judgement may be used to justify the use of the medium strategic significance category. This judgement should consider the importance of that habitat in providing a linkage between other strategic locations. Ecologist consultants' judgement could be used to determine medium strategic significance, although a robust justification for this will be required.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS, once developed, will provide input, and facilitate mapping of sites of strategic significance). Further information available on LNRS in section 4.1.

4.1. 3.2.3. How will BNG be demonstrated?

Applicants will be required to run a BNG calculation to assess the baseline conditions for the site at the pre-development stage. The latest published Biodiversity Metric must be used, and Defra will nominate the statutory metric in due course. The metric calculation must be conducted by a competent and experienced person ([as defined by BS 8683:2021](#)).” A competent person is someone who can demonstrate they have acquired through training, qualifications or experience, or a combination of these, the knowledge and skills enable that person to perform specified tasks in completing and reviewing metric calculations”.

The spreadsheet should show the assessment of existing/predevelopment habitat translated into biodiversity units. This will then be contrasted with the proposed post development biodiversity units (reflecting any proposed on or off-site habitat creation and restoration). This difference in Biodiversity Units will be calculated as a percentage therefore representing the change in biodiversity value. The minimum requirement is a 10% gain (LPAs have the discretion to go beyond 10% and require a higher percentage BNG if they so choose). The Essex Local Nature Partnership (LNP) supports going for higher than the mandatory 10% BNG requirement and encourages LPAs to go for 20% BNG in local policy. The Essex LNP have been investigating the provision of a 20% BNG viability study, to evidence and support reasoning behind going for higher than the 10% mandatory requirement. Progress on the LNP's work can be found at:

www.essexnaturepartnership.co.uk

If it is found that the habitat on site has been degraded since 30 January 2020 so that the habitat is lost prior to the baseline survey, then the site will need to be reassessed using data (aerial imagery and other habitat data) held by the Council from prior to the loss of the habitat. Where there is uncertainty of the habitat loss or disturbance from a proposed scheme or where there is insufficient information, it is recommended to apply a “worst case scenario” approach.

3.2.4. Important considerations when using the Biodiversity Metric

- Additionality - BS8683:2021 – Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain and industry best practice guidelines (CIRIA, 2019) require BNG to be ‘additional’ to any measures or obligations to mitigate a scheme’s biodiversity impacts and which would have happened regardless. These obligations are currently interpreted as including impacts on; (i) statutory designated sites, (ii) irreplaceable habitats and (iii) legally protected species.

- Impacts upon irreplaceable habitats cannot be accounted for under the Biodiversity Metric.
- Area based habitats, linear (e.g. hedgerows) and watercourse are all treated separately within the metric. 10% Net Gain is required for all three (LPAs have the discretion to go beyond 10% and require a higher percentage BNG if they so choose). For example, you can't have a 7% gain in area habitat and a 3% gain in hedgerows.
- Habitat replacement as part of net gain must also be "like-for-like" or "like-for-better". This links to 'Trading Rules', in line with rule 3 of the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 User Guide.
- The Biodiversity Metric and supporting information is available here: [The Biodiversity Metric 4.0 - JP039 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Information-and-Resources/Policy-and-Strategy/Biodiversity-Metric-4-0).

3.3. Large/Strategic sites (November 2023)

For strategic sites, where development may be phased, the Biodiversity Metric must be applied at both outline and full planning permission stage. The Council recognize that design may change between outline and Reserved Matters applications, or in phased developments. Where this occurs, it is important that the BNG calculations for the outline application are updated alongside the design changes so that the Council is able to assess whether the delivery of the required BNG will be achieved. Where the metric has been updated during the planning application process, using the same version of the metric throughout will provide more consistent results.

Applications will require BNG consideration for major development registered past January 2024, and minor developments past April 2024. Specific dates for this are not yet confirmed.

3.3.1. Minerals and Waste

Minerals and waste sites will also be subject to BNG. Guidance on applying BNG to waste and minerals sites should be sought from the waste and minerals planning authority, in this case Essex County Council

3.4. Small sites (April 2024)

Small sites can be defined as:

- (i) For residential: where the number of dwellings to be provided is between one and nine inclusive on a site having an area of less than one hectare, or where the number of dwellings to be provided is not known, a site area of less than 0.5 hectares.
- (ii) For non-residential: where the floor space to be created is less than 1,000 square metres OR where the site area is less than one hectare.

The government confirmed that BNG for small sites will not come into force until April 2024. This will allow LPAs, developers, Defra, and other bodies time to adjust and learn from larger sites. Small-scale developments are not exempt in principle from providing

biodiversity net gains, although there are some exemptions in relation to size and type of land which are explained below. Most small sites (minor applications) can use the Small Sites Metric.

3.4.1 Small Sites Metric

This simplified version of the Biodiversity Metric is designed specifically for small development sites. Small sites are defined as those that meet the following criteria:

- For residential developments, fewer than ten dwelling units (9 or fewer) must be provided on less than one hectare of land.
- The site area is less than 0.5 hectares where the number of dwellings is unknown.
- Any other development type with a site area of less than 0.5 hectares or 5,000 square meters.

The Small Site Metric user guide explains how to apply Small Site Metric and determine whether its use is appropriate. Please visit Natural England [The Small Sites Metric](#) (SSM) to download and utilise the metric. The guide sets out circumstances where the SSM cannot be used:

1. Where habitats not available in the SSM are present
2. Where priority habitats are within the development site (excluding some hedgerows and arable field margins)
3. Where protected species are present on the development site (as protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, but not species under the Wildlife Countryside Act 1981 or the Protection of Badgers Act 1991).
4. Where any offsite interventions are required

3.5. Exemptions to Mandatory BNG

Defra has confirmed several exemptions from BNG:

- Householder applications
- Permitted development
- Self-build and custom house building (small scale – with the caveat that this scale is to be defined)
- Development impacting habitat of an area below a 'de minimis' threshold of 25 square metres, or 5m for linear habitats such as hedgerows and watercourses
- Existing sealed surfaces (such as tarmac or existing buildings) which would give a zero score on the metric, meaning that these surfaces are effectively exempted from the percentage gain requirement.

3.6. Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (2025)

It is a requirement of BNG that the biodiversity value of land (terrestrial) and intertidal development affected by a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIPs) exceeds the

predevelopment biodiversity value by at least 10% (LPAs have the discretion to go beyond 10% and require a higher percentage BNG if they so choose). NSIPs are large-scale developments (involving energy, transportation, water, or waste) that require development consent order via the Planning Inspectorate. The government confirmed that BNG requirements will be incorporated into all NSIP projects (terrestrial) from November 2025, and that the government will also develop an approach for marine net gain (section 3.7). The BNG requirements for NSIPs will be outlined in a draft biodiversity gain statement.

3.7. Intertidal Habitats and Marine Net Gain

Essex has a vast and ecologically important coastline. The Defra consultation [Government response and summary of responses - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/government-response-and-summary-of-responses-to-the-biodiversity-net-gain-consultation) addressed intertidal habitats with the following:

“In response to broad support for the proposal, we will state that all habitats in the intertidal zone, including designated features of protected sites, or a short distance (to be confirmed, but no more than 2 kilometres) above the high-water mark, would be eligible for enhancement for BNG. Any compensation that a development is delivering in meeting wider statutory protections may be counted towards that development’s BNG. This would be subject to any relevant approvals for the enhancement and only permitted where the proposals do not risk harming designated species or features”.

There is future aspiration for Marine Net Gain, however, the overall approach is still subject to consultation and at a relatively early stage.

3.8. Watercourses

Rivers, streams and watercourses are included within biodiversity metric 4. They are linear habitats and as such are treated separately from area-based habitats within the metric. ‘Watercourse biodiversity units’ are calculated as opposed to ‘area habitat biodiversity units’. Area habitats, measured in hectares, generate area habitat biodiversity units and the watercourse habitats, measured in kilometres, generate watercourse biodiversity units. These units are unique and cannot be summed, traded, or converted. To calculate the watercourse biodiversity units of watercourse habitats, biodiversity metric 4 requires data inputs including watercourse habitat type, length, condition, strategic significance, and level of watercourse and riparian encroachment. The watercourse biodiversity units are used to quantify losses and gains of watercourse habitats and cannot be offset by creation or enhancement of area habitat biodiversity units or hedgerow biodiversity units.

3.9. BNG Onsite, Offsite and Statutory Credits

Biodiversity units are given for post development biodiversity net gain measures, these can be onsite, offsite, or as a last resort, statutory credits. Onsite units are delivered through habitat creation/enhancement via landscaping/green infrastructure and offsite units are delivered through habitat creation/enhancement, including via habitat banks, with public

and private landowners. The latest government guidance for selling units as landowners is available [here](#). As a last resort, where biodiversity net gain cannot be delivered onsite or offsite, statutory credits can be purchased, which fund and deliver through large-scale habitat projects delivering high value habitats which can also provide long-term nature-based solutions.



The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Guidance Pack produced by the Essex Local Nature Partnership (LNP) outlines, in detail, the benefits of off-site and on-site BNG. [Guidance on Biodiversity Net Gain \(canva.com\)](#)

3.9.1. Onsite BNG

Onsite BNG means all land within the boundary of a project. In a planning context, this usually means within the red line boundary of a planning application. Utilising the National Green Infrastructure Framework, and the Essex GI Standards and Strategy can help to deliver BNG.

If the Biodiversity Metric shows that a minimum of 10% BNG cannot be achieved onsite, the design of the development should be reviewed considering the mitigation hierarchy to avoid harm to biodiversity in the first instance and secondly to consider any further mitigation and enhancements measures that can be made onsite.

3.9.2 Offsite BNG

Offsite BNG means interventions on land outside of the onsite boundary.

The Metric incentivizes habitat creation onsite or within the same LPA or national character area. This is through a “spatial risk multiplier” which means that you generate more biodiversity units if the habitats are created within the LPA or in the same National Character Area (NCA). Conversely, this means that for habitat creation outside of the LPA/NCA, this won’t benefit from the spatial multiplier, and therefore more units would need to be generated.

Defra will establish a national register for BNG sites and offset units will only be accepted where they relate to a site on this national register once it is established. A template for the register is currently in development. Once developed, Natural England will operate this.

Where offsite BNG is required to deliver 10% BNG, applicants are encouraged to purchase offsite units from BNG sites that are identified as a priority for nature improvement in the LNRS (once it becomes available). BNG can be delivered on more than one offsite location, or as a combination of onsite and offsite enhancement measures. For example, if 10 biodiversity units are required to produce a minimum 10% uplift, and the site can deliver 8 of these units within the redline boundary, the remaining 2 units can be delivered offsite. This must be set out in the biodiversity gain plan and will be monitored in the same way as if all of the BNG was produced offsite.

Offsite biodiversity gains must be maintained for at least 30 years after the completion of the works to create or enhance the habitat. To count towards a development's net gain requirements, the site must be secured through a conservation covenant or planning obligation to ensure the habitats are maintained, even if the land is sold.

3.9.3 BNG Statutory Credits

Government will establish a national BNG statutory credit scheme for circumstances where applicants cannot secure BNG onsite or through offsite units. This is a last resort, BNG should be secured locally and onsite wherever possible. This is because as well as delivering BNG locally, improving the quality of green space in Essex is an excellent way of improving the quality of places and the wellbeing of residents, contributing to stronger social and economic outcomes.

The money raised through statutory credits will be reinvested into biodiversity habitat creation schemes. Defra have released indicative pricing for statutory credits available to view [here](#). The price is set by Defra, based on habitat type and two credits must be purchased for every unit required.

This price will be higher than the cost of equivalent offsite unit on the market, this should encourage use of the mitigation hierarchy and ensure statutory credits are used as a last resort; meaning that all on-site and off-site options should be sought before considering use of the statutory credit scheme to achieve BNG. Developers wishing to use statutory credits will have to provide evidence for this³. Natural England will sell statutory credits on behalf of the Secretary of State. An accessible and user-friendly digital sales platform is currently being developed and tested.

3.10. BNG good practice principles

Applicants should follow the ten principles set out in the table, below, which are taken from the CIEEM (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management), IEMA and CIRIA document: [Biodiversity net gain. Good practice principles for development, a practical guide](#). These are high level principles that should be applied to every site.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain>

Principle	Notes
1. Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy	Do everything possible to first avoid and then minimise impacts on biodiversity. Only as a last resort, and in agreement with external decision-makers where possible, compensate for losses that cannot be avoided. If compensating for losses within the development footprint is not possible or does not generate the most benefits for nature conservation, then offset biodiversity losses by gains elsewhere.
2. Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be compensated for	Avoid impacts on irreplaceable biodiversity – these impacts cannot be offset to achieve no net loss or net gain.
3. Be inclusive and equitable	Engage stakeholders early, and involve them in designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the approach to BNG. Achieve net gain in partnership with stakeholders where possible and share the benefits fairly among stakeholders.
4. Address risks	Mitigate difficulty, uncertainty, and other risks to achieving net gain. Apply well-accepted ways to add contingency when calculating biodiversity losses and gains in order to account for any remaining risks, as well as to compensate for the time between the losses occurring and the gains being fully realised.
5. Make a measurable Net Gain contribution	Achieve a measurable, overall gain for biodiversity and the services ecosystems provide while directly contributing towards nature conservation priorities.
6. Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity	Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity by using robust, credible evidence and local knowledge to make clearly justified choices when: - Delivering compensation that is ecologically equivalent in type, amount and condition, and that accounts for the location and timing of biodiversity losses; - Compensating for losses of one type of biodiversity by providing a different type that delivers greater benefits for nature conservation; - Achieving BNG locally to the development while also contributing towards nature conservation priorities at local, regional and national levels; - Enhancing existing or creating new habitat; and Enhancing ecological connectivity by creating more, bigger, better and joined areas for biodiversity.
7. Be additional	Achieve nature conservation outcomes that demonstrably exceed existing obligations (i.e., doesn't deliver something that would occur anyway).
8. Create a Net Gain legacy	Ensure BNG generates long-term benefits by: - Engaging stakeholders and jointly agreeing practical solutions that secure net gain in perpetuity; - Planning for adaptive management and securing dedicated funding for long-term management; - Designing net gain for biodiversity to be resilient to external factors, especially climate change; - Mitigating risks from other land uses; - Avoiding displacing harmful activities from one location to another; and - Supporting local-level management of BNG activities.

9. Optimise sustainability	Prioritise BNG and, where possible, optimise the wider environmental benefits for a sustainable society and economy.
10. Be transparent	Communicate all BNG activities in a transparent and timely manner, sharing the learning with all stakeholders.

3.10.1 The Urban Greening Factor

Brownfield sites are defined as “Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.” This definition has been provided by National Planning Policy Framework [National Planning Policy Framework - Annex 2: Glossary - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/432424/NPPF-Annex-2-Glossary-Guidance.pdf).

For Brownfield sites and sites with low ecological value [or a BNG metric calculation with a low baseline]. The Urban Greening Factor can be consulted to establish best practice. The Urban Greening Factor (UGF) is a planning tool to improve the provision of Green Infrastructure (GI) particularly in urban areas. It can be used to increase urban greening and contribute to Biodiversity Net Gain. While it is not a statutory requirement, utilisation of the UGF can significantly contribute to place making, nature recovery, biodiversity enhancement, and connectivity to larger green infrastructure networks within proximity to the development site. This will help to deliver a tangible gain in biodiversity. More information can be found within the [National Green Infrastructure Framework Standards \(2023\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114222/National-Green-Infrastructure-Framework-Standards-2023.pdf).

3.10.2. Irreplaceable habitats

National Planning Policy Guidance 2019, implies that “any protected sites and areas (statutory or non-statutory) can be considered as comprised of irreplaceable [natural] habitats, for which biodiversity net gain proposals should not undermine their strict protection.” DEFRA will provide updated definition of “irreplaceable habitats” as stated February 2023. The Defra consultation states that “Secondary legislation will also be used to disapply the 10% measurable net gain requirement for irreplaceable habitat” ...” The biodiversity gain objective (part 1 of the Environment Act 2021) is to be replaced with a requirement for appropriate compensation relative to the baseline habitat type”. The loss of irreplaceable habitats cannot be compensated for by gains elsewhere and so they are excluded from biodiversity net gain calculations. Natural England is currently developing guidance which will set out the definition and a definitive list of irreplaceable habitats in England.

Any proposals that are likely to result in impacts on irreplaceable habitat should be accompanied by detailed survey information and clear evidence to support the exceptional reasons that justify such a loss. Compensation strategies should include contribution to the enhancement and management of the habitat.

Any impacts to irreplaceable habitats will require significant, bespoke compensation beyond the BNG metric and will also require further consultation with Natural England. Impacts should be avoided as much as possible using the mitigation hierarchy.

3.10.3 Stacking and Additionality

3.10.3.1 Stacking

It is possible to stack land used for biodiversity unit creation, with other nature markets. This means that the same parcel of land that is used for other nature markets can also be used for BNG. For BNG, the landowner must prove that the units created are **in addition** to those that are created for another nature market. More information on stacking is available [here](#).

3.10.3.2. Additionality

If you're creating or enhancing habitat as part of your development, you may be able to count this towards your BNG.

You can still do this if the habitat required for your development is to:

- comply with a statutory obligation or policy, for example green infrastructure, environmental impact assessment (EIA) compensation or sustainable drainage
- provide river basin management plan (RBMP) mitigation and enhancement measures
- provide mitigation or compensation for protected species or sites, for example nutrient mitigation.

If you're also providing off-site mitigation and compensation for protected sites and species, this may count towards your BNG. You should do at least 10% of your BNG through other activities, for example, on-site habitat creation and enhancement. For example, if a development has a baseline score of 10 biodiversity units and needs to achieve a score of 11 units, at least 1 unit should come from separate activities (such as an onsite habitat or the wider market for biodiversity units).

If you're using off-site units, you need to legally secure these for at least 30 years. You must register them before they can count towards your BNG.

You should not count habitat creation or enhancements towards your BNG if you're already required to do this for:

- restocking conditions relating to a tree felling licence or a restocking notice
- marine licensing

- remediation under the environmental damage regulations

3.11. Conservation Covenants and s106 agreements

BNG will be secured through legal agreement, either through a section 106 agreement or through a conservation covenant.

A conservation covenant is an agreement between a landowner and a responsible body, they came into force in September 2022. The latest advice on conservation covenants is available [here](#). Councils can apply to Defra to become a responsible body. It must be stated that it will not be required to have both in place to secure a site – just one of those two options.

A s106 agreements are legal agreements between local planning authorities and developers/landowners as part of the planning permission granting process. Suggested baseline wording for a s106 agreement to secure BNG is available in appendix B. It is important to note that each s106 must be tailored to each individual application.

3.12. Management and Maintenance

3.12.1. Biodiversity Gain Plans

The requirement of schedule 14 (7A) of the Environment Act 2021 is that the development may not begin until a biodiversity gain plan is submitted and approved by the LPA. Developers must clearly demonstrate how net gains will be secured when submitting a planning application via inclusion of a metric calculation for both the pre-development baseline and post-development projection (see section 3.2). A well-thought-out Biodiversity Gain Plan must be submitted by developers, to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. As well as being incorporated into the planning application, these plans must be integral to the proposed scheme or design.

Biodiversity Gain Plans set out the key ecological considerations relevant to the development proposals, the biodiversity management principles for new habitat creation areas and the enhancements that are likely to be achieved. The Environment Act sets out that the biodiversity gain plan should cover:

- How adverse impacts on habitats have been minimised.
- The pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat.
- The post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat.
- The biodiversity value of any offsite habitat provided in relation to the development.
- Any statutory biodiversity credits purchased; plus
- Any further requirements as set out in secondary legislation.

3.12.2. Monitoring and Stewardship

Biodiversity Gain Plans must also set out how BNG will be monitored to ensure its establishment and achievement of 10% uplift over the 30-year period (LPAs have the discretion to go beyond 10% and require a higher percentage BNG if they so choose). This will require commitment to managing the site, through effective stewardship and maintenance. The developer must also submit monitoring reports to the LPAs, and the reports must be checked, and enforcement action taken as required.

Natural England are developing a standard habitat management and monitoring plan template, which the Council will require applicants to use. Monitoring requirements for BNG will be site specific and should be set out within the legal agreement which secures the BNG (conservation covenant, s106, or planning obligation). The body responsible for monitoring must be nominated, and this could be the developer, consultant, landowner, management company or habitat provider [or other, as indicated within the legal agreement].

3.13 Summary of Planning application expectations

The Environment Act 2021 [schedule 14 \(7a\)](#) states that “grants of planning permission in England are to be subject to a condition to secure that the biodiversity gain objective is met”. Paragraph 2(1) states “the biodiversity gain objective is met in relation to development for which planning permission is granted if the biodiversity value attributable to the development exceeds the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat by at least the relevant percentage [10%+]”. The general condition paragraph 13(2) is that a biodiversity gain plan must be submitted and approved by the local planning authority. This plan must include a metric calculation demonstrating how a minimum of 10% gain will be delivered.

Therefore, development should only be permitted for major developments where a BNG of **a minimum of 10%** is demonstrated [through a metric calculation] and secured in perpetuity for at least 30 years. (LPAs have the discretion to go beyond 10% and require a higher percentage BNG if they so choose). Planning applications need to be submitted with the following (the following list of requirements are to be confirmed as further guidance is released):

- A Biodiversity Metric calculation (the current Biodiversity Metric published by DEFRA), completed by a competent person (as defined by BS 8683:2021) and which clearly indicates the percentage change in biodiversity value from the baseline to the post development units. The metric calculation must be undertaken pre-development before any site clearance or habitat management work has been completed.
- A biodiversity gain plan^[1], which must include as a minimum:
 - information not captured in the biodiversity metric tool such as species factors and habitat management and monitoring plans.
 - how the 10-biodiversity net gain good practice principles have been followed.

Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance

- how wider benefits to biodiversity have been incorporated into the development.
- Including the aforementioned metric calculation.
- Details of how the biodiversity net gains will be managed and maintained for a period of at least 30 years.
- GIS layers pre and post development.
- Any offsite habitats created or enhanced are well located to maximise opportunities for local nature recovery.

DM Officers, in consultation with specialist Officers or ecology consultants, will review the information submitted in relation to BNG, including the biodiversity metric calculations. The Council will be looking for evidence of sound ecological principles and good outcomes for nature and not just the percentage BNG. The Council will challenge proposed habitat interventions when proposed habitats are too small to be ecologically functional; or are unlikely to be deliverable given the site characteristics; or conflict with national guidance on BNG.

For applications where the baseline biodiversity value is negligible/zero, it is recommended to calculate any biodiversity unit gains as a numerical unit value as opposed to a percentage.

Where external expertise is required to review and validate the biodiversity gain plan or other ecological reports submitted with the application, which may be the case for larger or complex applications, applicants may be requested to reimburse the Council. Arrangements for this will be discussed at the pre-application stage and may subsequently be secured through a Planning Performance Agreement.

^[1] The biodiversity gain plan is referred to in the Environment Act. Where the Government has published a template, this should be used.

3.14 BNG Process Flow Charts

Essex Planning Authorities are currently awaiting secondary legislation to be released by Defra and so the process flow charts below have been based on the information we currently have about the BNG planning process for both developers and LPAs.

Pre-development biodiversity value must be calculated before any site clearance or other habitat management work has been undertaken, by the applicants or anybody else. It should be noted that the baseline for habitats on any site proposed for development will be taken as 30 January 2020.

Involves submitting BNG information alongside application for planning permission. If planning authority is satisfied with application, planning permission will be granted subject to BNG conditions.

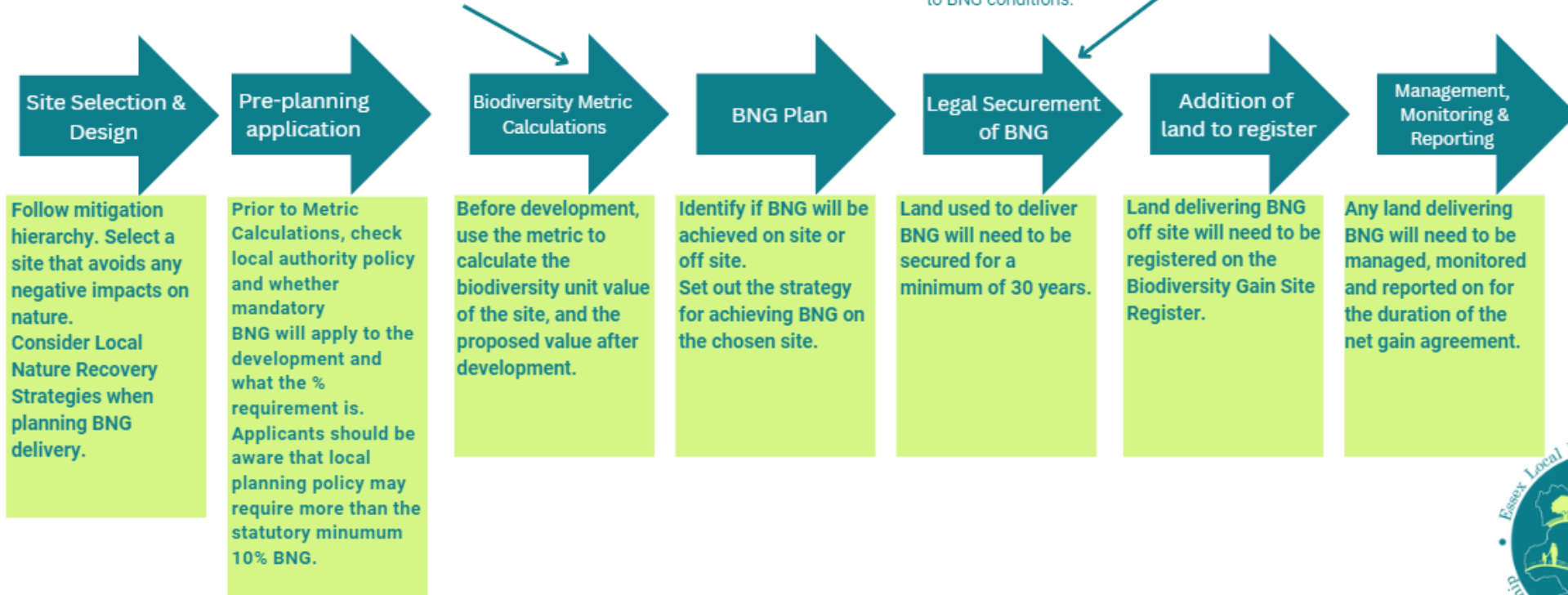


Figure 1. “How does BNG work?” flow diagram. Featured in the BNG Guidance pack created by the BNG working group within the Essex Local Nature Partnership. The flow diagram begins at “Site Selection & Design” and ends at “Management, Monitoring and Reporting.”

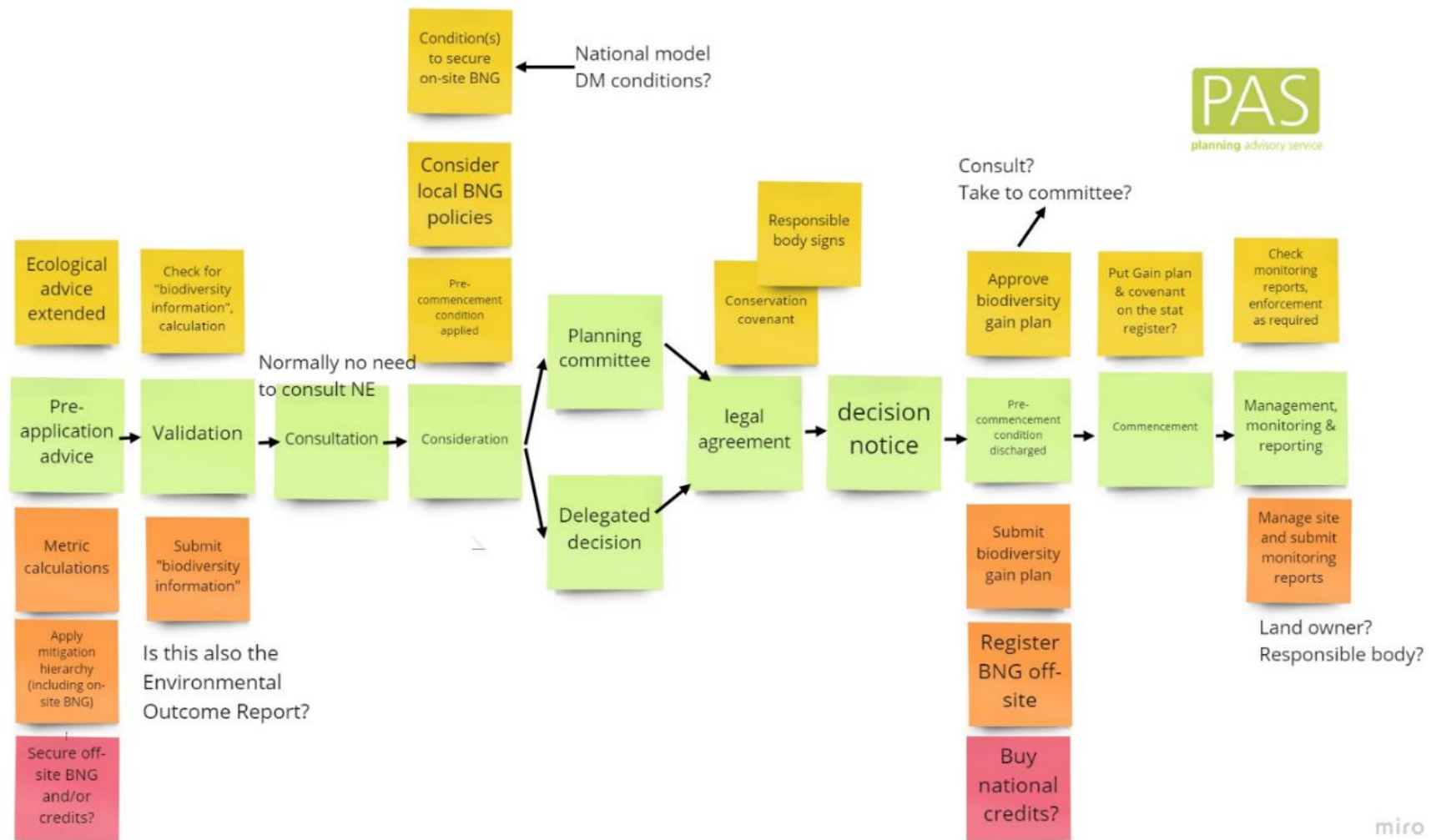


Figure 2. PAS flow diagram of planning application process with biodiversity net gain (once mandatory) based on current understanding (Yellow = LPA Activities, Orange / Red = developer activities). <https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/topics/environment/biodiversity-net-gain-local-authorities/biodiversity-net-gain-development>

The BNG Best Practice Process Flow produced by Future Homes Hub and PAS should also be consulted for reference by developers and LPAs: https://irp.cdn-website.com/bdbb2d99/files/uploaded/0180_862%20BNG%20BestPracticeProcessFlow-Option4CRev2023-04-21.pdf

The following link provides CIEEMS BNG and ecological impact assessment process in development projects diagram: <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/CIEEM-BNG-Report-and-Audit-templates2.pdf>

The following elements are important to consider as key parts of the process for Local Planning Authorities:

Pre-Application / Baseline Stage

- Habitat survey:
 - All habitat info in UK Habitat classification system (not JNCC Phase 1 Habitat Survey or translation from)
 - Habitat condition assessments
 - Digitised habitat data to produce detailed and clear GIS maps and BNG data
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEAR)
- Protected species surveys
- BNG Feasibility Report with Baseline Habitat Plan
- Ecological Constraints and Opportunities Plan

Decision-Making / Planning Application Stage

- Ecological Impact Assessment
- BNG Design Stage Report:
 - Full metric (in Excel, not a printout of headline results)
 - Full habitat condition assessment data (assessment sheets or equivalent evidence/notes)
 - Baseline Habitat Plan
 - Proposed Habitats Plan
 - BNG Implementation Plan
 - Steps taken to minimise adverse biodiversity impacts / mitigation hierarchy followed
 - Off-site gain details

Implementation / Post Planning Stage

- Biodiversity Gain Plan (can be submitted with application, must be submitted before commencement)
- Implement all other biodiversity measures - EPS licences, habitat/species mitigation etc.
- Habitat restoration/enhancement/creation
- (Habitat) Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP)
- BNG Audit Report at project completion stage

4.0. Local Nature Recovery

4.1. Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS') are a system of spatial strategies for nature and environmental improvement required by law under the Environment Act 2021. The main purpose of LNRS' is to identify locations to create or improve habitat most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment. The LNRS will set out habitats, and the species they support, that are priorities for habitat creation and enhancement measures in the strategy area.

Essex County Council (ECC) have been appointed as the responsible authority to deliver the Essex LNRS on behalf of Greater Essex. 48 LNRSs together will cover the whole of England, with no gaps and no overlaps. This lays the foundation of the England wide NRN.

The Environment Act 2021 establishes two mechanisms to support the delivery of local nature recovery strategies (LNRS): mandatory BNG and a strengthened biodiversity duty on public authorities. Mandatory BNG is one of the key mechanisms to support the implementation of LNRSs. The LNRS will identify where action to achieve net gain will have the most impact for nature recovery and will encourage action in these locations through the way net gain is calculated. LNRS' will be used to target offsite BNG so that it contributes to the NRN. LNRSs can be used to determine the 'strategic significance' score that is part of the biodiversity metric calculation. The 'strategic significance' score is a landscape scale factor, which gives additional unit value to habitats that are located in preferred locations for biodiversity and other environmental objectives. In summary, the biodiversity metric will favour sites that have been highlighted as opportunities within the LNRS.

The development of the LNRS in Essex will be a collaborative effort, bringing together partners from all sectors to support the delivery of a strategy that truly reflects the priorities for nature in Essex, and the local level knowledge needed to produce the strategy. ECC are working with multiple partners from across the public, private and voluntary sectors, to create the strategy. Landowners and Farmers are critical to the development of the LNRS, as they will be able to identify potential opportunity areas for nature recovery and off-site BNG delivery.

LNRSs will be reviewed and republished, approx. every 3-10 years. The announcement of the review will be announced by Secretary of State, this means that all LNRSs across England will be updated at the same time. When LNRS' are updated, they should present what actions for nature have been undertaken and map where actions have been taken, since the strategy was last published. To do this, the Responsible Authority (Essex County Council) will use sources of information including the biodiversity gain site register, to show where BNG has been delivered off-site in Essex, following the last LNRS review.

4.2 Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Planning

Public authorities who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This is the strengthened ‘biodiversity duty’ that the Environment Act 2021 introduced. This means that, as a public authority, you must:

- Consider what you can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on your consideration
- Act to deliver your policies and achieve your objectives

Once LNRS’ are published, public authorities will need to understand how they can contribute to them. LNRS guidance, released by DEFRA March 2023, states that all public authorities should have regard to relevant LNRS’ under the strengthened biodiversity duty. The government will be providing separate guidance to explain what this means in practice. The expectation is that LNRS’ will be used to help inform how and where BNG should be delivered, i.e., which habitats are appropriate in which locations.

There will be an interim period between BNG becoming a legal requirement in November 2023, and the creation of LNRS’. Local authorities are advised to use local strategies to inform offsite BNG targeting prior to the implementation of the LNRS, such as green space strategies and biodiversity opportunity mapping. The availability and type of strategies available varies locally according to what activity and policy making has been taken forward by local authorities, non-governmental organisations, and other agencies.

The Biodiversity Metric 4.0 User Guide states that if an LNRS has not been published, the relevant consenting body or planning authority may specify alternative plans, policies or strategies to use. Alternative plans, policies or strategies must specify suitable locations for habitat retention, habitat creation and or enhancements, and might, for example, be:

- Local Plans and Neighbourhood plans
- LPA Local Ecological Networks
- Tree Strategies
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans
- Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs)
- Species and protected sites conservation strategies
- Woodland strategies
- GI Strategies
- River Basin Management Plans
- Catchment Plans and Catchment Planning Systems
- Shoreline management plans
- Estuary Strategies

If no alternative is specified, agreement should be sought from the consenting body or LPA when determining strategic significance.

5.0 Delivery of BNG through other policy areas

BNG Delivery should also be considered in combination with the delivery of other key policy areas. This will help to achieve multiple benefits across the Local Planning Authority for people, and for nature. For example:

- Green Infrastructure – use of the National GI Framework and Essex GI Standards can help developers to utilise best practice GI, which will also contribute towards improved biodiversity (and therefore BNG).
- Flood risk planning and Sustainable Drainage Systems
- Economic Development
- Health and Wellbeing
- Housing and Development
- Accessibility to Green Space
- Renewable Energy
- Planning for Climate Change

Biodiversity Net Gain Summary

BNG is about enhancing existing habitats and creating new habitats – species will come if the habitat is right. Biodiversity units are not a full representation of ecological value but are used to provide a quantification of a loss, no net loss, or a net gain in biodiversity as a result of development. All proposals must follow the mitigation hierarchy: avoid, mitigate, and compensate in addition to the requirement to deliver a minimum of 10% BNG (LPAs have the discretion to go beyond 10% and require a higher percentage BNG if they so choose). Proposals should demonstrate biodiversity enhancement by delivering wider benefits in addition to the units, such as delivering species enhancements set out in other SPDs and by delivering the aims of the LNRS.

Appendix 1 Glossary

Term	Description
Additionality	The concept that BNG must be ‘additional’ to any measures or obligations to mitigate a scheme’s biodiversity impacts.
Biodiversity Gain Plan	This plan must be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority as a condition of planning permission. Its required contents are described in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Schedule 7 Section 14.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	An approach to development, land and marine management that leaves biodiversity in a measurably better state than before the development took place. This is additional to existing habitats and species protections.
Biodiversity Net Gain Metric	A biodiversity accounting tool, using habitats, that can be used to calculating the measurable BNG requirement. It is used to calculate pre and post development values to assess whether the net gain target has been met.
Biodiversity gain site register	A publicly accessible register of biodiversity net gain sites where such sites are allocated to a development for which planning permission has been granted. The register is operated by Natural England.
Biodiversity units	These are given for post development biodiversity net gain measures, these can be onsite, offsite, or as a last resort, statutory credits can be purchased.
CIRIA	Construction Industry Research and Information Association
Conservation covenant	An agreement between a landowner and a responsible body). As defined in the Environment Act 2021 (Part 7 Section 117)
ECC	Essex County Council
Green Infrastructure	A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity. (NPPF 2023)
Irreplaceable habitats	Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket

	bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen (NPPF 2023).
Nature Recovery Network	Nature Recovery Network: An expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. It includes the existing network of protected sites and other wildlife rich habitats as well as and landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats. (NPPF 2023)
Local Nature Partnership	A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, established for the purpose of protecting and improving the natural environment in an area and the benefits derived from it (NPPF 2023)
Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)	The required contents of this strategy are set out in the Environment Act 2021. It must include a statement of biodiversity priorities and a local habitat map for the strategy area. It should include a description of the opportunities for recovering or enhancing biodiversity, and proposals as to potential measures relating to those priorities.
Mitigation Hierarchy	The principle that environmental harm resulting from a development should be avoided, mitigated adequately or, as a last resort, compensated for.
National Character Area Profile	Natural England have defined areas across England which share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries. Braintree District falls within No 86. South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland.
Onsite and offsite BNG	Onsite BNG refers to land within the boundary of a project as defined the planning application red line. Offsite BNG refers to outside this line.
PAS	Planning Advisory Service
Priority Habitats and Species	Priority habitats and species: Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NPPF 2023)
Small sites	For residential: where the number of dwellings to be provided is between one and nine inclusive on a site having an area of less than one hectare, or where the number of dwellings to be provided is not known, a site area of less than 0.5ha

	<p>For non-residential: where the floor space to be created is less than 1,000 square metres OR where the site area is less than one hectare.</p> <p>BNG for small sites will not come into force until April 2024</p>
Small sites Metric	A simplified version of the Biodiversity Metric is designed specifically for small development sites (see small sites)
Spatial risk multiplier	Habitat creation is incentivised by creating more Biodiversity units per area if biodiversity units are created within the same Local Authority area or National Character Area
Species factors and habitat management and monitoring plans.	<p>A habitat management and monitoring plan (HMMP) is a detailed plan that outlines how the land will be managed over at least 30 years to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create and enhance habitats for biodiversity net gain (BNG) • manage and monitor the BNG
Stacking	Biodiversity units and nutrient credits can be sold from the same piece of land by stacking them. Units and credits can be sold to the same developer or different developers, provided the eligibility criteria for each market is met. (DEFRA Guidance Aug 2023).
Strategic Significance Multiplier	Certain sites, locations, and habitats are given a higher value and therefore allocated higher biodiversity units based on their strategic significance.
Statutory credit scheme	A last resort scheme for purchasing credits where these cannot be bought on or off the site.
Temporal Risk	Time taken for a created or enhanced habitat to reach target condition
UK Habitat Classification system	A standard classification of UK and European Habitats (UKHab).
Watercourse biodiversity units	Linear habitats, as measured in kilometres within Biodiversity metric 4. They are calculated separately from and cannot be combined with or mitigated by area based habitats.