



Biodiversity Net Gain

What is Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)?

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is an approach to development, and/or land management, that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand.

Biodiversity net gain delivers measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development.

BNG is already required through national planning policy in England and Wales, and can be achieved on-site, off-site or through a combination of on-site and off-site measures.

What does Biodiversity Net Gain look like?

‘Development often results in impacts on, and losses of, nature.

By reinforcing and complementing the mitigation hierarchy, mandatory BNG requires development to deliver more for nature; setting a requirement to increase biodiversity by a minimum of 10% compared to the baseline.

This means that there will be more and better-quality places for wildlife to live and thrive and for people to enjoy’. ([Natural England BNG Brochure](#)).



Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain and the Environment Act 2021

Under the [Environment Act 2021](#), all planning permissions granted in England (with a few exemptions) except for small sites will have to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain from January 2024.

BNG will be required for small sites from April 2024.

BNG will be measured using [Defra's biodiversity metric](#) and habitats will need to be secured for at least 30 years. This sits alongside:

- a strengthened legal duty for public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity,
- new biodiversity reporting requirements for local authorities, and
- mandatory spatial strategies for nature: Local Nature Recovery Strategies or 'LNRS'. (see Further Information & Resources section below for more information on Cumbria LNRS).

Biodiversity Net Gain beyond the essentials

BNG is not just about Planning

Many service areas are impacted by BNG within Local Government, and can join up together in relation to BNG.

Climate Emergency

BNG can help mitigate climate change through the restoration and protection of nature. For example, additional woodland creation will help take more carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

BNG delivery can be a way in which local communities can be directly involved in climate related adaptation projects, including tree planting and maintenance.

BNG can help communities adapt to climate change by increasing resilience to extremes of weather, including heatwaves and flooding.

People and Places

BNG can create more attractive places in which to live and work, contributing towards **place-making**.

BNG can finance investment in new or existing **green infrastructure** and **nature-based solutions**, enhancing the resilience of our towns, cities, coasts and infrastructure.

It enables us to better adapt to climate change whilst contributing towards corporate and government Net Zero targets.

BNG promotes health and wellbeing by creating opportunities for people to connect with nature.

BNG increases natural capital assets, providing green jobs and contributing to sustainable development.

Nature

BNG contributes towards nature recovery by enhancing existing or creating new habitat.

BNG creates and connects habitats in which species can thrive and in doing so can help wildlife adapt to climate change.

BNG can help contribute towards ‘more, bigger, better and joined up’ green and blue networks and deliver priorities for nature set out in **Local Nature Recovery Strategies** or other strategic plans.

Economy

BNG can help to create greener neighbourhoods that are more attractive places to live and work and do business in.

For landowners BNG can create long-term income opportunities through investment in habitat management.

BNG generates sustainable and long term financing for habitat management and maintenance, providing certainty and creating jobs.

Restoring habitats via BNG can act as a **green finance mechanism, delivering wider economic benefits** and increasing financial and natural capital asset values.

BNG will involve local communities, landowners and farmers, especially where delivery of BNG happens off the development site.

Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood Plans provide a great opportunity to enhance both biodiversity and development in your area.

Neighbourhood planning enables communities to play a much stronger role in shaping the areas in which they live and work and in supporting new development proposals.

A neighbourhood plan forms part of the development plan and sits alongside the local plan prepared by the local planning authority.

Decisions on planning applications will be made using both the local plan and the neighbourhood plan, and any other material considerations.

Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be relevant within Local Planning, and should also be taken into account within Neighbourhood Planning.

Further Information & Resources

Name	Details	Link
Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy	<p>Westmorland and Furness Council have received funding from Defra to help develop a tailored nature recovery strategy for Cumbria.</p> <p>This latest funding will allow the council to build on the success of the Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy pilot developed in 2020.</p> <p>Cumbria LNRS will set out locally agreed priorities and opportunities for nature recovery in written and cartographic form.</p>	Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy - Pilot Scheme
Natural England	Biodiversity Net Gain- An introduction to the benefits	Natural England BNG Brochure
Local Government Association	Planning Advisory Services (PAS) resources to support local authorities moving towards the introduction of mandatory biodiversity net gain.	Local Government Association
Neighbourhood Planning	Gov.uk guidance on Neighbourhood Planning	Neighbourhood Planning Guidance
Land Use team in DEFRA	The Land Use team in Defra. have set up a blog to share progress and insights across the land use policy areas. They work on the Land Use	Defra Land Use Blog

	<p>Framework, Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS), Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), nutrient neutrality, and wider enhancement of the environment through the planning system.</p>	
<p>DEFRA</p>	<p>Information you need for biodiversity net gain (BNG).</p>	<p>Gov.uk</p>
<p>Zero Carbon Cumbria</p>	<p>Farming and other Land use- Underpinned by data from Cumbria's Carbon Baseline Report, the Farming and other Land Use sector group has been formed to create and steer Emissions Reduction Action Plans, in order to achieve Cumbria's ambition of becoming carbon net-zero by 2037.</p>	<p>Sector Group- Farming and other Land use</p>

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