



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Biodiversity Net Gain in Telford & Wrekin

A guide to help developers

April 2026

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Introduction

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a significant change to the planning system. Some have claimed it has been the biggest in England since The Town and Country Planning Act in 1947. The government said it was the largest in decades. Whichever is true, it's very big and very fundamental.

Given the scale of the change, there is a significant amount of BNG information freely available online, with the official source being [government webpages](#). This document does not intend to replace, add to or alter the national framework. Instead, it aims to provide some basic information about BNG, the general processes and local context into how it is being applied within Telford & Wrekin Council.

BNG is certainly complex. Guidance and procedures will vary between sectors, development types, Local Planning Authorities and individual planning applications. Therefore, the government guidance provides more detailed information on the deeper and diverse nature of implementing this legislation. We strongly advise reading and applying this national guidance when considering development of any scale. However, we hope this guide gives you an understanding to help you in your journey.

As with most technical subjects, there is jargon. We have tried to make this document as clear as possible, however some terminology is inevitable. Therefore, we have put a glossary in Appx 3 to help you get up to speed.

We have also included some process flowcharts within the relevant sections and check sheets in Appx 1 to help guide you through your project's BNG.

The Basics

What is BNG?

Biodiversity is the variety of animals, plants and other living things.

BNG is a legal framework introduced by the Environment Act 2021 and supported by a number of statutory instruments. It aims to stop the general loss of biodiversity through development in England and support the delivery of higher quality, better connected ecological networks.

It is only concerned with your site's general habitats and not with any protected species, particularly important habitats (Irreplaceable Habitat, see Appx 3. Glossary) or designations. These must still be addressed separately.

Some developments are legally exempt from BNG. However, they will still be subject to other biodiversity related legislation and planning policies.

To achieve BNG, the biodiversity value of a site is measured before development to establish its baseline. This involves a survey of the types of habitat present such as grassland, woodland, heathland or hedgerow, and a condition assessment for each bit. This results in a numerical value.

A second biodiversity assessment of the post-development site design and landscaping proposals is then carried out to establish the expected biodiversity unit value of your completed development. This uses the same criteria as the baseline assessment and the difference between the two values is your net loss/gain.

There are also "anti-trashing" and other rules in place to make it work and prevent negative outcomes.

The minimum legal increase required from the baseline value by BNG is 10% and maintained for 30 years post completion. However, more is strongly encouraged in Telford and Wrekin.

In most cases, BNG will need to be formally secured. If onsite, often this is via a bespoke legal agreement before you can start on site. This agreement will set out how you will deliver and monitor your number of units, as well as enforcement clauses and how the costs are met for the organisation you are legally securing them with.

As BNG is a legal requirement the framework is robustly rooted in legislation, knowing how to navigate it and thinking ahead will stop you hitting an avoidable brick wall or an expensive detour.

Before you go any further – is your development exempt from BNG?

The legislation sets out a number of exemptions which are explained in more detail in the [BNG Planning Practice Guidance](#) (BNG PPG, especially paragraph 3 & 4). The following are the most common planning applications within the borough that are legally exempt from BNG:

- householder applications
- non-foundational applications (e.g. reserved matters where outline was before BNG applied)
- small self-build/custom residential developments (see below)
- those which fall under the minimum impact threshold (see below)
- those purely for BNG works
- section 73 applications (variation or removal of condition) unless there would be a change in biodiversity value (see below).

The **minimum impact threshold** (de minimis) applies where **both**:

- no priority habitat is harmed, and
- any habitat harmed (which scores more than 0 on the metric) totals less than 25m² of area habitat or 5m of hedgerows or watercourses.

The **small self-build and custom build exemption** stands if **all** of the following apply:

- if there are less than 10 dwellings
- the total site is less than 0.5ha, and
- it is entirely self-build or custom residential development, meeting the exact definition under section 1 (A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act (2015)

Section 73 (including 73A) permissions are generally exempt. However, if any conditions attached to the new planning permission, granted under section 73, do affect the post-development biodiversity value, then a Biodiversity Gain Plan for the new permission must be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of the permission.

If you are exempt, you must state this and explain why on your planning application form.

Not exempt? Here is our very best advice for you

The legislation and national system sets out milestones which must be adhered to. Beyond the baseline state of your site, much of the information legally required must be submitted after you get planning permission. This is via the statutory condition, which is implied on all planning permissions. Be aware that LPAs are not allowed to insert this condition on decision notices, but must enforce it.

There are sound reasons for this, as many of the fine details of aspects like landscaping are only finalised at this stage. However, in practice when developers do not consider how they will address their BNG, until the relevant legal step finally arrives, they find themselves with unforeseen problems. These can be expensive or impossible to resolve, sometimes preventing the approved development from taking place.

The developers who have saved money, time and made BNG work for their schemes have worked through the implications from site selection and early design onwards.

It cannot be overstate enough; **consider what you have onsite and how you are going to resolve your BNG from day 1.**

Our [Ecology Team undertakes private consultancy work for developers](#), as well as statutory LPA duties. After a year helping developers through BNG, here are some tips from the Ecology Team which it would be very wise to take up to get the best for your project and not end up at an impasse after you are granted planning permission:

Five top tips to 'succeed at BNG'

1. Get your baseline metric (and other ecological assessments) done **early** to inform your initial design process. Avoiding harm to your most valuable habitats will save you money and problems.
2. Design your site to ensure your 10% BNG is **integrated into your other open space functions** (e.g. drainage, access and recreation) and delivered, as far as possible, on site. This will help you pass policy tests and is generally more cost effective.
3. Know your BNG **processes and the costs** of delivering & monitoring your BNG to save money and prevent problems over the next 30 years.
4. Get an indicative post-development metric completed to check your net gain balance and **test your viability**. You may need to adjust your red line boundary to get best results e.g. excluding high-value areas on the edges which will not be changed and including enough low-value areas to enhance.
5. Know how you want to legally **secure** your BNG long before you get permission and inform the council as soon as possible in order to reduce legal costs and delays.

Early actions for success

The best approach

Two key things to think about before you start:

- BNG is a legal requirement and there is no exception for viability.
- Most problems can be avoided by taking the right path.

Every site is different and it is likely that each bit of your site will have a different biodiversity value. So, understand what is there and work with it.

Therefore, at least get an indicative baseline survey done early, ideally before purchase and certainly before you start looking at ideas for layout.

If you are not exempt from BNG, you must submit your baseline metric and map with your planning application for it to be registered. It is not valid without them and it will be rejected.

However, if you only know what you have at this point, your scheme may have already started down a very difficult and expensive path, or you will have to backtrack and have wasted money on your planning to date.

We would advise the same for your other required ecological and technical surveys.

Your scheme is likely to be able to stack functions like recreation, drainage and general amenity landscaping onto your post-development onsite BNG. So plan ahead to identify how you can integrate it into your development in smart ways, to maximise your site's efficient use of space and BNG score.

There is a design flowchart below and we have put checklists in Appx 1 to help you plan your tasks.

So what is a biodiversity metric?

They are official Excel spreadsheets that do a lot of the standardised calculations for you.

As outlined above, developments will need to measure the amount of biodiversity present before development, through a formal assessment of the habitats present. Some habitats are less common or contain more species than others. Therefore, all habitats are graded into bands of "Habitat Distinctiveness". Those in higher bands and in better condition will get more "Biodiversity Units" than others. Biodiversity Units are effectively the standard set of unit of values for BNG.

Another value that is inputted into the strategic significance of your habitat areas. At the pre-development, baseline assessment stage, habitats present on site are allocated a low strategic significance. Post-development, low strategic significance is again given to all interventions, unless they are the recommended habitat actions, in specific locations, as set out by the Shropshire Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

Developments can use this to increase the amount of units generated in the same physical area. Strategic significance is discussed further in Appx 2.

There is a standard process for surveying, mapping and assessing habitats for BNG. The results of these feed into one of two official spreadsheets (the Statutory Metric or the Statutory Small Sites' Metric). These metrics calculate your unit values.

The [metrics and their user guides](#) are freely available to download and are the only ones valid for planning applications. There are a number of rules and principles to follow, however the Metrics help guide you through a number of these.

BNG is not just about the numbers

The rules of BNG do not allow a development just to wipe a site clean and pay someone, somewhere else, to offset their impacts. There are a series of checks and balances in policy and metric to control this.

The LPA is required to make sure these rules and principles are adhered to, based on the standardised information you have to provide and that which we already have.

The following diagram aims to explain habitat distinctiveness and some of the rules around the biodiversity gain hierarchy (which will be explained further below). It also shows how some, but not all, habitats can be exchanged (traded) with those of the same or higher distinctiveness.

However, one basic rule to be aware of is that there are three types of units; Area, Hedgerow and Watercourse. These are completely separate and cannot be interchanged.

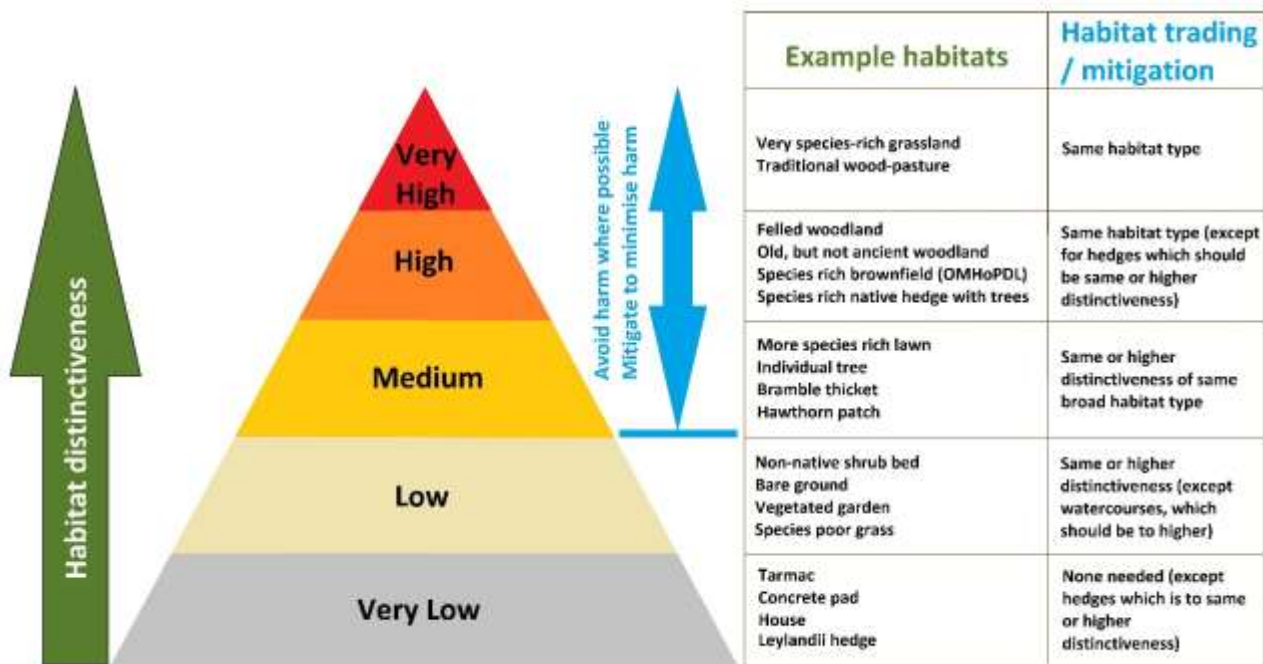


Diagram 1. Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy and trading rules

The biodiversity gain hierarchy is a material planning consideration. It sets out a number of required steps, in order, to minimise damage to your site's ecology.

It mandates that any habitat in your metric which is categorised as Medium distinctiveness or higher, starts at step 1 and habitat categorised as Low or Very Low starts at step 3:

1. **Avoid** harm
2. **Mitigate** harm
3. **Enhance** existing onsite habitats
4. **Create** new onsite habitats
5. Create/buy registered **offsite** units
6. Purchase of biodiversity **credits**

You will need to justify how you have followed this hierarchy in your Gain Plan which we will look at in more detail below.

If your habitat on site has been intentionally damaged since 30th January 2020, in a way which reduces its biodiversity units, through activities not covered by any planning permission, you must discuss this with the LPA. You will need to agree with us your baseline date for your Metric, which must reflect the conditions on site before this happened.

Please be aware, without solid evidence to prove its value, the [BNG PPG](#) requires LPAs to presume any degraded habitat had the highest biodiversity units reasonably supported by the evidence available. So if you, or the previous land owner, cleared an area, this may become an issue.

Checking aerial photographs of your site from 2019 onwards is one of steps we must take in deciding your application. So it is important to do the same before you buy a site, so you are not left with an expensive problem!

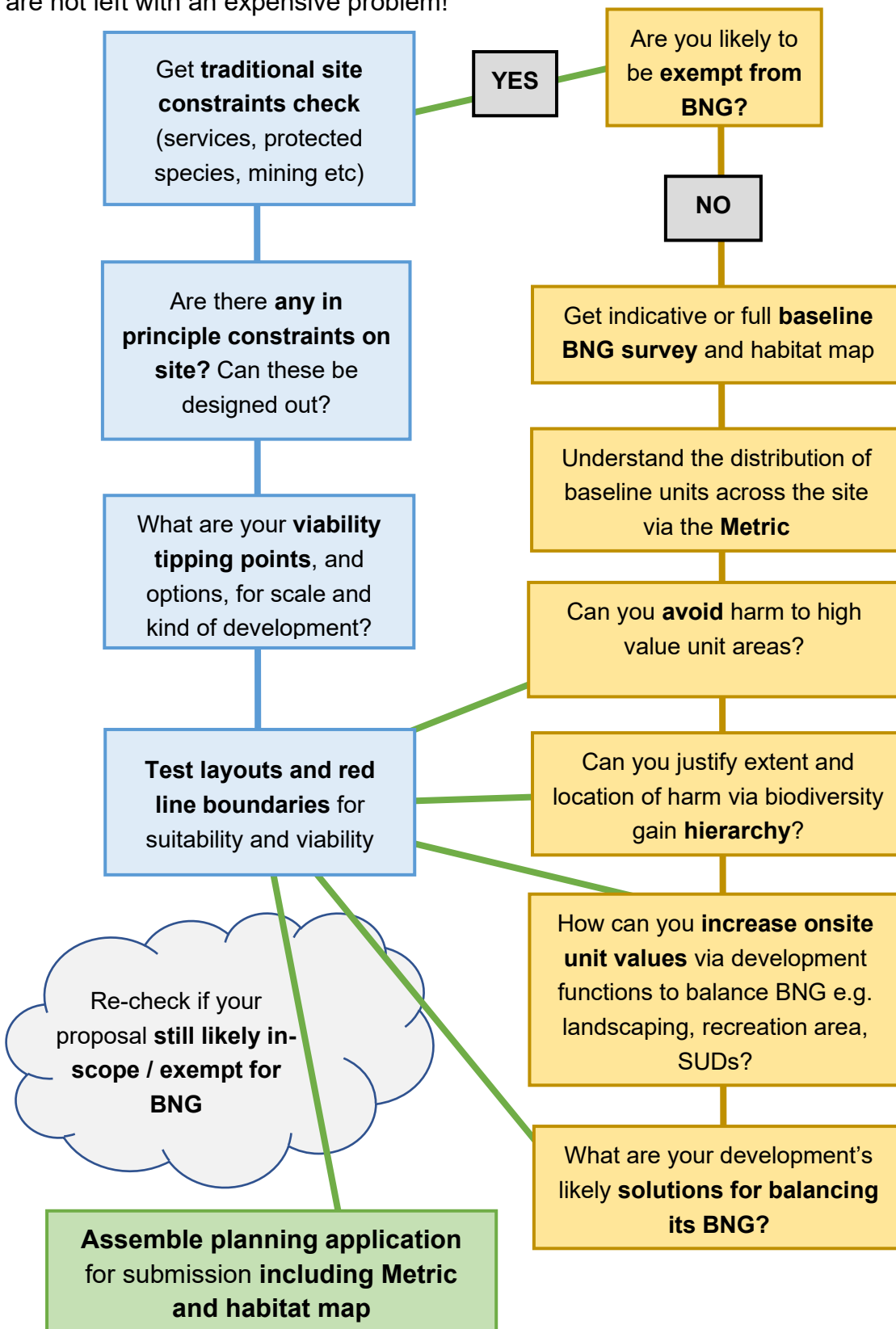


Diagram 2. BNG and your design process

Getting your plans agreed

Formally detailing and agreeing your BNG delivery before you start work on site

As discussed above, you are advised to scope out your BNG delivery early. If you can't fit your minimum BNG onsite, you will have to justify and explore offsite units or biodiversity credits. We will discuss these below.

Offsite units can be more expensive and biodiversity credits are intentionally even more so. Therefore, knowing your balance and methods of delivery will let you check your viability before it's too late. However, legally you don't have to submit your final balance to the LPA until you discharge your pre-commencement statutory BNG condition.

This part of BNG has caused a lot of confusion amongst developers to date, so we will provide an overview here and then dive into some of the fundamental detail that you will need to be familiar with, later in the document.

The statutory Biodiversity Gain Condition is a pre-commencement condition and legally implied. We are not allowed to repeat it on your decision notice.

You still need to formally apply to have it discharged and an LPA has to take enforcement action against you if it is not.

The statutory condition requires you to formally submit a Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP). This document is where you state how you:

- Will meet your BNG balance onsite, offsite and/or via biodiversity credits
- Justify having followed the rules and principles, including the Biodiversity Hierarchy
- If you need to legally secure your units for 30yrs and, if so, how
- Will make sure they are delivered, maintained and monitored for the 30yrs.

There are [standard BGP templates](#) for this and we request that you use them. Deviating from them can cause you avoidable complications and delays.

As part of your Biodiversity Gain Plan you will be required to submit a fully completed Biodiversity Metric and habitat maps which show your baseline from the application and the post-development values you are committing to.

We will discuss this in more detail below, but most developments which have to deliver BNG, will also require a [Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan](#) (HMMP) which sets out the practical methods and arrangements for ensuring the units will be delivered successfully over your 30yr period. Again, there are [standard HMMP templates](#) for this which we strongly recommend you use for the same reasons.

If you need to submit a HMMP, with regard to monitoring, we are expecting it to be carried out and submitted in years 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 following completion of your habitat enhancement and/or creation.

It is important to know we will need to be confident you can deliver your Biodiversity Gain Plan (including where appropriate HMMP and legally secure, maintain and monitor the success of your units) **before** we can discharge your pre-commencement condition.

Getting a recipe that works for your site

As outlined above, you need to justify your split of BNG provision in your BGP, based on the hierarchy. You also need to ensure it is appropriately legally secured.

You are strongly advised, as early in the process as possible, to decide, or at least scope out:

1. If your BNG is going to be delivered **onsite**, **offsite** and/or via **biodiversity credits**.
2. If any onsite enhancements are “**significant**”.

Understanding this will dictate your success and viability. The following information should help you unpick the considerations and decide.

Onsite, offsite, statutory biodiversity credits, or a mixture of these?

Although your final Gain Plan is only approved via condition, after you have planning permission, the implications will affect your layout and viability. Therefore, it is wise to work this through early in your design process. Details of this are in the [BNG PPG](#), especially para 8.

Your steps are as follows:

1. It is expected that you will achieve as much as possible **onsite** i.e. within your red line boundary.
2. If you can't deliver all your BNG onsite, the next option is to deliver those remaining via **offsite units**. These can be gained from a third party supplier or on any land you own outside of your red line boundary. Offsite units are expected to be from within the borough or evidence should be provided to clarify why this is not possible. If the offsite units are from other land you own, you must first set up a habitat bank. This is a separate process to the planning application and will also incur fees via entering into a bespoke legal agreement with either the council or a third party “Responsible Body” (see glossary). If your supply of units is low, this may not be an economically viable option for you.
3. If you are unable to secure offsite units, your final option is the government's **biodiversity credits**. You need to provide evidence of why you can't use on or

offsite solutions before they will sell them to you. They are also intentionally expensive to be only used as a matter of last resort.

Are your onsite enhancements significant or non-significant?

This seems an odd distinction, but it has big implications for your project. Unfortunately, it is usually not the most straightforward decision, so the national definitions are included below.

However to understand the definitions, first you will need to know some BNG terms from your biodiversity metric including:

Distinctiveness; as discussed above, this is a measure of how ecologically important a particular habitat type is. The value is assigned automatically by the metric for each habitat recorded on your site.

Habitat condition; this is a measure of how good an example of that habitat type you have is. This is determined by your ecological survey and entered into the metric.

The [government define](#) a **significant enhancement** as follows:

“Significant enhancements are areas of habitat enhancement which contribute significantly to the proposed development’s BNG, relative to the biodiversity value before development. Retention of existing habitat does not count as an on-site enhancement. What counts as a significant enhancement will vary depending on the scale of development and existing habitat, but these would normally be:

- *habitats of **medium or higher distinctiveness** in the biodiversity metric*
- *habitats of **low distinctiveness which create a large number of biodiversity units** relative to the biodiversity value of the site before development*
- *habitat creation or enhancement where **distinctiveness is increased** relative to the distinctiveness of the habitat before development*
- *areas of habitat creation or enhancement which are **significant in area** relative to the size of the development*
- ***enhancements to habitat condition**, for example from poor or moderate to good”*

With regards to these the government states:

*“The maintenance of these significant enhancements **must be secured with a legal agreement (planning obligation or conservation covenant) or planning condition for 30 years** in the same way as off-site gains. LPAs will consider the most appropriate mechanism and this will need to be agreed at the planning permission stage.”*

Conversely, they define **non-significant enhancements** as:

*“Non-significant enhancements are **habitat enhancements whose loss will not significantly decrease the development’s biodiversity value**. They should still be included in your metric calculations.*

*Examples could include private gardens which have a low distinctiveness value, or container planting. These enhancements do not normally require maintenance provisions, so for non-significant enhancements, **you do not need to have an HMMP, legal agreement or commitment to maintain them for 30 years.**”*

So as a rule of thumb, if they are medium distinctiveness or above, you are improving their level of distinctiveness or condition and/or it’s a substantial amount of your total unit uplift or area, the onsite enhancement is probably “significant” and you must:

- have them legally secured either with the council (through a bespoke s106), or with a responsible body (via a Conservation Covenant).
- produce a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP).
- manage and monitor the habitats for a minimum of 30 years once works have been completed.
- submit your monitoring reports either to the council or responsible body over the 30yrs so they can check you are still on track, or if needed take enforcement action against you.

You will probably need to cover the costs of the council, or responsible body, for their involvement with regard to legal costs, reviewing your monitoring reports and/or enforcement action.

Exploring the five pathways to deliver and secure your BNG

So, there are two types of onsite enhancements, two sources of offsite units and a statutory credit option. You will need to choose which method/s your development is going to use to deliver its BNG commitment, and appropriately secure them, before you can start your development:

1. Onsite

- 1a Non-significant enhancement only
- 1b Including some significant enhancement

2. Offsite

- 2a **On land you do not control**, outside of the red line boundary, via a 3rd party habitat bank
- 2b **On land you control**, outside of the red line boundary, that you secure as a habitat bank

3. Biodiversity Credits

These options are explored in the diagram and more detail below.

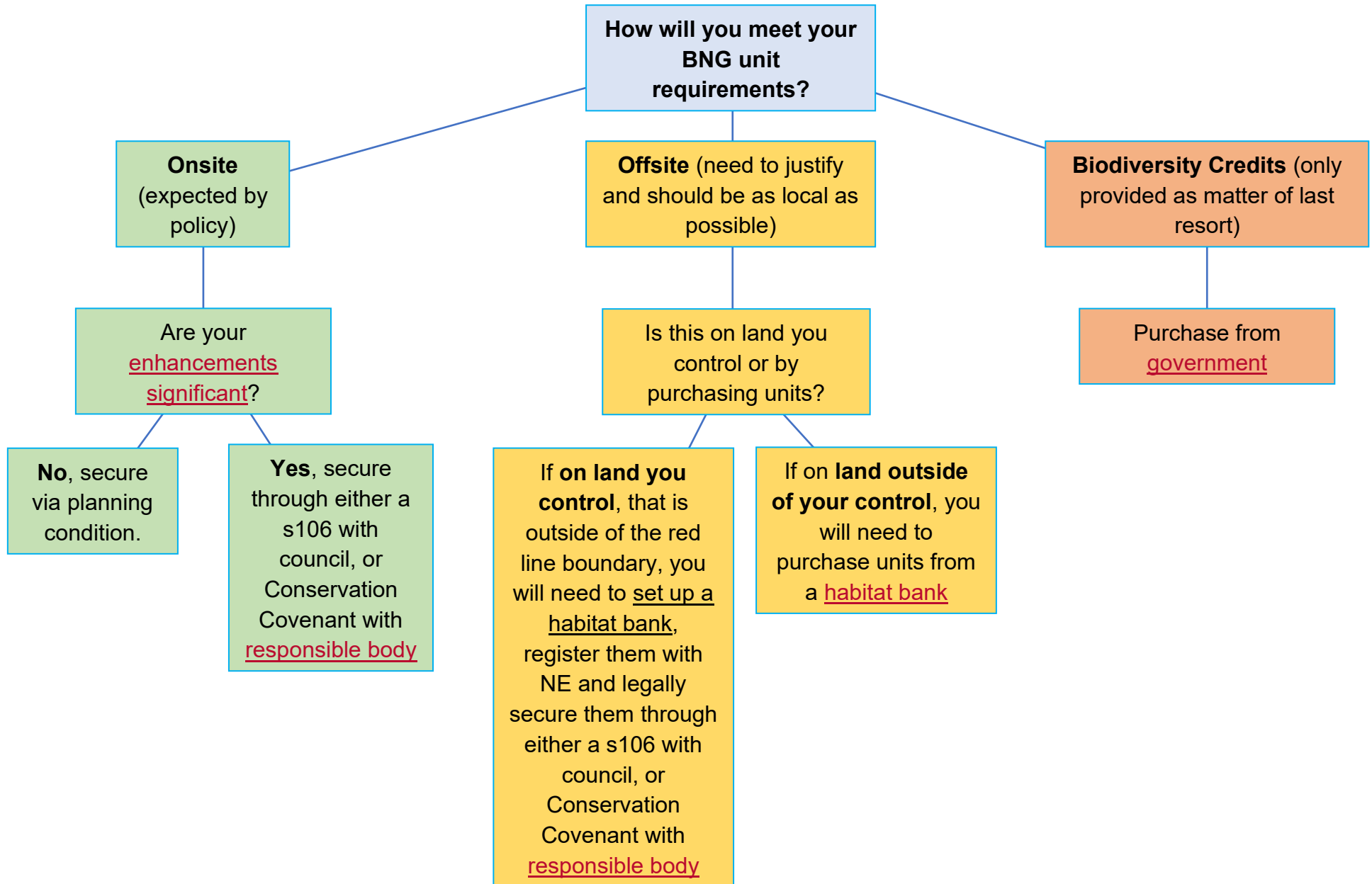


Diagram 3. Options for BNG delivery

1a. Onsite (non-significant enhancement only)

These must be:

- Set out in your Gain Plan and completed metric, submitted after you have had your planning permission, but before you start work.
- Managed for 30yrs at the value you agreed.

If you do not, the council can take enforcement action due to non-compliance with the statutory biodiversity gain condition.

1b. Onsite (including some significant enhancement)

These must be:

- Set out in your Gain Plan, completed metric and HMMP, submitted after you have had your planning permission, but before you start work.
- Legally secured either with the council or a responsible body.
- Managed for 30yrs at the value you agreed.
- Monitored as set out in your legal agreement and reports sent to be reviewed by council or responsible body.

If the above are not complied with, the council or responsible body can take enforcement action due to non-compliance with the legal agreement. The council can also take some enforcement action from non-compliance with the statutory condition.

The legal agreement is likely to set out how you will pay the costs of the council or responsible body over the 30yrs.

2a. Offsite (via a 3rd party habitat bank)

You must buy, or at least have confirmation that purchase is agreed with no impediment, and include the details in your gain plan before we can discharge your planning condition. The Council will need evidence of this and will check the national register to make sure they are genuine and the units are allocated accordingly.

The responsibility for delivering and monitoring the ecological enhancements is with the habitat bank and enforcement of this is by the council/responsible body that they have a legal agreement with.

2b. Offsite (on other land you control that you have set up as a habitat bank)

You must set your land (which is outside of the red line boundary) up as a habitat bank. This includes:

- Registering the habitat bank land with Natural England
- Creating a completed metric of baseline and uplift
- Writing a HMMP to show how you will achieve the required results
- Making a legal agreement with the habitat bank land's Council or a responsible body.
- Allocate the units you need from your bank site to your development on Natural England's register
- Include the details of the offsite units in your BGP and submit this to the development's LPA
- Carrying out the enhancements, maintaining and monitoring it for 30yrs post completion
- Sending monitoring reports to the habitat bank land's council or responsible body.

If the above are not complied with, the council/responsible body that has the legal agreement with you for the habitat bank can start enforcement action. TWC may also take enforcement action against your development for non-compliance with the statutory condition.

The legal agreement for the habitat bank land is likely to include how you will pay the costs of the council or responsible body over the 30yrs.

Due to economies of scale, this option may be expensive if you only need a small number of units. However, if this is an option you want to explore, please contact us or a responsible body as soon as possible to prevent delays in your project.

3. Biodiversity Credits

This is a system led by government and they have published [guidance on their use](#).

You must:

- get agreement with the council that this is your only option and get this in writing before you starting the purchase process. This may be after planning permission is granted, but before your condition is discharged.
- set out the details of the credits and your justification for using them within the BGP you submit to discharge your planning condition.
- only buy your statutory credits when you can discharge all your other non-BNG pre-commencement planning conditions.

Once agreed, if you do not purchase the credits, the council will take enforcement action against you for non-compliance with the statutory biodiversity gain condition.

Delivering your plans

What happens after you have discharged your BNG condition and the diggers begin to roll?

This will obviously depend on which of the five options you are relying on to deliver your BNG. However, by now you will have worked through most of your decisions and agreed them with the council.

If you have bought third party offsite units or biodiversity credits to cover all your BNG requirements, your obligations have now finished.

This is not the case if you have any units onsite, or are using your own land elsewhere as a habitat bank. You will now need to deliver your commitments agreed within your BGP, HMMP and/or legal agreements for at least 30yrs post-completion.

If you only have non-significant onsite enhancements this will probably be just their general protection and maintenance.

If they are significant or via your own habitat bank you will need to:

- Carry out the enhancement works you have promised to do
- Make sure the habitat works establish successfully
- Maintain via your agreed maintenance schedule
- Monitor your results on the agreed schedule
- Send your monitoring reports to the Council/Responsible Body
- Adapt management to rectify any unexpected failure to meet agreed unit values

The following flowchart aims to summarise the process.

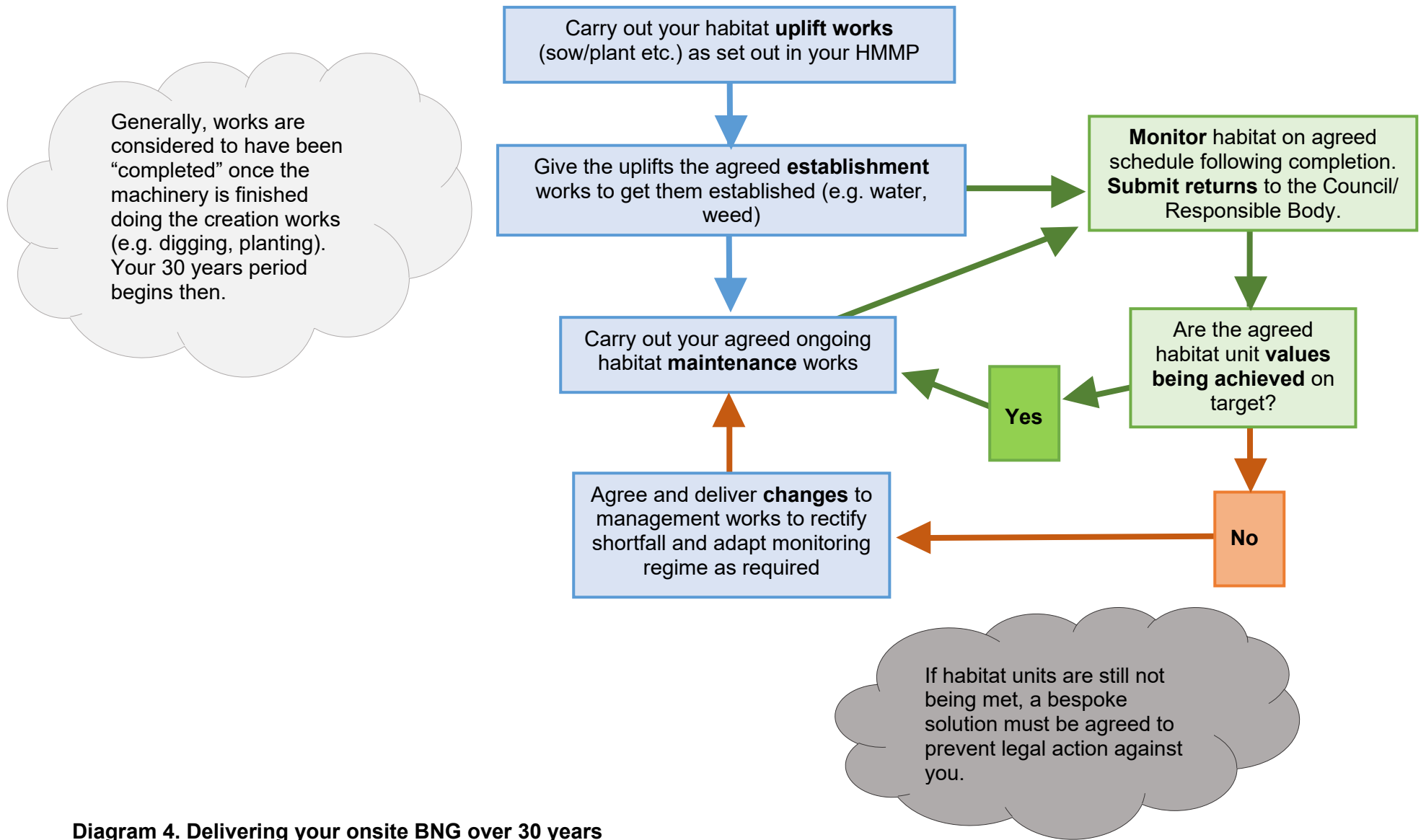


Diagram 4. Delivering your onsite BNG over 30 years

Appendix 1. Checklists

Site purchase to submitting your planning application

Task	
Check if your proposal is exempt from BNG	
Has there been any degradation of habitats (trashing) since 30 th Jan 2020?	
Understand your site's habitats and their biodiversity units (survey, map and metric)	
Know where each of your site's habitats fall under the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy	
Can you use site functions/constraints to retain or create onsite habitat units?	
Design your layout	
Re-check post design to see if development is likely exempt, or not, from BNG	
Tailor red line to include all that is needed, including areas for onsite habitat uplifts and avoid areas that artificially increase your baseline.	
Finalise your biodiversity metric and habitat map based on red line	
Calculate your provisional post-development change in habitat units – Do you meet threshold %?	
Understand how you are likely to need to balance your BNG, including costs of securing these.	
Submit application including metric and habitat map	

Before determination and pre-commencement

Task	
Check impact of any amendments on your post development BNG totals	
Discuss with LPA how you want to secure your BNG units, including via condition and/or s106.	
Finalise your metric based on approved development	
Decide how you are going to meet your minimum BNG %	
Draw up your Biodiversity Gain Plan (and if needed Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan including agreeing ongoing responsibilities for delivery over 30yrs).	
Begin discussions to secure; onsite units, set up a habitat bank (outside of your red line), buy units from a 3 rd party and/or biodiversity credits.	
Submit Biodiversity Gain Plan to discharge statutory condition	
Liaise with LPA when to buy any 3 rd party units and/or biodiversity credits	
Secure all units/credits	

Onwards for 30yrs

Task	
Protect habitat to be retained onsite during construction	
Carry out onsite habitat creation/enhancement landscaping works	
Set up ongoing habitat management arrangements	
Set up ongoing monitoring arrangements	
Ensure monitoring reports go to LPA/Responsible Body on time over 30yrs	
In light of results from monitoring, do management operations need to be adjusted to meet unit values?	

Appendix 2. Local Definitions and Interpretations; Monitoring Report periodicity and Strategic significance

Monitoring Report periodicity

If you are using us to legally secure your habitat units we will require monitoring plans to be submitted to us in years 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 following completion of the habitat enhancement and/or creation. This schedule should be presented in your Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan which will be submitted at condition stage. However, in some ecological circumstances there may need to be a revised timetable, to reflect BNG works on a particular habitat or site. These will need to be agreed with ourselves in advance.

This schedule provides more observation at the start when most of the key establishment is occurring and intervention is most likely to steer your management. Different habitats mature at different rates, however we have chosen this blanket approach for pragmatism, to simplify your monitoring returns.

Strategic significance

This is a factor within the Metric to raise the score of certain habitat improvements within targeted locations. It is designed to incentivise habitat improvements that will have wider positive benefits for the area's biodiversity. These locations and actions are defined by the [Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Recovery Strategy \(LNRS\)](#) and shown on the interactive map.

The [Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide \(2025\)](#) by Defra sets out the method in which strategic significance must be applied in Table 7 (page 28), which is shown below:

Category	Score	Description
High (Formally identified in local strategy)	1.15	<p>This category can only be applied to post development interventions when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the location of the habitat parcel has been mapped in the Local Habitat Map as an area where a potential measure has been proposed to help deliver the priorities of that LNRS; and the proposed intervention is consistent with the mapped potential measure in the LNRS for the habitat parcel <p>You should record that you have applied the published LNRS in your gain plan.</p>
Medium (Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy)	1.10	This category cannot be applied.
Low (Area / compensation not in local strategy)	1	<p>Where the definitions for high strategic significance are not met.</p> <p>Even if your project is in an area mapped with a potential measure, if the proposed intervention is not consistent with a potential measure proposed by the LNRS for that location, you should record strategic significance as low.</p>

In summary:

- High strategic significance can only be used for post-development works, in areas mapped by the LNRS, that deliver the specific recommended action for that location.
- Everything else, both at baseline and post-development, must be recorded as being Low strategic significance.

A specific guidance document has been produced on this topic by [Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) Steering Group.

Appendix 3. Glossary

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	This is the statutory system in England for ensuring a positive biodiversity outcomes for biodiversity via development. It was introduced via the Environment Act .
Baseline	This is the initial biodiversity value of a site before any works have been carried out. A standardised survey and assessment is conducted and fed into the metric to give your “baseline” unit values.
Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP)	This is a standard plan which sets out how you are proposing to deliver your BNG requirements and why. TWC expects you to use the standard national template .
Biodiversity Metric (metric)	This is an official spreadsheet where you must set out details of your site. The metric then automatically calculates your unit values and confirms if certain rules etc. have been met.
Biodiversity Units (units)	This is the standard measurement used in quantifying the value of a habitat. There are three types of biodiversity units none of which can be interchanged; area habitat, hedgerow and watercourse units.
Conservation Covenants	Conservation covenants are voluntary, legally binding agreements between landowners and responsible bodies (see above) to ensure long term conservation of biodiversity and/or historic features.
Exemptions	Some applications, set out in law do not need to carry out BNG either because of their type or impact. These are set out in The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024 and are discussed in this document.
Habitat Bank	This is a regulated site where habitat improvements take place for the purpose of generating biodiversity units. These units are then either used by the owner of the bank on another project or sold to third parties to help them offset their development.
Habitat Distinctiveness	This is a category automatically calculated by the metric. It relates to the relevant biodiversity importance of the type of

habitat. For example an old species rich native hedge with trees will have a higher distinctiveness than a Leylandii hedge.

Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP)	A standard management plan for all significant onsite and/or offsite habitat enhancements. It details how you will deliver the physical habitat works, including responsibilities and monitoring over 30yrs. TWC expects this to be in the standard national template.
Irreplaceable Habitat	Habitat types which are not in scope for BNG because they are not realistic to recreate either due to timespan or extremely limited environmental conditions. These are set out in law and require bespoke attention. Locally these include Ancient Woodland, Ancient or Veteran Trees and Lowland Fen.
Responsible Body	<p>A responsible body is an organisation that is legally permitted to enter into conservation covenants (see above). They are entered onto a national register.</p> <p>Organisations that can apply for the status include local authorities, public bodies or other organisations which oversee significant conservation related activities e.g. Wildlife Trusts. With regard to BNG, their role is to enter into a legal agreement (conservation covenant) with a supplier of habitat units (land owner etc) to agree conservation activities and unit outcomes over a given period. If these are not met, the responsible body must enforce the legal agreement against the unit supplier to ensure compliance.</p>
Strategic significance	This is a category in the metric and relates to the relative wider importance of a specific action, in a particular location. They are mapped and defined within each county's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Further details are set out in Appx 2.



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