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BNG – How did we get here?

District Licensing for Great Crested Newt


Process

- Mapped
- Mitigation license
- Accepts loss
- Conservation


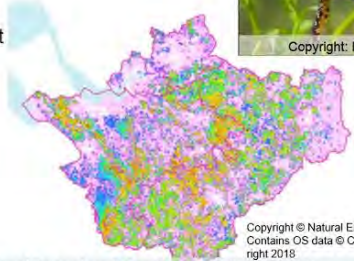
Benefits

- Cheaper
- Fewer delays
- Targeted
- Strategic

Great crested newt data



- Species distribution models integral to District Level Licensing approach
- Robust models need a lot of data (habitat and species)
 - Large number of records
 - Fine spatial resolution
 - Representative of distribution
- Approximately 54,000 ponds occupied by GCN - almost 20% of all ponds in England (Wilkinson et al., 2011)
- We use the best available evidence base to inform District Level Licensing by sourcing records from:
 - existing biological records data (eDNA, bottle trapping, netting, torch counts, egg searches)
 - new survey data (eDNA)



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Wilkinson, J., Wright, D., Arnell, A. & Driver, B., England, N. (2011). Assessing population status of the great crested newt in Great Britain. Available: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/41017>.



BNG – The basics



Developers must provide at least 110% of the biodiversity value found on the site prior to development. (10% uplift)

How: Hierarchy

- On-site habitat
- Off-site habitat, self-delivered or purchased offsite units
- Purchase of statutory biodiversity credits
- Mix of the above

Outcome:

- Must Produce a gain
- Created and enhanced habitat will be secured for a minimum of 30 years
- Gains secured through legal agreement:
Conservation Covenant
Section 106
- Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) qualifies 'habitat enhancements'

Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP)

Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan

Site Name:	
Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Version:	



Author:

Client:



BNG Exemptions

- **Householder development**
- **Development order under section 59.**
Including permitted development rights.
- **Development subject to ‘de minimis exemption.’**
No priority habitat impact. Less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat, or 5 metres of linear habitats. e g: hedgerows
- **Self-build and custom build development.**
No more than 9 dwellings on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares and consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding
- **Urgent Crown development**
- **Development of a biodiversity gain site.**
- **High speed railway transport network.**

De minimis examples:

A development solely on a sealed surface

A development which only marginally impacts on a garden habitat

A very small development within an established wood

How to calculate BNG (metric tool)

You ecologist will need to know:

- Habitat types, both present and planned
- Size of each 'habitat parcel' in hectares or metres squared, or for linear habitats (watercourse and hedgerows) in kilometres or metres
- Condition of each 'habitat parcel' (poor – 1, moderate – 2, good - 3)
- Whether proposed actions habitat parcel are mapped in local nature recovery strategies local habitat map (in draft) or identified in other alternative strategies, eg: Biosphere
- A 'habitat parcel' is a smaller area within a site, which contains one type of habitat.
- If you are making an on-site calculation, you will need to include everything that exists within a development's red line boundary. This includes all features, whether or not they may be lost, retained or improved.
- Small Sites Metric (SSM) cannot be used for priority habitat (excluding some hedgerows and arable field margins), protected sites, European protected species

Calculating BNG – Small Sites Metric (SSM)

Small Sites Metric (The Statutory Biodiversity Metric)

Version 1.2.2 Release Date:

July 2024

Cell style conventions

	Enter data
	Automated equation
	Result
	Title cell
	Title cell alt colour
▲	Error
⚠	Attention required
	Use of this cell is not required



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Technical Requirements - Excel Versions: 2010, 2013, 2016, 2019, Office 365, Excel for Android

Joe's Blooms: Biodiversity Net Gain tool



Biodiversity Gain Plan

Unless your development is exempt, you cannot start the development until the LPA approves your biodiversity gain plan and biodiversity metric calculation tool.

1. Submission details

1.1 Date

For example, 3/11/2023

1.2 Planning application reference number

1.3 Local planning authority (LPA)

1.4 Development site address

If the site does not have an address, enter the OS grid reference.

1.5 Describe the development

Tell us about the proposed development and any changes of use (250 words).

2. Developer details

2.1 Applicant name

2.2 Company name

Statutory BNG Credits

Habitat distinctiveness	Broad habitat type	Specific habitat type	Price per credit	Tier
Low	All	All	£42,000	A1
Medium	Cropland	All	£42,000	A1
Medium	Grassland	All	£42,000	A1
Medium	Individual trees	All	£42,000	A1
Medium	Lakes - ponds (non-priority habitat)	Ponds	£125,000	A4
Medium	Sparsely vegetated land	Other inland rock and scree	£125,000	A4
High	Woodland and forest	Native pine woodlands	£125,000	A4
High	Lakes	Moderate alkalinity lakes	£650,000	A5
High	Lakes	Peat lakes	£650,000	A5

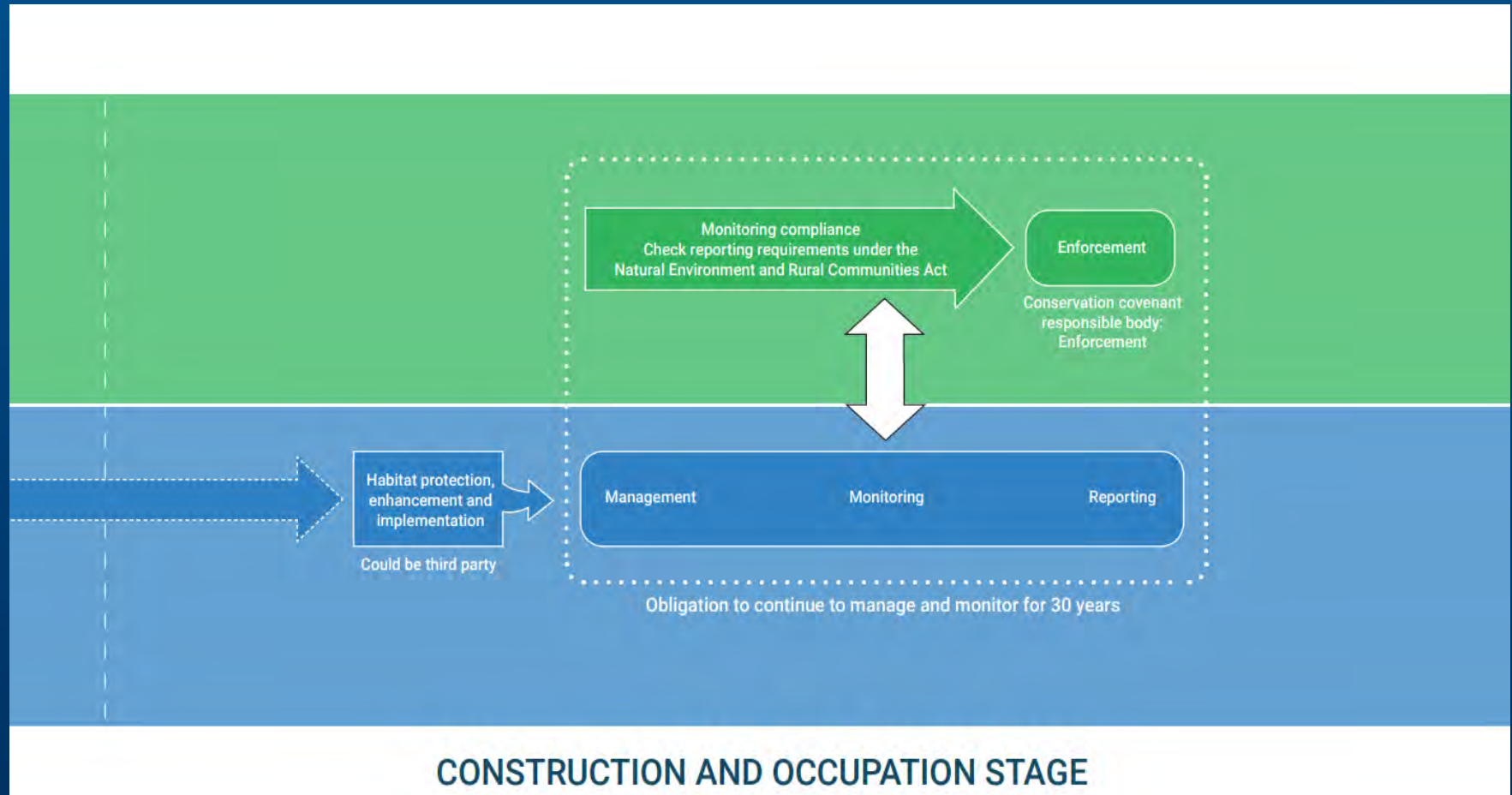
BNG Unit availability

BNG Pricing - North v South



Habitat Type	Habitat Distinctiveness	North	South	Variance
Other Neutral Grassland	Medium	£27,825	£28,875	3.77%
Woodland and forest	Medium	£31,500	£33,075	5.00%
Heathland & Scrub	Medium	£30,500	£31,500	3.28%
Lakes / Ponds Non Priority Habitat	Medium	£60,375	£65,625	8.70%
Lowland Meadow	Very High	£36,225	£39,375	8.70%
Watercourses - All Watercourses	High	£149,625	£164,575	9.99%
Individual Trees'	Medium	£31,500	£33,075	5.00%
Woodland and forest	High	£46,200	£48,300	4.55%
Traditional Orchard	High	£39,900	£42,425	6.33%
Wet woodland	Medium	£35,250	£38,325	8.72%
Mixed Deciduous Woodland	High	£54,500	£55,125	1.15%

PAS: Best practice flowchart



What are LPA's doing?

- Twenty LPA's want higher than 10%
- Not all the same, some using SPGs, others stipulating sites
- Some have species requirements not tied to BNG metric
- Letter to SoS to require a minimum of 20%, as they say it is viable
- National Audit Office believes LPA's are unable to monitor and enforce BNG
- Forcing planning resubmissions through non-determinations and reduced local plan allocations
- Requiring ecologists on small sites
- Challenging self and custom build sites
- Inserting contractual obligations outside of BNG
- Assessing whether they will close off reduced BNG if they believe it is deliverable
- Not assessing viability impacts

Industry BNG Experiences

Good

- Local credits
- LPAs understand BNG
- LPA's don't understand BNG
- Gardens might be included
- Opposition
- Opportunity

Bad

- Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) don't have a clue
- Conflicting advice
- No trained staff
- Higher BNG
- Section 106 issues
- Opportunity wasted

Ugly

- Used to oppose development
- Sites made unviable
- Price gouging of offsite credits
- Application re-submissions
- Government
- Opportunity ignored

Examples: Self-build

Issues being created:

Baseline requirement with ecologist

Contract for ownership

Site or home permission?

Officer disagreements

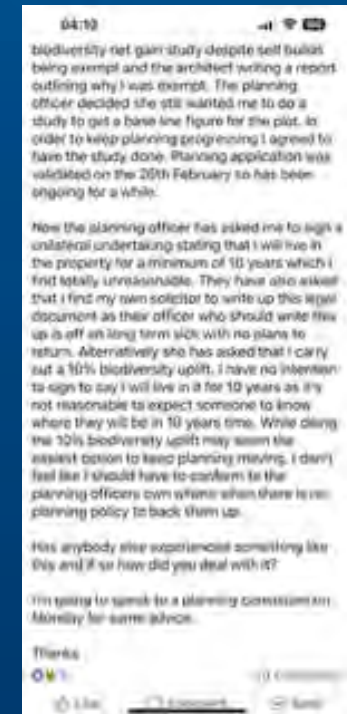
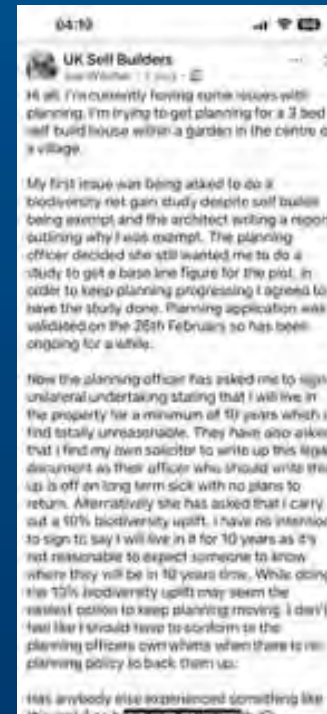
Exemption rejection

Environmental planning conditions

Self-build definition:

Building or completion by—

- (a) individuals,
- (b) associations of individuals, or
- (c) persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals,
- of houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals.
- Does not include the building of a house on a plot acquired from a person who builds the house wholly or mainly to plans or specifications decided or offered by that person.



Open Mosaic Habitat



Examples: Onsite, offsite, BNG units?

Onsite:

Legal agreement

LPA preference

Ecologist guidance

Offsite:

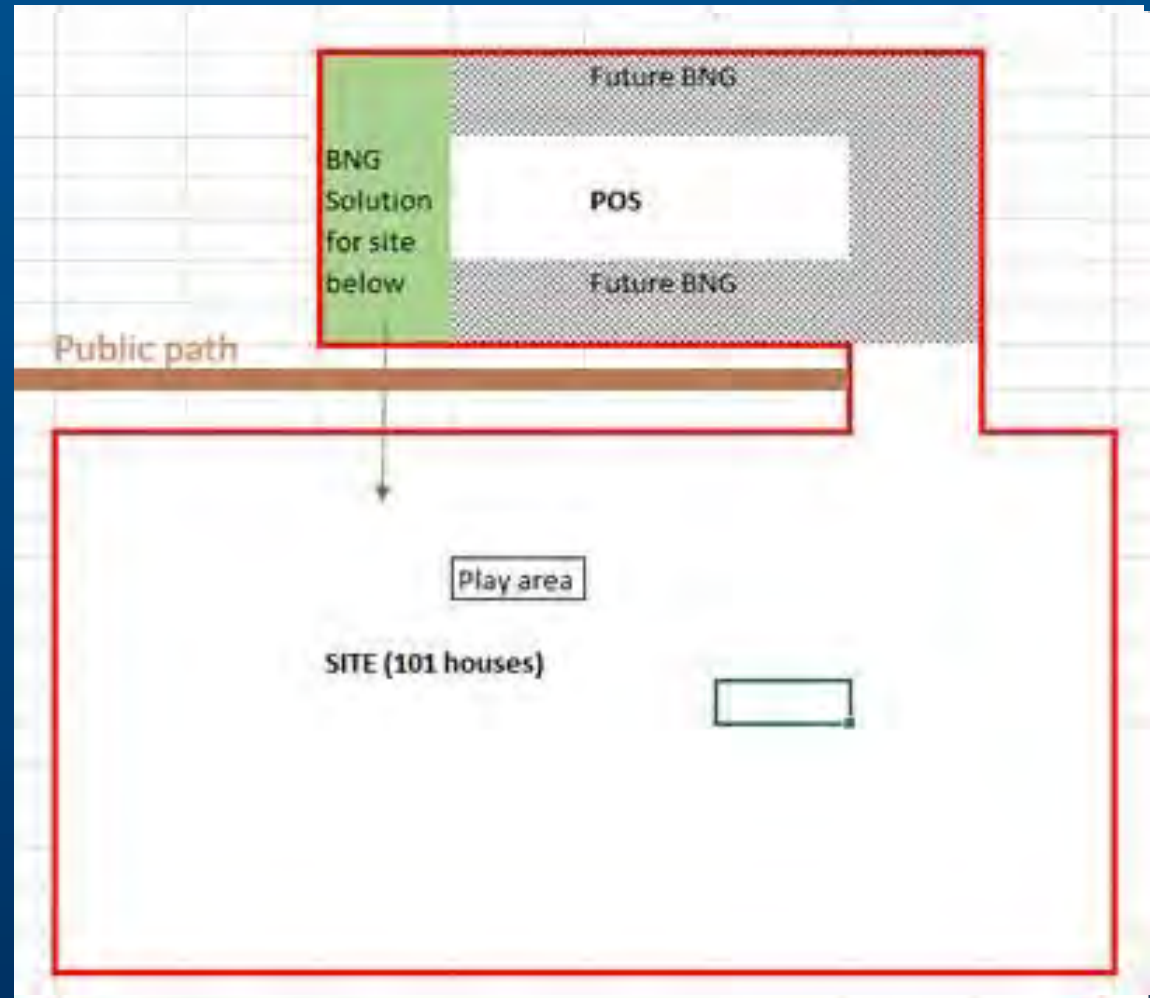
£639 registration cost

£45 allocation cost

Re-submission of site

Gain plan details

Future BNG, when?



What can you do?



<https://www.bngonline.org.uk/>

Resources from various groups, eg: NFB, PAS, LGA, .Gov

Government website - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain>

Let your ecologist deal with it all.....

Speak to experts!

What NFB/HBA is doing?



Collecting experiences

www.surveymonkey.com/r/BiodiversityNetGainNFB

Speaking to the Government fortnightly about industry experiences

Working with offsite providers, eg: Environment Bank

Automated BNG calculators; eg: JoesBlooms – BNG Tool

Lobbying the Government to ‘Build in Biodiversity’!

Building in Biodiversity

Embedding building fabric and site design solutions into the Biodiversity Net Gain metric

Author: Rico Wojtulewicz, Head of Housing and Planning Policy, NFB