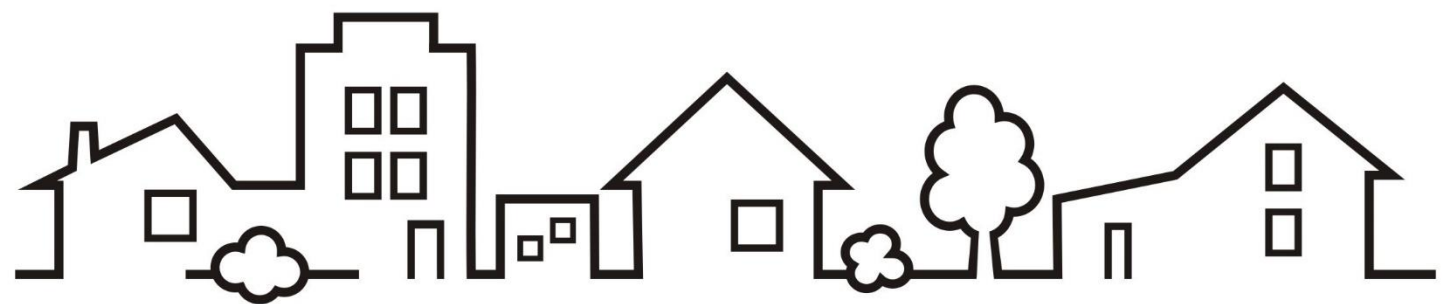




# Biodiversity Net Gain

Dr Nick White – Principal Advisor - Net Gain, Natural England

# Multiple Crises



# Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain – Key Components



## The Environment Act

- England only
- Amends the Town & Country Planning Act (TCPA) & 2008 Planning Act
- Applies down to mean low water
- Minimum 10% gain required calculated using Biodiversity Metric & approval of a net gain plan
- Habitat secured at least 30 years
- Delivered, on-site, off-site or via statutory biodiversity credits
- National register for net gain sites
- Legal requirement from – February 12<sup>th</sup> 2024 major TCPA development, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024 minor TCPA developments + late 2025 (NSIP)
- Does not change existing legal protections



# Exemptions + Tools for Smaller Development Sites



The following are fully exempt:

- Householder applications
- Some custom/self-builds exempt
- De minimis habitat impact exemption - less than 25m<sup>2</sup> (area habitat) or 5m long (linear habitat)
- Permitted developments

Tools for Smaller Developments

- **Small Sites Metric** – lower user competency threshold but restrictions on use
- Simplified **habitat management & monitoring plan template**





# The Value of Habitats



- Habitats are vital to wildlife + benefit people
- 2 ways to achieve BNG, a) more and/or b) better quality habitats
- Use of a standardised statutory biodiversity metric
- Contains all area-based and linear habitat types found on land & around coast
- Habitats have different values + some are easier to create than others – seek advice
- Enhancing existing habitat scores more highly than creating new habitat from scratch



# Mechanisms for Biodiversity Net Gain Delivery



## Onsite (units)

Potentially in full or combination



Delivered via habitat creation/enhancement via soft estate/green infrastructure/landscaping

## Offsite (units)



Delivered 'locally' through new habitat creation/enhancement on land holdings or via habitat banks

## Statutory Credits

Only if units not available



Delivered through landscape-scale strategic habitat creation delivering nature-based solutions



# Biodiversity Gain Site Register



## Purpose

- To evidence the recording of off-site biodiversity gains
- Ensure gain sites meet eligibility criteria
- Safeguard against double counting of off-site enhancements
- Provide transparency in BNG delivery in local areas.

N.B. – Any offsite BNG used must be allocated on the register



# Top Tips

- Consider early – site allocation/selection/design stage
  - Avoid high nature value sites if possible
  - Integrate nature into scheme design
  - Talk to the LPA early – use pre-app advice
- Retain good existing habitat where possible
- On or off-site or both? Consider strategy and pros and cons
- Obtain data and advice
- Involve maintenance/management contractors
- Deliver local habitat priorities to achieve BNG more easily
- Land on the net gain register can be used immediately





# Thank You

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