

Biodiversity Net Gain Checklist

This document is intended to provide guidance to applicants during submission of a planning application, and act as a checklist to ensure the correct information is being submitted to support a planning application.

The checklist will assist to determine what information is required to be submitted with your planning application, regarding Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The identified information requirements are to be submitted with the planning application form in the formats specified within this checklist. The information is required to inform the consideration and determination stage of the application and will be assessed alongside this checklist by planning officers and consultees.

The checklist will assist to determine whether your application will be subject to mandatory BNG, or if the proposals are exempt, and which exemption rule applies. Evidence is required to prove that some exemption criteria are met, and this information should be provided alongside the planning application.

For non-exempt applications, providing information on BNG above the minimum statutory requirements as set out in Article 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, will assist the LPA to better understand how the development proposals will achieve the 10% BNG Objective.

The LPA encourages applicants to consider BNG and other ecological considerations as early in the planning process as possible and encourages applicants to seek pre-application advice.

Failure to complete the checklist and/or failure to provide the required information may result in invalidation and delay your application.

This BNG Checklist does not supersede the council's Validation Criteria, which should be also be adhered to.

Table 1: Biodiversity Net Gain Exemptions

Ref.	Query	Yes	No	Applicable Exemption where answer is 'Yes'
1a	Is the proposal a householder application?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Householder exemption Exempt from BNG; BNG information not required
1b	Is the proposal a small-scale Self-build or Custom-build (SB/CB) development? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusively SB/CB properties Site <0.5 hectares 9 or fewer dwellings 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Small-scale Self-build and Custom-build exemption Justification to be provided in Table 5 (a)
1c	The proposals will not impact* : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any Priority Habitat 25m² (5m x 5m) of on-site habitat 5m or more of linear / hedgerow habitat Any trees of size ≥7.5cm DBH** ≥5m length of watercourse ≥25m² of watercourse riparian zone (refer to Table 11 in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	De minimis exemption Exempt from BNG; BNG information not required Evidence required (photographs and scaled site plans with area measurements)
1d	The development is subject to other exemption criteria. e.g. Biodiversity Gain Site (i.e. Habitat Bank), Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Exemption Justification and/or evidence is to be provided at Table 5 (b) .
<p>*'Impact' equates to the loss or degradation (deterioration of condition) to on-site habitat.</p> <p>**DBH = Diameter at Breast Height; measure of the diameter of the tree trunk to establish tree size</p> <p>If the proposals meet any of the above exemptions, the Applicable Exemption is to be stated on the planning application form, with the appropriate evidence and/or justification as needed.</p>				

Application Exempt

(you have ticked 'Yes' to one or more for questions 1a-1d)



**Skip ahead to
Table 5**

Application Not Exempt

(you have ticked 'No' for ALL questions 1a-1d)



**Complete Tables
2-5**

Table 2: Biodiversity Net Gain Checklist: Small Sites Metric or Full Metric

Ref.	Criteria	Yes	No	Details / Guidance
2	Statutory Small Sites Metric (SSM) or Statutory Full Metric			
a	The development meets the definition for ‘major development’	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The SSM is suitable for non-major developments only. The full metric is to be used for all major developments.
b	The site supports Priority Habitat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The full metric is to be used for sites that support Priority Habitats (with the exception of some arable field margins and hedgerows of medium distinctiveness or lower which are included in the SSM).
c	The site lies within 500m of Priority Habitat, or is hydrologically connected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If the site lies within 500m of, or is hydrologically connected to Priority Habitat, the full metric <i>should</i> be used. If the SSM is used justification is to be provided at Table 5 (e) .
d	The site supports a habitat type only included in the full metric (e.g. habitat above medium distinctiveness)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The SSM does not include all habitats that are available in the full metric; if any such habitats are present on site, the full metric is to be used. For example, Priority Habitats, Irreplaceable Habitats, rivers and streams.
e	The site lies within or adjacent to a statutory designated site for nature conservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Statutory designated sites can be identified on Defra’s MAGiC Map .
f	The site lies within 500 metres of a designated site (including non-statutory sites), or is hydrologically connected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If the site lies within 500m of, or is hydrologically connected to a designated site, the full metric <i>should</i> be used. If the SSM is used justification is to be provided at Table 5 (e) . Non-statutory designated sites include Biological Heritage Sites (BHSs).
g	The site supports protected species (or their presence is likely)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If presence of protected species is a possibility, advice from an ecologist is to be sought. Protected species surveys may be required. Presence of protected species triggers the need for the full statutory biodiversity metric.
h	Residential development where the site is over 1 hectare (ha) in size	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Area within the red line boundary; i.e. not limited to the proposed development area.
i	Residential development for 10 or more units	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The full metric is to be used if there are 10 or more residential units proposed.
j	Residential development where the number of dwellings is unknown, and the site is over 0.5 ha	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Where the proposed number of dwellings is unknown at the time of application.
k	The proposals are for a non-residential development and the proposed net floor space is over 1000m ² and the site is more than 1ha	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	For commercial developments, the SSM can only be used if net floor space created is under 1000m ² or the site is area is less than 1ha
l	Development is for the purposes of minerals and/or waste	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mineral and waste developments are to use the full statutory biodiversity metric.
<p>Where the answer is ‘No’ to ALL of the above the Small Sites Metric (SSM) can be used as the site and proposals meet the small sites metric criteria set out in the Small Sites Metric (Statutory Biodiversity Metric) User Guide (DEFRA, February 2024), and do not trigger the need for full metric.</p> <p>The SSM is a simplified version of the metric and must be completed by a ‘competent’ person (can be a non-ecologist), this may be a landscape architect, architect, landowner / land manager, for example who is familiar with, and has visited the site and who can identify the habitats present. The SSM is to be completed in accordance with the SSM User Guide.</p> <p><i>If an ecologist is involved with the project for other matters (e.g. a PEA or protected species survey) it is recommended that the full statutory metric is used and completed by the ecologist.</i></p> <p><i>The SSM may be inappropriate for sites within 500m of statutory protected sites or priority habitats; advice from an ecologists should be sought.</i></p>				

Table 3: Biodiversity Net Gain Minimum Information Requirements Checklist

Ref.	Checklist	Yes	No	Details / Guidance
3	Minimum Information Requirements			
a	I have provided the information as set out within the planning application form. See the Biodiversity Net Gain section of the Planning Application form.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The pre-development Biodiversity Value of the site as calculated by the Full or Small Sites Metric (SSM) in Biodiversity Units. The date of the pre-development biodiversity value should be the submission date of the planning application unless an earlier date has been agreed with the LPA.
b	Statutory Full or Small Sites Biodiversity Metric Tool completed with pre-development baseline values in the on-site tab(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	With relevant details entered onto the Start Page
c	Tabs for each on-site Area, Hedgerow and Watercourse pre-development (baseline) habitats of the metric have been completed (as applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If watercourse habitats are present on-site or the red line boundary lies within the riparian zone of watercourses, a Rivers Condition Assessment (RCA) is required to be carried out by a trained and accredited person and evidence provided at Table 5 (d) .
d	Condition Assessments (CA) of all pre-development on-site habitats present*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Using the statutory CA sheets, with completed habitat and survey details in each tab (habitat reference, surveyor and survey date, grid reference etc.) For sites with watercourses surveyed by an RCA accredited ecologist, a completed copy of the 'Condition and Encroachment Reporting Sheet - Rivers and Streams' is to be submitted in excel format, alongside the results of the RCA survey.
e	Pre-development habitat map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	In UKHab Classification style** plan labelled with habitat references to allow cross-referencing to metric and CAs (as applicable); plans must be to scale and include a North arrow.
f	Relevant information on Irreplaceable Habitat if present	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Details of Irreplaceable Habitats present on site, and location on a labelled, scaled plan (habitat map)
g	Relevant information on degradation***, if applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Details of site degradation and the pre-degradation date used to determine site baseline value; and any supporting evidence for pre-degradation condition of habitats.
<p>*Not required for applications using the statutory Small Sites Metric (SSM) Tool</p> <p>**UKHab style is not essential for sites using the SSM, provided the habitats on site are identifiable and labelled</p> <p>Continue to Table 4 for local information requirements to support a BNG application.</p> <p>***Information on what is classed as degradation can be found at Paragraph 36 of the BNG Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)</p>				

Table 4: Biodiversity Net Gain Local Information Requirements Checklist

Ref.	Checklist	Yes	No	Details / Guidance
4	Draft Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP)			
a	Statement declaring how the development has considered existing on-site habitats and abides by the NPPF Mitigation Hierarchy through good site design, with justification for any deviation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>NPPF Mitigation hierarchy:</p> <p>Avoid, minimise, mitigate and compensate. Developments should prioritise the avoidance of loss or degradation of ecologically valuable habitats, if avoidance not possible, minimising loss and/or degradation, followed by mitigation and compensation for loss and degradation.</p>
b	Statement declaring how the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy has been considered and abided by, with justification for any deviation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Biodiversity Gain hierarchy:</p> <p>Avoid adverse impacts to on-site habitats with medium, high and very high distinctiveness; mitigation of any unavoidable adverse effects.</p> <p>Adverse effects to be compensated by prioritising in order and where possible: Enhancement of existing on-site habitats, creation of new on-site habitat, allocation of registered offsite gains and, as a last resort, purchase of statutory credits.</p>
c	Draft completed Statutory Full or Small Sites Metric (SSM)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Values for both pre-development and post-development on-site tabs; complete with habitat references and user comments</p> <p>Full metric to be completed by ecologist or SMM completed by a 'competent' person</p>
d	Draft Condition Assessments (CA) for proposed post-development habitats target conditions*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Justification for target condition values to be evidenced/justified in the submitted metric user comments and/or within a draft BGP (and evidenced within a supporting HMMP for significant** on-site habitats, see below).
e	Draft post-development habitat map(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	In UKHab style, consistent with draft landscape plans. Habitats labelled with references consistent with the metric and Condition Assessments to allow for cross-referencing. To scale, and with a North arrow.
f	Draft Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) for significant** proposed and retained on-site habitats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>All habitats with significant** biodiversity to be included within an HMMP; including ecologically valuable retained habitats</p> <p>If no significant on-site habitats are proposed, no HMMP required.</p>
g	Estimated types and quantities of off-site units to be sourced and/or statutory credits to be purchased to achieve the 10% gain objective, where necessary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Where 10% net gain cannot wholly be achieved on-site, or where a shortfall means the Trading Rules are not met.</p> <p>Developers should seek to source off-site biodiversity units as locally as possible. The use of statutory credit purchase should only be a last resort.</p>
<p>*Not required for applications using the statutory Small Sites Metric (SSM) Tool</p> <p>** 'Significant' post-development habitats are those that significantly contribute towards to site achieving the 10% net gain objective; to exclude all private land (e.g. private gardens, and any proposed vegetation); can include POS and landscaped areas, created and enhanced habitats that can be managed and secured long-term.</p>				

Table 5: Biodiversity Net Gain Checklist – Evidence and Justification

5	Evidence and Justification	
a	<p>Self-build and Custom-build Exemption</p> <p>You have answered ‘Yes’ to 1b, please provide justification of how the owner of the home has had primary input into its final design and layout, and confirmation that the applicant will be the resident in the proposed property for a period of at least 5 years following completion.</p> <p>Please answer ‘N/A’ if not applicable.</p>	
b	<p>Other Exemption</p> <p>You have answered ‘Yes’ to 1d, please state the relevant exemption rule and provide relevant evidence to support this.</p> <p>Please answer ‘N/A’ if not applicable.</p>	
c	<p>Small Sites Metric Competency</p> <p>The proposals meet the criteria for using the SSM and the SSM will be used to support the application. Please provide the name of the person who completed the SSM and details of their competency, confirming their qualifications and experience.</p> <p>Please answer ‘N/A’ if not applicable (e.g. your site is exempt or using the full metric).</p>	
d	<p>Watercourse Competency</p> <p>The red line boundary lies within the riparian zone of a watercourse (other than a culvert and/or ditch) and requires a River Condition Assessment (RCA) carried out by a qualified and accredited person.</p> <p>State the name and provide the qualifications and accreditation details of the competent person.</p> <p>Please answer ‘N/A’ if not applicable (e.g. your site is exempt or does not support watercourses).</p>	
e	<p>Connectivity to a Priority Habitat or Designated Site</p> <p>The site lies within 500m, and/or is hydrologically connected, to Priority Habitat and/or a designated site for nature conservation. The application is supported by an SSM (where the full metric would be preferred). Sufficient justification for using the SSM is to be provided here.</p> <p>Please answer ‘N/A’ if not applicable (e.g. your site is exempt or you are submitting the full metric)</p>	

Declaration

I confirm that I have completed all sections of this checklist and the information contained within is accurate to the best of my knowledge at the time of writing. I understand that failure to provide the necessary and correct information may delay validation and decision of the application.

Site Address:

Applicant's Name:

Agent's Name (if applicable):

Date: