

Chorley Borough Council

Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance Note

Strategic Significance - Interim Approach

Context

Strategic Significance as defined by the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide¹, is *the local significance of the habitat based on its location and habitat type*. Strategic Significance values of habitats will be determined by the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategies being prepared across the UK, once these are published. At present, the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which includes the Chorley Borough has not been published. Until the Lancashire LNRS is published (expected in Spring-Summer 2025), Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metric assessments are to abide by the following guidance to assign strategic significance to habitats.

Draft LNRS

Lancashire County Council (LCC) have prepared a [draft LNRS Local Habitat Map](#) that is available to view online. Existing areas of importance and areas that could become of importance (opportunity areas) are available to view on the map.

Proposed habitats that will be created, enhanced and/or managed in accordance with the measures set out in the draft LNRS map for that location are to be given a 'high' strategic significance score (refer the **Table 8** below).

Justification for use of the 'medium' strategic significance score is required.

Once the Lancashire LNRS has been published and adopted, strategic significance scores must be assigned in accordance with Table 7 of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (DEFRA, July 2024).

Applicants are encouraged to obtain ecological information [from Lancashire Environment Record Network](#) (LERN) to determine the presence of the above important areas and Priority Habitats to inform the assigned strategic significance of habitats.

¹ The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (DEFRA, February 2024)

Table 8 of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide provides guidance for assigning Biodiversity Metric Strategic Significance categories where an LNRS has not yet been published and is presented below:

Strategic Significance Category	Score applied in the metric	Description
High (formally identified in local strategy)	1.15	<p>The habitat type is mapped and described as locally ecologically important within a specific location, within documents specified by the relevant planning authority.</p> <p>If your project delivers the mapped habitat creation, enhancement or actions set out within specified alternative documents, or enhances an existing habitat identified within specified alternative documents as locally ecologically important, strategic significance can be recorded as high in the post-intervention sheets.</p> <p>If the specified alternative documents identify existing habitat as locally ecologically important within a specified location, strategic significance may be recorded as high in the baseline.</p> <p>You should record the name of the plan the relevant planning authority has specified in the user comments and record that you have used the specified document in your gain plan.</p>
Medium (Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy)	1.10	<p>This category can be applied when the LPA has not identified a suitable document for assessing strategic significance.</p> <p>Users should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain how the habitat type is ecologically important within a specific location • demonstrate the importance of that habitat in providing ecological linkage to other strategically significant locations • use professional judgement <p>When the above criteria are met, strategic significance may be recorded as medium in the baseline and post-intervention sheets.</p>
Low (Area / compensation not in local strategy)	1	Where the definition for High or Medium strategic significance are not met.