



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Joanna Averley
Chief Planner

**Department for Levelling
Up, Housing and
Communities**

3rd Floor, Fry Building
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By email only

Dear Chief Planning Officer,

You will have seen on 27 September, Defra announced the next steps and the updated timetable for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Here is a link to the [Defra Press Notice](#).

BNG was introduced through the Environment Act and will be fundamental in helping the country meet our target to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030, while helping create more beautiful communities and deliver new homes.

The updated timetable is an important step towards putting BNG on formal statutory footing and the press notice highlights the following key dates:

- Major developments in England will be required to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain from January 2024;
- Biodiversity Net Gain for small sites will be applicable from April 2024; and
- implementation for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects is planned for 2025.

Mandatory BNG will only apply to new applications for planning permission made after the implementation date. We will provide more detail around precise dates as soon as possible.

To help the sector prepare, by the end of November, the government will publish all guidance and the regulations, the details of which can be found below:

- The statutory biodiversity metric, critical for calculating the correct biodiversity net gain;
- the draft biodiversity net gain plan template, which will help developers prepare for what they will need to complete during the planning application stages;
- the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan template, which will set out how the improved significant on-site and off-site habitats will be managed for the long term; and

- a package of BNG guidance that sets out further advice for landowners, developers, and Local Planning Authorities around their role and responsibilities in delivering mandatory BNG.

To support the implementation of BNG, the government has already committed over £15 million this year to help Local Planning Authorities prepare. Defra has funded the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) to support local planning authorities. PAS has produced a range of resources available to support local authorities including a BNG readiness checklist and frequently asked questions. Defra's July blog also provides further information on preparing for BNG – [10-actions-local-planning-authorities-can-take-to-prepare-for-biodiversity-net-gain](#).

Defra would like to thank all local authorities for submitting evidence of spend returns for the BNG grant and they are in the process of sending out purchase orders to local authorities. The process for grant payments this year is different from last year so Defra encourage authorities to check the grant FAQs sent to all local authorities with the grant information for details. Please contact Defra at sm-defra.netgain@defra.gov.uk with any queries.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joanna Averley', written in a cursive style.

Joanna Averley
Chief Planner