



BIODIVERSE

CONSULTING

BNG: Living the Dream!

**WHERE HAVE WE BEEN, WHERE ARE WE NOW AND WHERE
ARE WE GOING?**

2025



01

INTRODUCTION

Living the Dream



AS OF TODAY

- Mandatory Net Gain: **12th February 2024**
- Small Sites: **2nd April 2024**
- NSIPS: **November 2025**
- Guidance (not) Published:
- **September 2024.**





STATE OF NATURE

2023 |  state of nature
PARTNERSHIP

Chris O'Reilly (rspb-images.com)

WHY BNG?

THE SIXTH MASS EXTINCTION

- Nature in the UK is still seriously declining: We are already one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world.
- *'The UK itself has lost much of its wildlife, ranking 189th for biodiversity loss out of 218 nations in 2016,'* **London Zoological Society 2018**
- The UK has now legally binding targets to halt species decline by 2030 and international targets in the Global Biodiversity Framework to protect 30% of land and seas by 2030
- National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan launched this week. BNG boast!



02

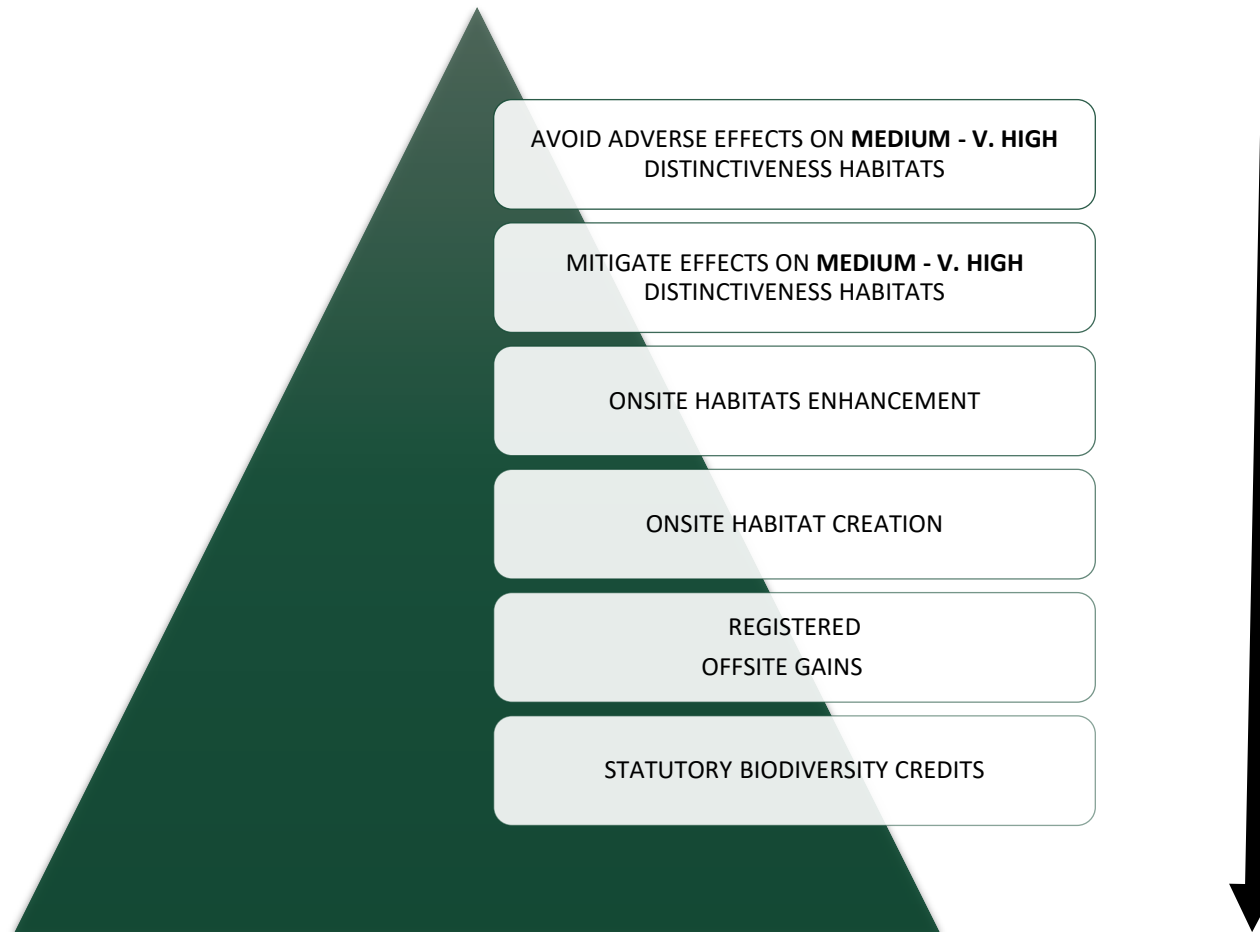
STEP BY STEP GUIDE

The Process For Developers



PRE-PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

BIODIVERSITY GAIN HIERARCHY



Desk Top Study

- Appoint Ecologist
- Is Site located within Local Nature Recovery Strategy or other Locally Significant Environmental corridor
- Red Line Boundary of development provided
- Check LPA requirements including at Pre-App.

Baseline Survey

- Complete Survey within optimal time (May - Sept end)
- Establish whether site cleared recently (Degradation issues)
- Agree Baseline Assessment Date with LPA

Biodiversity Statement

- Establishes whether a Biodiversity Gain Condition will be applied
- Report submitted at Planning Application Stage establishing Baseline Biodiversity Value (Units) of site pre-planning (i.e. pre-works)
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric completed and submitted with baseline Habitat Map
- LPA may require more detail depending on local requirements

PLANNING GRANTED

- Pre-Commencement Biodiversity Gain Condition applied if:
 - Significant onsite BNG proposed
 - And/Or Biodiversity offsite required to achieve 10%
 - REMEMBER PLANNING COMMITTEE FOIBLES

Biodiversity Gain Plan

- Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) sets out HOW Biodiversity Gain Objective (min 10%) achieved (template).**
- Includes information on how Biodiversity Mitigation Hierarchy followed & explains any deviations
- Pre & Post Biodiversity Unit Value of site including Habitat Plans
- Legal documentation evidencing securement of Registered Offsite Biodiversity Gain & Biodiversity Unit value inc. Statutory Credits
- Finalised Metric

Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan

- HMMP sets out HOW you will deliver, manage & monitor the Onsite gains proposed**
- Required for "Significant" onsite Gains (which covers most things)
- Template available but don't have to use
- Requires detail/evidence of whether Habitat type/condition is achievable

Commence Project

- Submit BGP & HMMP to LPA for approval
- LPA approves (possibly with additional requirements) and discharges condition
- Works commence

BIODIVERSE'S STEP BY STEP GUIDE FOR DEVELOPERS



03



HABITAT BANKS

The Opportunities



THE REVISED PROCESS: FOR THE LANDOWNER

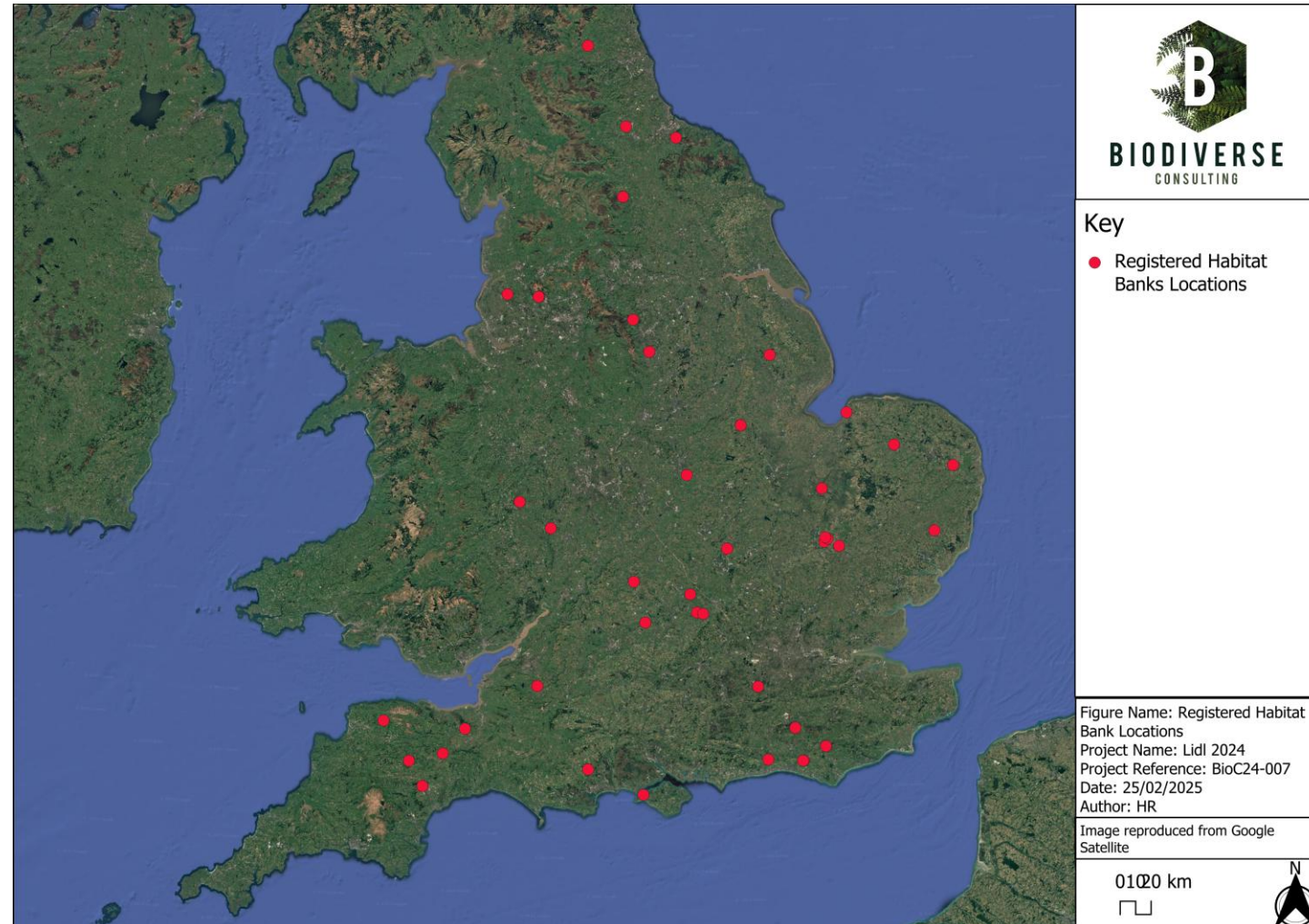
i.e. how does a
landowner create
Registered Off-site
Biodiversity Gain
(ROBG)





Habitat Banks Today

- **Currently 46 banks on the DEFRA Register.**
- **More pending.**
- **Land registry delays.**





LANDOWNER DETAIL – STOP THE PRESS!!

Biodiversity Unit Price Alert

Guidance published in October states that landowners should “come up with a price for your units”.

Based on:

- Management of the land covering at least 30 years
- Registration Costs (LPA/other)
- Monitoring and reporting
- Ecologist or other experts’ costs
- Insurance
- Costs to cover work if the habitat fails
- Machinery, tools and other staff to carry out the tasks
- Inflation and market competition costs
- Legal Fees (LPA Section 106 + own contracts)

ROBGs need to agree payment terms i.e. lump sum, staged payment, results





Soil Resource Surveys (SRSs) - What are they? Why do we need them?

- ▶ Adaptation of existing Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) soil survey techniques
- ▶ Conduct soil nutrient (Mg/P/K) / suitability (organic matter etc) laboratory testing
- ▶ Determine a Soil Health Index value
- ▶ Carry out surveys on operational building sites
- ▶ Surveys carried out on proposed Habitat Banks
- ▶ Can we identify areas for improvement / value / biodiversity??

Soil Resource Survey Applications

- ▶ Identify potential uses for the land
 - ▶ Fallow land - carbon sink?
 - ▶ Habitat/land bank?
 - ▶ Identifies possible future 'waste' /surplus soil - income stream if we take off site?
- ▶ Identify potential habitat creation
 - ▶ Neutral grassland
 - ▶ Mixed scrubland
 - ▶ Woodland???
- ▶ Is there a way of altering the soil to suit a potential habitat to create?
 - ▶ Can we 'reduce' soil nutrients?
 - ▶ Bring poorer quality soil on to site? Could this tie in with resource removal to generate income?



Soil Resource Survey - Recent Examples

Live Development Site

- Residential development site - two areas of land earmarked for habitat creation
- Proposed habitats provided by BC
- Obvious areas for improvement identified
- Stumbling blocks
 - Operational site
 - Site storage areas
 - Very hot summer conditions
- Positives
 - Enhanced green spaces for future residents
 - Sense of place - LPA push currently
 - Biodiversity gains
- Key takeaway - timing!

Soil Resource Survey - Recent Examples Proposed Habitat Bank

- Proposed Habitat Bank site - two areas of land earmarked for habitat creation
- Former landfill site - assumed homogenous fill materials
- Proposed habitat plans provided by BC
- Obvious areas for improvement identified
- Stumbling blocks
 - Made assumptions on site
 - Outlier identified in lab data
 - Could we have sampled more locations?
- Learning Points
 - Need comprehensive site history ahead of survey works
 - Need clear habitat proposals - BUT is it more 'chicken and egg'?
 - Can we agree a contingency fund with the client?
- Key takeaway - maintain conversations with client

Soil Management Plans (SMPs)

- ▶ Outline how soil can be managed on site to ensure no damage is made to the soil resource so it can be reused on/off site
- ▶ Assist with budget development / Soil Budget
 - ▶ Identifies useful soil resources
 - ▶ Identifies possible future 'waste'/surplus soil
 - ▶ Allows soil importation requirements to be determined
- ▶ Feeds into design of build programme
 - ▶ When is the best/worst time to move soil?
 - ▶ How long can it be stockpiled?
- ▶ Earthworks design
 - ▶ Plant choices
 - ▶ Soil handling
 - ▶ Stockpile design/locations
- ▶ Planning requirements
- ▶ If we have identified the resources, then let's protect them!



Soil Resources - Joined Up Thinking

Soil Resource Surveys /
Agricultural Land Classification

THE KEY AIM

How can we enhance
land 'value'?

Soil Management
Plans

Biodiversity
Net Gain



05

The crystal ball

Where are going?

BNG: What Next?

1. On balance I think BNG is here to stay.
2. Shift in focus from pre-planning to post planning.

Nationally

1. Changes to Small Metric
2. Testing of some of the applications of BNG in the courts
3. Simplification of application
4. Year of Habitat Banks & evolving Nature Markets
5. Investment into Nature's Recovery or Restoration in rural areas / middle class. Will urban areas become nature depleted?

Locally

1. Pushing for a North East BNG Strategy (with NECA)
2. Lots of Habitat Banks will come online
3. High demand for Units
4. Solutions for OMH (Brownfield) & Watercourse Units



07



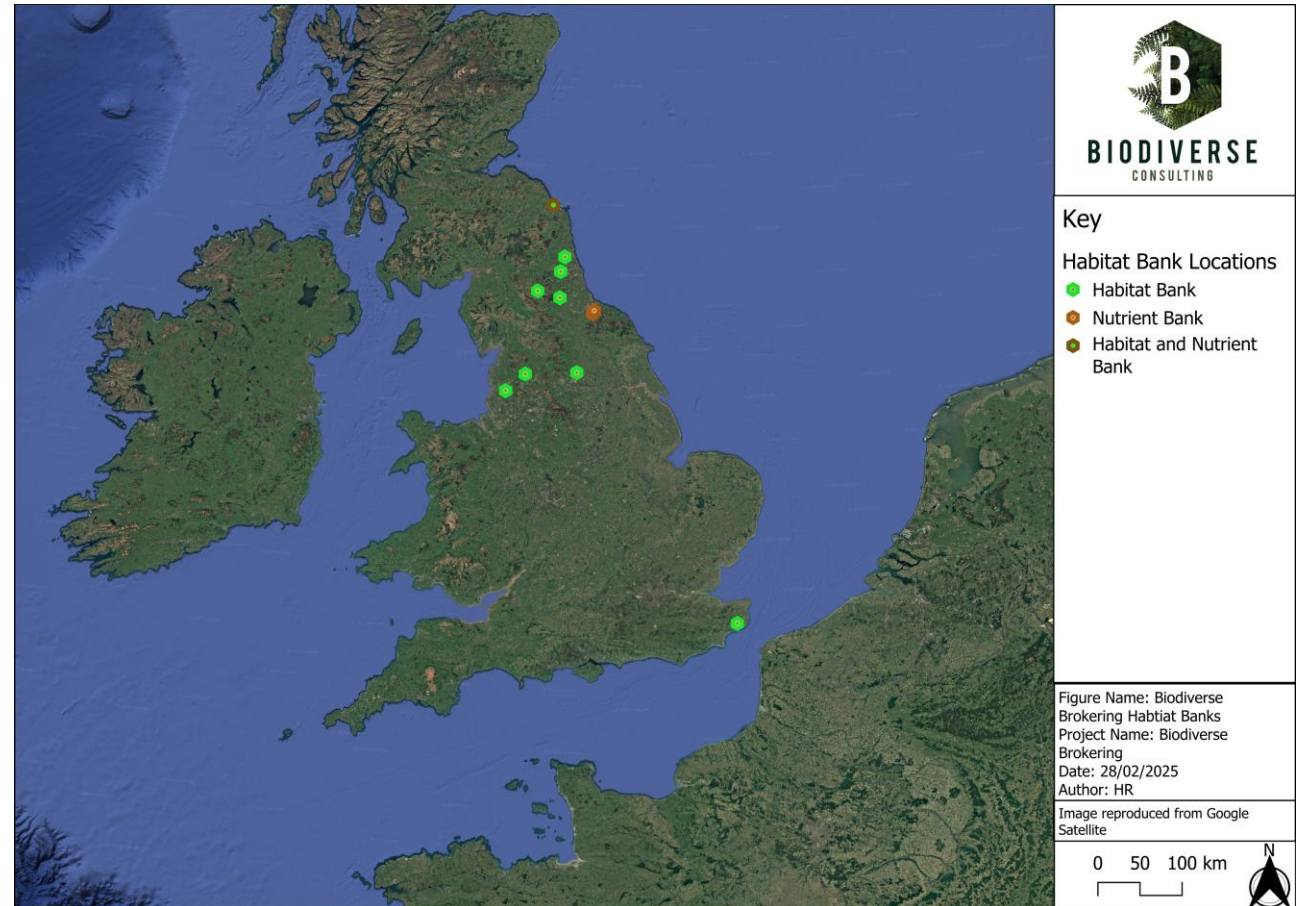
Biodiverse Brokering

A shameless plug



Tinder for Biodiversity

- **13 Banks secured**
- **13 in the pipeline across England**
- **212 ha**
- **1670 BUs**
 - Grassland
 - Woodland
 - Watercourses
 - Hedgerows
 - Trees
 - Shrubs



Any Questions? Thank you!



Lauren Manning
Principal Consultant, Roberts Environmental



Vicki Mordue MSc MIOD AIEMA
Managing Director
0191 303 7805
07920 239121
enquiries@biodiverseconsulting.co.uk
www.biodiverseconsulting.co.uk

Vicki Mordue
Managing Director, Biodiverse Consulting



BIODIVERSE

CONSULTING

THANK YOU

Vicki Mordue

T: +44 (0) 191 303 7805

E: enquiries@biodiverseconsulting.co.uk

www.biodiverseconsulting.co.uk