

Addressing the Nature Emergency for Local Planning Authority Councillors

2 April 2025

- Government funded, part of the Local Govt. Association (LGA)
- We help local planning authorities:
 - **Respond** to planning reform
 - **Implement** change
 - **Improve** - share good practice
- PAS support programmes
 - **Performance**
 - **Strategy**
 - **Resources**

PAS Planning and the Environment



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

NATURAL
ENGLAND



- **Biodiversity Net Gain:** supporting local authorities with the implementation of mandatory net gain.
- **Nature Recovery:** helping local authorities with their delivery of the Nature Recovery Network including sharing best practice.
- **Nutrient Neutrality:** supporting local planning authorities in water catchments affected by this issue.
- **Protected Sites Strategies:** engaging local authorities, in the PSS development process as the next tool for nature recovery.

Aims:

- help you understand why considering nature is important for all cabinet members and portfolio holders;
- explain how nature fits into the wider context of changes to local government and planning;
- explore opportunities for investing in local nature, and
- provide you with take away actions on what you can do to support and benefit from nature.

Time	Item
5 mins	Introduction
20 mins	Nature in context
15 mins	Over to you... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the challenges and opportunities?• What can you do in your role as a member?
15 mins	What's next? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is your takeaway action?• Opportunity to continue the conversation

To join the Slido: scan the QR code...

Or you can join by using the links provided in the chat.



SLIDO QUESTION - Has your local authority declared a nature/biodiversity emergency?

By the end of the session, we'd like your views...

- Councillor's Network
- Share ideas, ask questions, solve problems
- Support by PAS

Biodiversity net gain forum for LPAs

A place for local authority officers to ask questions, post updates, share experience and co-develop PAS support on biodiversity net gain (BNG). If you want us to add colleagues, please email pas@local.gov.uk with their details.

Set up people AE AS AS AM AF AB AE AR AD AP AN AS AB AM AA AK AS AJ AL AA + 267 just 1

General	1. The BNG System	2. DM Processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KR Regeneration of vegetation on cleared site Hi everyone, I have an application where they have GH BNG on Infrastructure Schemes BNG Regulations — Hi everyone, Has anyone CW Professional Ecologist for Statutory Metric Question — Hi Everyone, I was under the Drop-In #29 scratchy notes General Updates • Case studies – LPAs own land ***PLEASE RESPOND ASAP*** PAS End of Year Programme Evaluation 24/25 (Part 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CH Habitat Banking - Exec Cab Report Off-site Biodiversity Market/Statutory Credits Metric values changing when clicking Enable Editing SE Issues around Habitat Banks for coastal/inter-tidal habitats Understanding Monitoring Reports / Schedules NC Financial Treatment of BNG Monitoring Fees Monitoring & Enforcement — Apologies, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SR One Site, two apps - claiming exemptions Exemptions — Not sure if this has been LB BNG and statutory undertakers' infrastructure Hi all, A solicitor mentioned to me in passing that CW Hedgerow in planters? Planning Applications: Quality & Consistency AS BNG self-build exemption. Mortgagor refusing to sign S106 JA School Site/Outdoor Classroom Planning Applications: Quality & Consistency
3. Policy	Auto-Check-ins (PAS Team)	Schedule
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DO Biodiversity Gain Plan (The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications) Drafting Local Plans Local Plans — A post on LinkedIn from Drafting Local Plans - What are the Key Topics & Questions? NB Including retrospective applications in policy Other Council Policies & Interactions with BNG JA Legal status/weight to give metric user guide Other Council Policies & Interactions with BNG 	<p>Send questions to your team on a schedule to get fresh insights.</p> <p>Ask a question</p>	<p>TUE, APR 1</p> <p>BNG Drop-In (Fortnightly Network Session)</p> <p>9:30am - 11:30am</p>
Docs & Files		
	PAS Team 2025 2024	

Why a nature 'emergency'?

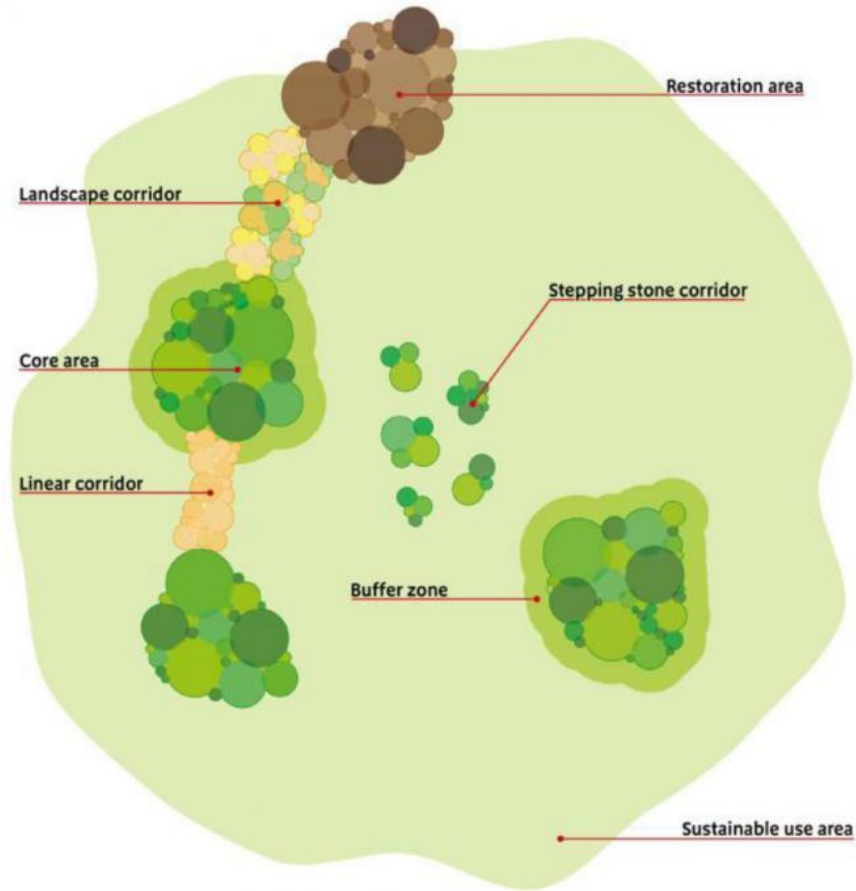
- **Climate and biodiversity crises** – UK is in bottom 10% globally and worst G7 nation for biodiversity loss.
- **Health crisis:** Annual loss to economy due to mental health absence estimated at £70 - £100bn.
- Nature is key to mitigating & adapting to climate change and supporting health & wellbeing.
- Focus on nature *conservation* hasn't stopped decline → need to move towards **nature recovery**.



The abundance of 753 terrestrial and freshwater species has on average fallen by 19% across the UK since 1970.

[State of Nature 2023](#)

What do we need to do to restore nature?



- We need: **‘more, bigger, better, and more joined up’** spaces for nature (Lawton review of 2010).
- Nature networks are better at delivering all the benefits that nature provides.
- Planning for nature early helps protect what’s important and deliver nature in the right places.
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a key part of this.

How do we address the nature emergency alongside our other priorities... ?



How can nature help?

Key challenges

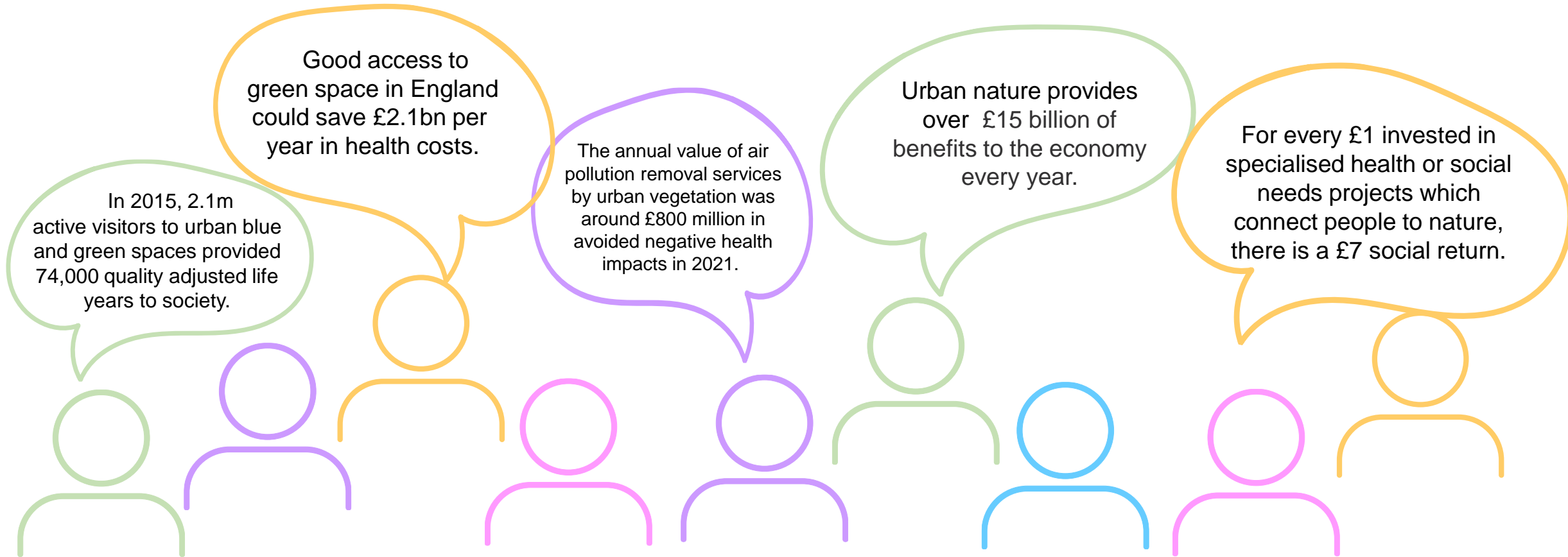
- Funding gap
- Rising costs
- Climate change
- Social care
- Mental and physical health
- Housing need
- Aging population

- Healthier housing and places
- Active transport
- Better health and well being
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Reduced flood risk
- Improved air and water quality
- Thriving biodiversity

Outcomes

- Increasing prosperity
- Strengthening communities
- Reducing inequalities
- Improving the environment
- Protecting the vulnerable

The benefits of nature for people

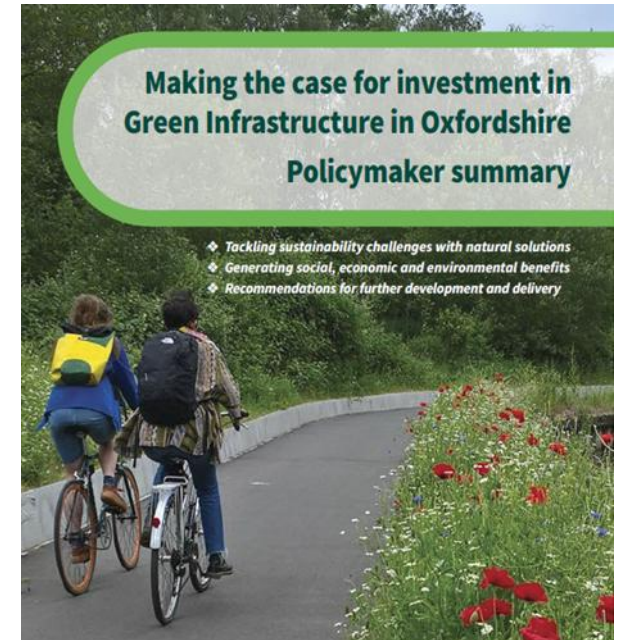


The cost of doing nothing

Problem	Symptoms in Oxfordshire	Annual cost
Mental Health	55 suicides p.a., people with anxiety and depression, eating disorders, lost productivity	£ 1,300,000,000
Obesity	200,000 overweight adults and 100,000 obese adults (costs are in addition to those for inactive lifestyles)	£ 427,000,000
Air pollution	Heart disease, c53,000 people receiving treatment for Asthma; c400 air pollution related deaths; loss in productive years	£ 207,000,000
Transport	Congestion: fuel & time wasted & increased cost of doing business	£ 170,000,000
Transport	31 fatal and 242 serious and 1240 minor accidents - of these: 7 fatal casualties and 74 serious accidents amongst pedestrians and cyclists.	£ 135,000,000
Inactive lifestyles	65,000 people leading inactive lifestyles	£ 120,000,000
Noise	Urban road noise - nuisance & illnesses (avg. of range £98m-£140m)	£ 119,000,000
TOTAL	Cost of top seven sustainability problems in Oxfordshire	£2,496,000,000

Table 1: Summary table of the top seven sustainability challenges in Oxfordshire and their annual cost to Oxfordshire GVA.

Source: [Oxfordshire County Council & Brillianto](#)



A report commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council

This report was prepared by Dr Ingo Schöder, Brillianto
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 Brillianto April 2021



Funding and financing nature

Common sources

- Public sector funding
- Planning and development
- Output-based payments for ecosystem services
- Opportunities to unlock place-based funding
- Income generation and loans
- Alternative asset management structures

Alternative sources

- Taxation, incl levies
- Multi agency opportunities
- Private funding, such as through water companies and corporates
- Charitable giving and voluntary sector involvement

Lots of change on the way...

Local Government
and planning reform

Now

Land Use Framework
consultation
New National Planning Policy
Framework, including new
housing targets
Government growth mission

On the horizon

Planning and Infrastructure Bill,
including new local plan system
Devolution
Local government
reorganisation

Nature-specific aspects

Now

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)
Local Nature Recovery
Strategies (LNRS)
Enhanced biodiversity duty
Emerging Protected Sites
Strategies

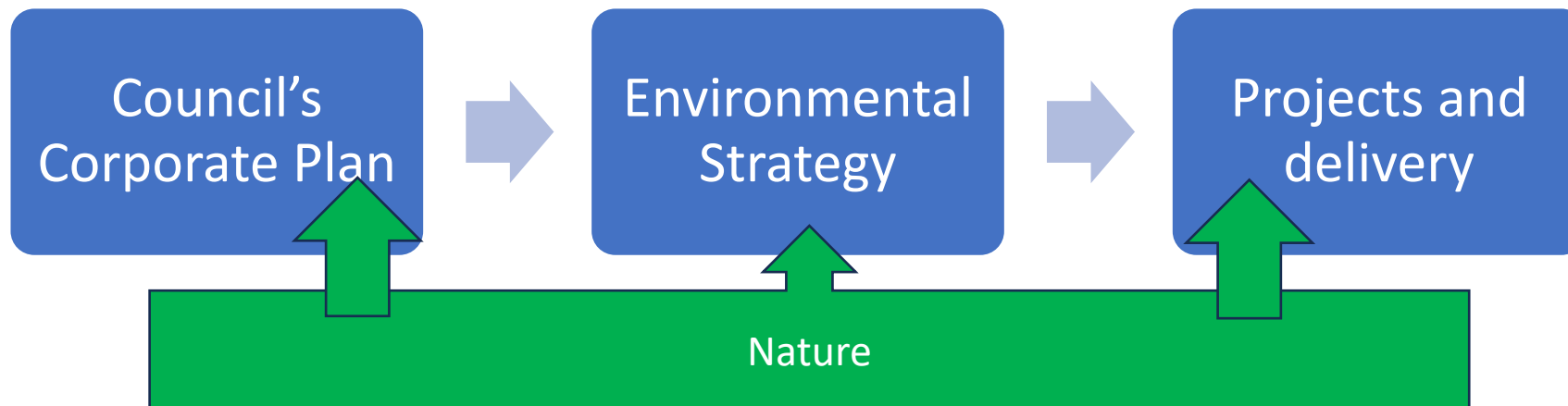
On the horizon

‘Nature Restoration Fund’
New strategic authorities with a
role in LNRS and climate, and
Spatial Development Strategies
New Government Environmental
Improvement Plan

What are the opportunities?

- Planning at a strategic scale and integrating nature into plans and strategies is exactly what is needed to restore nature and for nature to best deliver wider benefits for communities.
- Collaboration and partnerships are key to taking action for nature recovery.

How does this all link up to what you're doing and your priorities and challenges?



Sustainable Environment

- Total Wiltshire emissions CO2
- Wiltshire Council’s carbon footprint
- No. EV charging points
- Council homes retrofitted for energy efficiency/renewable energy
- Renewable energy capacity in Wiltshire
- No. Solar Together installations
- Renewable energy generated on the council estate (kWh)
- Number of staff and Cllrs completing carbon literacy training
- Nature based solutions for climate change
- Sequestering carbon – tree planting
- New development nitrogen impacts mitigated
- Council land used for mitigation using nature based solutions
- % recycling
- Pushing waste disposal methods up the waste hierarchy

Our mission



● Thriving Economy ● Resilient Society ● Sustainable Environment ● Empowered People

Thriving Economy

- Green corridors for nature and people
- Commercial sector – farming food security/nature
- Circular economy

Resilient Society

- Community engagement – joint delivery of projects
- % Planning applications completed

Empowered People

- Connecting people with nature – physical and mental wellbeing

North Devon Council Carbon, Environment and Biodiversity Plan

- July 2019 - North Devon Council **declared a Climate Emergency** which committed a target to reach net carbon neutrality by 2030.
- June 2022 - **Carbon, Environment and Biodiversity Plan** sets out the Council's road map to carbon neutrality recognising the need to integrate climate change and sustainability into the heart of their governance and processes.

The image shows two vertical panels from the website www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk. Each panel contains several sections with icons and bullet points. The left panel includes sections for fossil fuels, energy consumption, community action, and carbon capture. The right panel includes sections for escaping greenhouse gas emissions, developing a resilient economy, circular resource use, and natural carbon storage. Both panels feature the 'dce Devon Climate Emergency' logo at the bottom.

www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk

Fossil fuels no longer an energy source.

- We use more renewable energy
- Communities are active in energy issues
- We walk, cycle & use electric vehicles

Energy consumption is minimal.

- We drive less, we are active and healthy
- Services are local, reducing travel needs
- All buildings are more efficient

Community action for a net-zero Devon.

- We think innovatively
- Communities share ideas of net-zero
- Citizens are at the centre of change

Carbon captured from fuels burnt.

- Only used for unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions
- Devon pilots carbon capture & storage projects e.g. catching smoke from industrial chimneys

Escaping greenhouse gas emissions are minimised.

- Reduce escaping gases from sewage works, landfill & electrical equipment

Develop a resilient economy.

- A circular, just, regenerative economy
- Reskill workers e.g. in renewable energy
- We spend money locally

Resources are used more circularly

- We consume fewer materials
- Reduce household & commercial waste
- We reuse, repair & recycle more

Maximise natural carbon storage

- Adapt to climate impacts e.g. flood controls
- Trees planted & habitats restored
- We enjoy healthy, locally sourced foods

dce Devon Climate Emergency

Source: [North Devon Council](https://www.northdevon.gov.uk)

Project – Roundbarrow Nature Reserve

- Council owned 120 hectares dairy farm - tenant served notice to quit
- Opportunity to restore land to a chalk grassland nature reserve as an environmental offsetting project
- The land is / will continue to be managed for food. The restored chalk grassland will be grazed at conservation levels by cattle and sheep
- Meets wider council objectives - Business Plan, GBI Strategy and Climate Strategy and presents opportunities for new partnerships
- No current public rights of way on the land
- Creating a new 5 m wide bridleway between villages of Firsdow and Pitton
- Links to wider footpath and bridleway network
- Creating a new community orchard



Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- Ensures habitats in a better state after development complete
- Developments must achieve minimum 10% net gain
- Gain is measured in 'Biodiversity Units' (BUs)
- BUs created by enhancements to land

The BNG 'hierarchy'

- Onsite - BNG achieved by creating BUs on land within the development site
- Offsite (1) – BNG achieved purchasing BUs created on land outside development site)
- Offsite (2) - BNG achieved by purchasing 'credits' directly from government - 'last resort')

Habitat Banking:

- If onsite not possible - **offsite BUs required**
- Landowners enhance land to create **biodiversity units** (BUs) for sale £ to developers - 'habitat banking'.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG): Opportunities



- **LPA Strategy:**

- Facilitate habitat bank creation
- Support local development, local biodiversity gains
- Local habitat banks – process, legal agreements
- Service – income for advice
- Council's own land – create income for Council
- OR happy to see BNG delivered elsewhere?

- **Councillor role:**

- Contribute to / approve strategy / link to other corporate and environmental objectives
- Approvals for change of use of land
- Setting prices, approving investments
- Approve communications, press releases, articles
- Liaising with communities and local groups

Our off-site biodiversity net gain Regulation Service
We offer a paid service to help with the setting up and then regulation of a legal agreement associated with an off-site BNG site.

The S106 agreement:

- binds the landowner and any successors in title
- means that we will ensure that the landowner (or another person) manages the habitat to the standard set out in the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan we agree with them (for 30 years after the work is completed)

View a [draft S106 agreement](#) (Word, 90.2 KB).

We will accept expressions of interest from:

- landowners
- agents
- habitat bank brokers
- developers

You should submit an expression of interest as early as possible. We've received a lot of expressions, [so have setup a quarterly review schedule](#).
Interest submissions are confidential.



Challenges/risk

- Resources, skills
- Market regulation
- Nature Markets trading

Over to you...

- What are the challenges and opportunities?
- What can you do in your role as a member?
- What do you want to know more about?

SLIDO QUESTION – Why are members important in the response to the nature emergency?

SLIDO QUESTION - As a member, what have you done within your local authority to address the nature emergency?



- Awareness of the range of solutions that might be available to you through peer discussions.
- Sharing knowledge and perspectives surrounding recent development on nature.
- A level of reassurance, to ensure you're on the right track.
- Improving your understanding of nature's importance and integrating this within current and future council priorities
- The ability to promote both good and bad practice in a private space to support other member peers in responding to individual local challenges.



SLIDO QUESTION – Would you find a members' network useful?

A special thank you for championing nature recovery within your communities...And for attending this session!



[Local Authority Nature Recovery Toolkit | Local Government Association](#)

SLIDO QUESTION – What's your main takeaway action from the session today?

SLIDO QUESTION – Did you find this session useful?

Thank you for attending



youtube.com/@paswebmaster



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