

**Devon Local Planning
Authorities** – working together to
achieve Biodiversity Net Gain

Planning Guidance Biodiversity Gain Plans

This guidance note has been designed for both major and minor developments (as defined by The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015)

July 2025

Biodiversity Gain Plans

Introduction - What is a Biodiversity Gain Plan?

A [Biodiversity Gain Plan \(BGP\)](#) is a stand-alone document that outlines how a development will achieve a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity, as required by planning permission.

It is distinct from the [biodiversity metric calculation tool](#) and other supporting documents, such as a [Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan](#) or a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan.

Why submit a Biodiversity Gain Plan?

All consented planning applications subject to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain will have a nationally imposed condition that will need to be formally discharged prior to commencement of development.

The deemed condition is included as an informative on the Decision Notice.

The determination of the Biodiversity Gain Plan is the mechanism to confirm whether the development meets the biodiversity gain objective. **Development may not commence until the Biodiversity Gain Plan is approved.**

Process for submitting a Biodiversity Gain Plan

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must be submitted no earlier than one day after permission has been granted, and a decision must be made by the relevant planning authority within 8 weeks whether to discharge the general biodiversity gain condition or not.

The fee will be refunded if a determination is not made within 12 weeks from the date of receipt, unless an extension of time is agreed. For ease of use and to ensure all relevant information is submitted, the applicant is encouraged to use the [Biodiversity Gain Plan template](#).

It is recommended that a draft Biodiversity Gain Plan is submitted with planning submissions to ensure the required information has been considered at an early stage and to minimise potential delays with discharging the general biodiversity gain condition.

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide all necessary supporting documents with the submission of the Biodiversity Gain Plan. This includes the following:

- A completed copy of the statutory biodiversity metric excel spreadsheet in .xls format,
- Defra condition assessment sheets,
- Updated pre-development and post-development plans/maps based on confirmed site layouts,
- A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (for significant onsite enhancements, if appropriate) and;
- Any other required documentation.

Please note that a failure to submit an acceptable and complete Biodiversity Gain Plan will mean the condition cannot be discharged and development cannot commence.

The commencement of development before the BNG condition is discharged is considered a breach of planning control.

What information must be included in the Biodiversity Gain Plan?

The following content of a Biodiversity Gain Plan is required for development which is not to proceed in phases. Where planning permission is granted that has the effect of permitting development in phases, there are different requirements for the Biodiversity Gain Plan

Under paragraph 14(2) of Schedule 7A of [The Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#), a Biodiversity Gain Plan must include the following matters:

- information about the steps taken or to be taken to minimise the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the onsite habitat and any other habitat;
- the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- the post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- any registered off-site biodiversity gain allocated to the development and the biodiversity; and
- any biodiversity credits purchased for the development.

In addition, under Articles 37C(2) and 37C(4) of [The Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(England\) Order 2015](#), the following specified matters are required, where development is not to proceed in phases:

- name and address of the person completing the Plan, and (if different) the person submitting the Plan;
- a description of the development and planning permission reference number (to which the plan relates);
- the [relevant date](#), for the purposes of calculating the pre-development biodiversity value of onsite habitats and if proposing an earlier date, the reasons for using this earlier date;
- the [completed biodiversity metric calculation tool\(s\)](#), stating the publication date of the tool(s), and showing the calculation of the pre-development onsite value on the relevant date, and post-development biodiversity value;
- a description of arrangements for maintenance and monitoring of habitat enhancement to which paragraph 9(3) of Schedule 7A to the 1990 Act applies – [significant onsite habitat enhancement](#) which must be maintained for at least 30 years after the development is completed;
- a description of the actions to be taken for the purpose of applying the biodiversity gain hierarchy, including any reasons for not following the order of priority;
- pre-development and post-development plans showing the location of onsite habitat (including any irreplaceable habitat) on the relevant date, and drawn to an identified scale and showing the direction of North;
- a description of any [irreplaceable habitat](#) on the land to which the plan relates which exist on the relevant date and the arrangements for compensation for any impact the development has on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat; and
- if [habitat degradation](#) has taken place:
 - i. a statement to this effect,
 - ii. the date immediately before the degradation activity,
 - iii. the completed biodiversity tool showing the calculation of the biodiversity value of the onsite habitat on that date, and
 - iv. any available supporting evidence for the value.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must address the above to be considered suitable for discharge.

Helpful tips on completing the Biodiversity Gain Plan can be found on the [Government webpages](#).

Notes:

1. As BNG becomes more established and there are appeal decisions and case law the above guidelines will potentially require adjustment.