



Reference: EIR4041

Request:

I would like to request, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the following information:

- When is the Local Planning Authority planning to introduce Biodiversity Net Gain as a mandatory requirement for all small development projects in the LPA's jurisdiction? Please provide a specific date and a short definition of what the LPA classes as a 'small development project'.

Local Plan policy DM5.2 "Protection of Green Infrastructure" requires, among other matters, "proposals for new green infrastructure, or improvements to existing should seek net gains for biodiversity...." And policy DM5.5 requires, among other matters, that all development proposals should "incorporate beneficial biodiversity and geodiversity conservation features providing net gains to biodiversity, unless otherwise shown to be inappropriate". The Local Plan was adopted in 2017. In terms of the emerging requirements associated with the Environment Bill, the legislative requirements will be complied with as per the requirements set out in any legislation. Any other local requirements would require revised Local Plan policy. The Authority at this time does not have a programme in place to update its current Local Plan. Within North Tyneside there is presently no definition for a "small development project". Planning process would define Minor development as development up to 10 dwellings or 0.5 hectares and major development as anything in excess of that.

- If a specific date has not yet been decided, does your Local Planning Authority intend to introduce a requirement for planning applications to include localised Biodiversity Net Gain plans for small development project within the 24 months following the passing of the Environment Bill? (Please define 'Biodiversity Gain Plan' as any document that is analogous to the type of document specified in the Environment Bill).

No decision has been made on this, however , any requirements will be in accordance with published Government guidance associated with the Environment Bill.

- Is there any material that sets out what criteria a Biodiversity Gain Plan needs to meet in order to be accepted by the authority for a small development project? If such material exists please can it be attached to your response. If such material does not exist, please provide a brief description of what criteria a Biodiversity Gain Plan needs to meet within your LPA. (Again, please define 'Biodiversity Gain Plan' as any document that is analogous to the type of document specified in the Environment Bill).

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The Authority does not yet have published information outlining what should be included in a Biodiversity Net Gain Plan - information relevant to Net Gain and demonstrating compliance with the current Local Plan policy requirements are generally expected to be provided within an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) in accordance with the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric with subsequently agreed management and monitoring plans.

- Who is the official at your Local Planning Authority that is tasked with ensuring that Biodiversity Net Gain is implemented for the LPA?

The delivery of both planning and ecology services are the responsibility of the Director of Environment, Housing and Leisure.

- Does the LPA's approach to Net Gain require all 'Biodiversity Gain Plans' to be produced by an accredited ecologist?

Yes we currently as that all BNG Assessments/Plans are undertaken by a suitably qualified/experienced ecologist.