

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMITTEE

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN FINAL DRAFT

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT



Report Reference PL-23-08
Meeting Date 27th November 2023
Agenda Item 10
Prepared by Planning and Facilities Officer

1.0 BACKGROUND

Supplementary Planning Documents add further detail to policies contained within the development plan and are used to provide guidance on specific sites or particular issues. SPDs do not form part of the adopted development plan but they are a material planning consideration in decision taking.

This Final Draft Biodiversity Net Gain SPD provides guidance related to existing development plan policies found in the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (adopted July 2017) and the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (adopted December 2022), particularly those policies that address the approach to protecting the natural environment, securing ecological enhancements and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Under the Environment Act 2021 all planning permissions granted in England, with a few exceptions (including small sites) will be required to deliver at least 10% net gain in November 2023. Biodiversity Net Gain will be required for small sites from April 2024. DEFRA has created a robust Biodiversity Metric to measure biodiversity losses and gains. Proposals will be expected to use the latest Defra approved biodiversity metrics for consistency. DEFRA has also produced a simplified version of the Biodiversity Metric called the Small Sites Metric which can be used for minor development, subject to certain criteria being met.

The link to the document portal is below.

[Link to: Final Draft Biodiversity Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document portal](#)

2.0 MITIGATION HEIRARCHY

Biodiversity Net Gain should be achieved in a way that is consistent with a mitigation hierarchy. All development proposals must therefore ensure losses of, and impacts to, biodiversity are firstly avoided. If impacts cannot be avoided, measures should be developed to mitigate these impacts. Finally, if impacts are unavoidable and cannot be mitigated then, as a last resort, compensation measures should be provided. This hierarchy is mirrored in policy E3 of the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan.

3.0 DECISION

The committee should consider a submission to the Final Draft Biodiversity Net Gain SPD.