

Liz Milne notes of BNG Implementation Advisory Group meeting 17th March 2021

BNG policy update

- The Environment Bill was paused earlier this year; anticipate this will return in May followed by Royal Assent in Autumn.
- Work continues despite “pause”.
- Working (with MHCLG) towards a consultation on secondary legislation in Summer.
- “BNG plan” that developers will need to submit with application.
- Policy questions wrt how things might work in practice.
- Looking at user needs – BNG register, biodiversity credit etc.
- Looking at LPAs – biodiversity capacity and capability survey; plus PAS project on LPAs Env Bill training and guidance.
- Creation of BNG sites register and Biodiversity Credits Scheme – contact sadie.a.hobson@naturalengland.org.uk
- Some engagement ahead of formal consultation. If there is a particular area interested in engaging with further, email Charlie Coombs at charlie.coombs@defra.gov.uk
- Using previous comments from group on net gain plan and guidance.
- Expect launch of the metric 3.0 in Spring 2021.
- BNG timetable – Royal Assent in Autumn 2021 – transition period for 2 years – BNG mandatory Autumn 2023.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies

- Pilots to test thinking and to inform regulations and guidance.
- Pilots will now run until end of May.

BNG British Standard

- BS 8683 – A process for designing and implementing biodiversity net gain
- Spring/summer 2020 consultation – 800+ comments.
- Draft standard revised and edited.
- Voluntary standard not linked to government policy of legislation.
- Applies to development and land management.
- Could be used in project specifications, procurement or planning conditions.
- Process standard, encompassing: preparation, design, implementation and management/maintenance/monitoring. Does NOT include biodiversity outcome delivery.
- For companies, ecologists, LPAs and land owners/managers.
- For LPAs - to receive consistency in the reporting of BNG proposals.
- Late spring/early summer for release.

Additionality

- Working on definition of additionality – noted there is uncertainty in practice of what this might be so need clear guidance.
- Draft policy and draft principles in development.
- Will be consulting and drafts will be circulated.

- (Note – I have stressed the importance of anything relating to this needing to be clear and easy to interpret at the LPA level – noting concerns that any grey areas this may create could be problematic for the approach in practice. I have requested early sight of and engagement with ALGE/ADEPT wrt the policy/principles development).