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Greater Manchester Habitat Bank Verification and Auditing Guidance

September 2024

Overview of guidance

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is defined by the Department for Environment, Food, & Rural Affairs (Defra) as an approach to development that makes sure that habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than they were before the development¹.

BNG is mandatory for major developments and small sites under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

BNG requires the application of the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy, which specifies that adverse effects to habitats of medium, high, or very high distinctiveness should be first be avoided where possible and then mitigated.

All remaining on-site habitat losses should then be compensated by prioritising in order, the enhancement of existing on-site habitats, creation of new on-site habitats, allocation of registered off-site gains, and the purchase of statutory biodiversity credits. Statutory biodiversity credits should only be used as a final resort.

Given this, if sufficient habitat gains cannot be achieved on-site (within the planning application red line boundary of a development), it must next be delivered off-site, in line with the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy. Where habitat gains are delivered off-site, these are referred to as 'habitat banks', which must be legally secured and registered on Natural England's Biodiversity Gain Site Register prior to any sale of units to a development.

The market for off-site BNG is developing, with a pressing need for off-site Biodiversity Units in Greater Manchester. The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) provides ecological advice services for 9 of the 10 authorities in GM (Stockport has their own in-house ecology service). The GM local authorities and GMEU are receiving frequent requests from developers for these units, but local availability across Greater Manchester is lacking. This shortage could lead to:

- Planning applications halted/delayed due to lack of off-site BNG options.
- Planning applications approved that have off-site BNG being delivered elsewhere in the country.
- Benefits of off-site BNG going outside of Greater Manchester.

¹Defra (2024). Guidance – Understanding biodiversity net gain. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain>

²Defra (2024). Register a biodiversity gain site. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-a-biodiversity-gain-site>

There are multiple organisations with land within GM wanting to be set up as habitat banks and accepted onto Natural England's Biodiversity Gain Site Register. Some districts are also making their land available for habitat banking. Both options need to be pursued to support off-site BNG delivery.

A supply and demand study of biodiversity units outside the development sites was undertaken by Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) in 2024³. The findings revealed that the offsite BNG demand in Greater Manchester could amount to £132.8 million or £8.8 million annually over 15 years, therefore revealing the substantial demand for offsite BNG units in Greater Manchester.

There is also a need for a transparent verification and auditing standard to ensure they operate in accordance with local principles and in-line with national best practice.



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³Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (2024) Biodiversity Net Gain in Greater Manchester - Assessment of Offsite Need for and Supply of Biodiversity Units. Available at: <https://naturalcourse.co.uk/uploads/2024/01/BNG-Needs-and-Supply-Summary-Report.pdf>

Local Planning Authority (LPA) role in growing the off-site biodiversity unit market

There are two roles that local authorities can play in supporting the development of a local off-site BNG market, namely:

Role 1

Bringing their own sites forward

for off-site BNG by preparing them for sale to developers.

Role 2

Supporting local third-party

sites by providing legal routes to secure them (via s106) and offering a verifying and auditing role in the absence of or complementary to a responsible body.

Making progress on both of these will help to bring forward sites across Greater Manchester to meet developer demand. This Guidance focusses on what is needed by LPAs and GMEU (or in-house ecologists i.e. in Stockport) to effectively deliver Role 2; however, the processes proposed within this document are also relevant to LPAs bringing their own sites forward.

¹Defra (2024). Guidance – Understanding biodiversity net gain. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain>

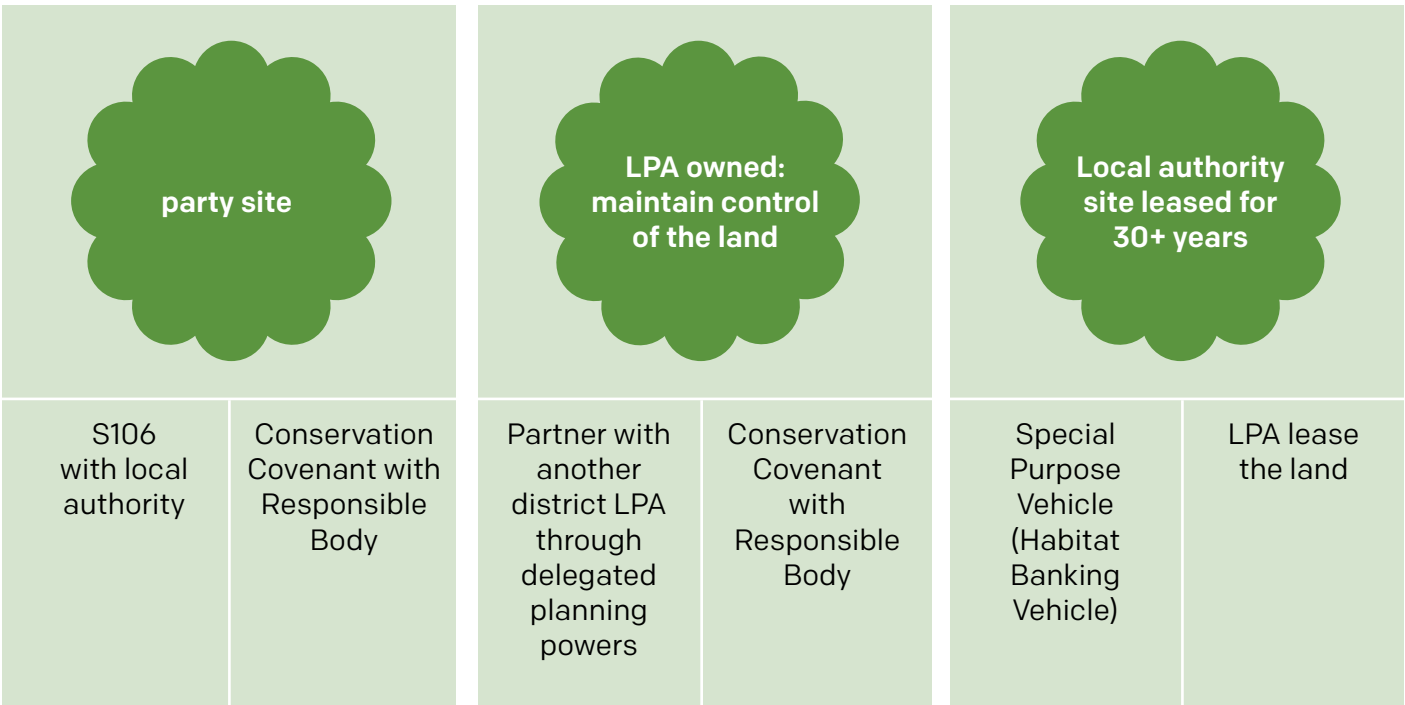
²Defra (2024). Register a biodiversity gain site. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-a-biodiversity-gain-site>

How can Local Planning Authorities support local habitat banks in Greater Manchester

LPAs have powers to legally secure land via a S106 agreement, which can act as a necessary step towards registration of a habitat bank site so that it can serve developments needing planning consent.

Conservation Covenants⁴. Both these forms of legal agreements can be used to secure a habitat bank. A figure demonstrating the blend of options available to bring habitat bank sites forward is shown below.

The process of securing habitat banks can take place irrespective of whether the site is requiring planning permission. The option of LPAs using S106 agreements sits alongside the option of Responsible Bodies signing



⁴ See more on conservation covenants here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/getting-and-using-a-conservation-covenant-agreement>

This Guidance sets out the process for verifying and auditing habitat banks that come forward in Greater Manchester, detailing the roles the LPA and GMEU (or in-house ecologists) will play to ensure successful delivery of off-site BNG. Its purpose is to provide consistent guidance to be used in the absence of any district specific guidance which may be available.

This process can be used whenever a habitat bank chooses to enter S106 agreements with a LPA; however, it also sets out local

principles and criteria which can be adopted by Responsible Bodies operating within Greater Manchester to ensure high standards are maintained within the off-site BNG market.

LPAs aren't obliged to follow the Guidance which should be seen as adaptive and there to provide help with the process. Whether they decide to adopt the Guidance and sign S106 agreements with Habitat Bank providers will be decisions which they will make on a case-by-case basis.



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Who will be involved?

The process will involve 3 key actors:

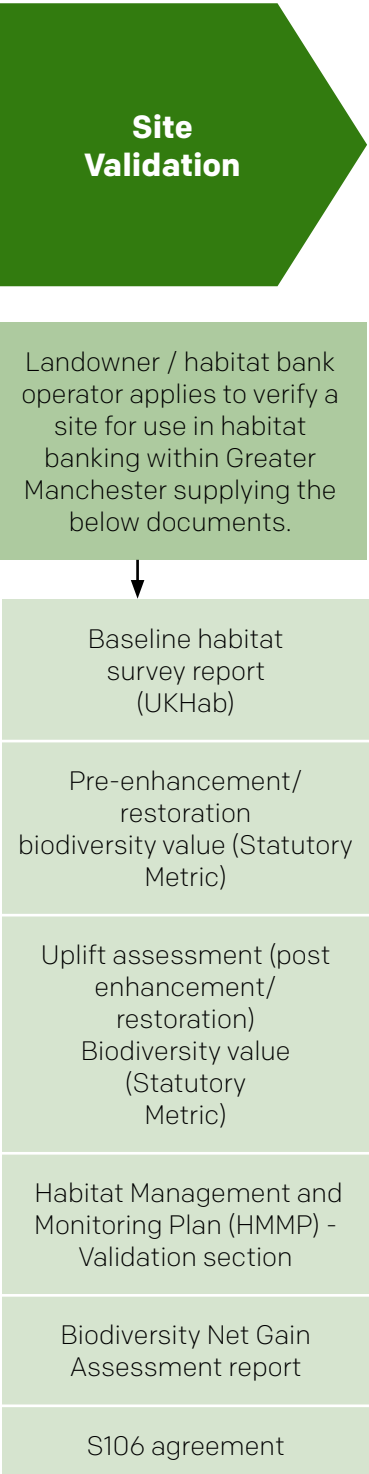
Habitat bank operator or landowner – these will be responsible for both habitat creation, enhancement and ongoing management works within the habitat bank site. They will also be responsible for monitoring the site throughout the 30 years of a legal agreement. They will be the ‘applicant’ for kickstarting the process for registering a site to be a habitat bank through this verification and auditing service. They will then be responsible for passing monitoring reports throughout the 30-year period to the LPA and GMEU (the ‘auditors’).

LPA – The relevant LPA in which the land sits will be responsible for receiving and verifying any non-ecological information submitted by the habitat bank operator/landowner as part of the habitat bank application process. This will include information relating to the signing of a legal agreement and any wider environmental constraints such as archaeology and contaminated land. They will work with GMEU to legally secure the site before it is registered on Natural England’s Biodiversity Gain Site Register. They will also work with GMEU to take enforcement action, where deemed absolutely necessary.

GMEU - GMEU will be responsible for both receiving and verifying the ecological information submitted by the habitat bank operator or landowner as part of the application process. They will work with the relevant LPA to legally secure the site before it is registered on Natural England’s Biodiversity Gain Site Register. They will also be responsible for checking the monitoring reports as agreed in legal agreements with the habitat bank, undertaking spot checks of the site at regular intervals and helping the LPA in taking enforcement action where necessary.

Key steps

The various steps required in the habitat bank verification and auditing process are set out below. Click on each step to find out more.



Validation

The process begins with habitat bank developers submitting an application to register a habitat bank in the Greater Manchester area. For this initial step, the relevant LPA will assign an officer to validate whether the habitat bank has provided the correct documentation to allow a thorough review. The following documentation are the essential documents a habitat bank will need to submit:

- ✓ Baseline habitat survey report (classified using UKHab)
- ✓ Pre-enhancement/restoration biodiversity value (Statutory metric)
- ✓ Uplift assessment (post enhancement/restoration) biodiversity value (Statutory metric)
- ✓ Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan
- ✓ Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report
- ✓ S106 template

Site
Verification

GMEU check compliance of the habitat bank against the Habitat Bank Criteria checklist.

Verification

A detailed ‘Habitat Bank Criteria’ checklist is provided at [Appendix A](#) to assist habitat bank developers in supplying the correct information to LPAs and GMEU. This ensures that LPAs and GMEU can properly evaluate habitat bank design and management before entering into a legal agreement. The criteria will form the basis of the review by GMEU and the LPA during the verification stage and therefore, applicants are encouraged to familiarise themselves with this checklist to ensure they cover all necessary information.

Securement

Offset provider secures the site to deliver BNG Uplift over 30 years.

Legal agreement securing site with the landowner 30yrs.

Payment plan & contingency arrangements.

Final agreed Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP).

Securement

At this stage in the process, GMEU and the LPA will be satisfied with the habitat bank proposals, and the LPA legal team will work with the applicant to agree the terms of the S106 agreement. Both parties will sign this agreement for a minimum of 30 years. LPAs will agree their own templates for these agreements; however, applicants should familiarise themselves with the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) S106 template for habitat banks⁵, which has been used as a starting point to refine agreements that work in the Greater Manchester context.

⁵ See more on conservation covenants here: [PAS Biodiversity Net Gain \(BNG\) Legal Agreement and Planning Condition Templates | Local Government Association](#)

Registration on the Natural England Biodiversity Gains Site Register

Site registered on the Biodiversity Gain Site Register.



Units can be sold to a developer and used within their Biodiversity Gain Plan to get planning approval.

Registration

At this point, the legal agreement will be signed, allowing the habitat bank to be registered onto Natural England's Biodiversity Gain Site Register. This will allow the sale of units to developers in order to satisfy their planning requirements. [Appendix B](#) summarises how the process of securing, registering and auditing habitat banks interacts with the Development Management Planning process.

Delivery

Maintenance and management commences (delivery of the HMMP) by the landowner or habitat bank operator.



Ongoing maintenance management and monitoring by the landowner or habitat bank operator.



Reporting sent to GMEU at timeframes specified within the S106 agreement.

Delivery

Delivery of the habitat bank refers to habitat creation and enhancement works, as well as the management and monitoring of those habitats, to be undertaken by the habitat bank operator or landowner. This work may commence prior to the above actions, but no later than a specified date after securement of the site, which will be defined within the associated S106 agreement.

Monitoring must take place, as a minimum, on years 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30, and will involve trained ecologists visiting the site to undertake update field surveys to determine the progress of habitat creation and enhancement works against the previously verified and secured Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP). Reports detailing this process must be produced and sent to GMEU for review at these intervals (see auditing section).

Auditing

Monitoring reports submitted to GMEU, as per the schedule agreed in the HMMP for auditing, and are checked for compliance.



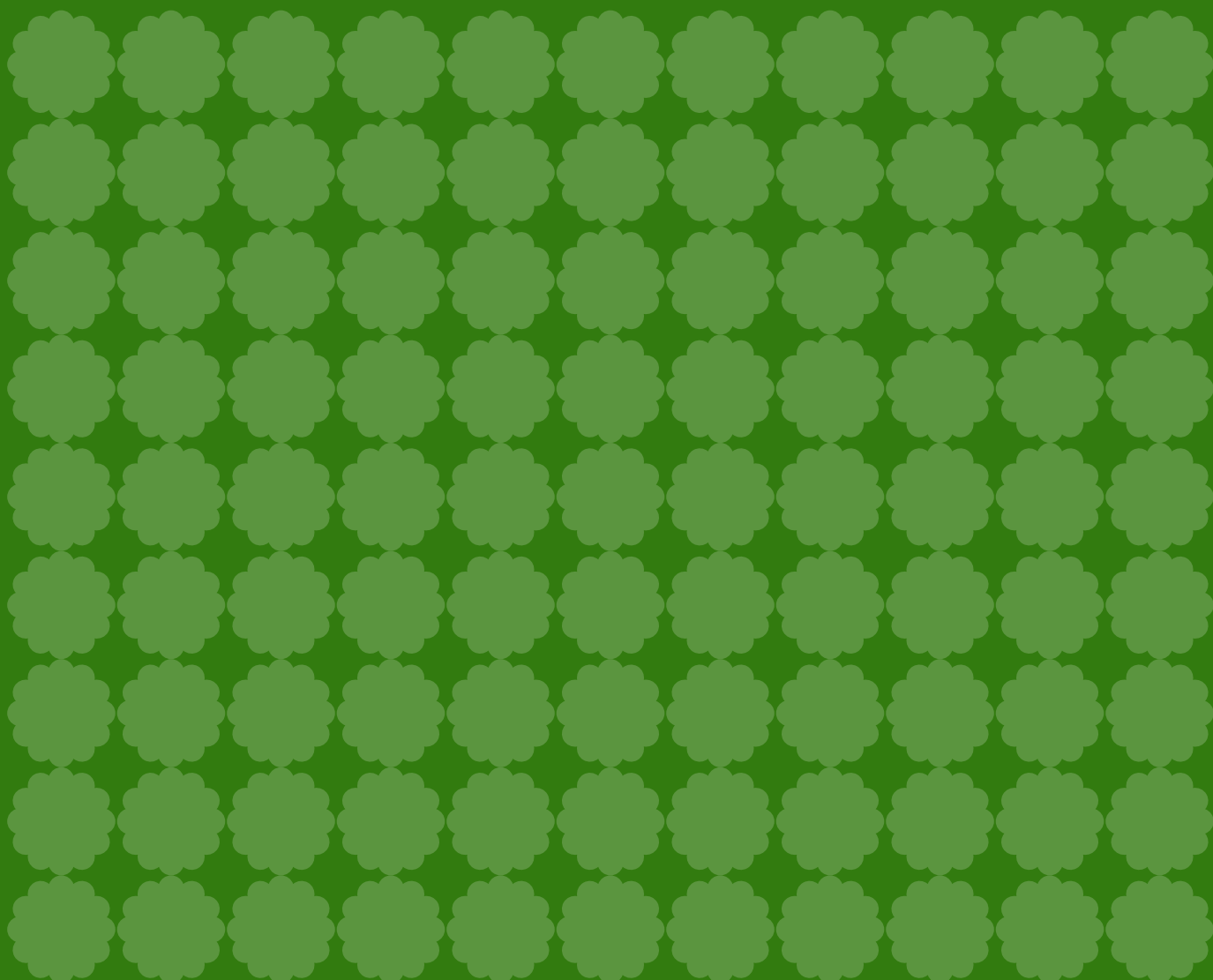
GMEU or LPA report back to DEFRA on BNG every 5 years, as set out in the Environment Act 2021 (Enhanced NERC Biodiversity Duty).

Auditing

Auditing is a key stage in the process and involves GMEU reviewing the monitoring information provided by the habitat bank operator or landowner. GMEU will review the progress of habitat creation and enhancement against the previously verified HMMP, biodiversity net gain report and biodiversity metric, and judge whether the works are on track.

Where there are signs that the habitat works are not achieving objectives, remedial measures may be discussed and agreed with GMEU and the habitat bank operator or landowner. Only in cases where a fundamental breach has occurred, will the LPA legal team and GMEU explore enforcement measures, in line with the terms within the original S106 agreement signed by both parties.

Appendix A - detailed criteria



Key:

Green: Showing elements of the checklist which would be checked by **GMEU**.

Yellow: Showing elements of the checklist which would be checked by other **LPA officers**.

Criteria No	Criteria	Where to provide information	Relevant Guidance
Section 1 - Legality and Compliance			
1.1	<p>The applicant must have legal control over the land.</p> <p><u>Ownership</u></p> <p>The applicant must provide evidence demonstrating they have legal control over the land. This includes any conditional contracts and the specific terms that must be met. The documentation should confirm that the applicant is able to fulfil these conditions.</p> <p>Ownership Confirmation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of Ownership - Official documentation confirming the applicant's legal title to the land. • Conditional Contract Details - A copy of any conditional contracts, clearly stating the conditions. • Control Confirmation - Evidence that the applicant has the authority to satisfy the contractual conditions. • Compliance Plan - A statement or plan outlining how and when the applicant will meet these conditions. <p><u>Tenant / Leasehold Considerations</u></p> <p>Details of any contract (leasehold agreement, tenancy agreement or other) that enables the habitat bank broker to deliver BNG on this land for a minimum of 30 years. The habitat bank broker or landowner needs to be able to place a charge on the land.</p>	<p>Draft Section 106 / legal agreements</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Land Registry Title deed and plan of the land boundary from owner</p> <p>Charges register of title and plan</p> <p>Copy of Leasehold Agreement</p>	<p>The Biodiversity Gain Register (Financial Penalties and Fees) Regulations 2024</p> <p>The Biodiversity Gain Site Register Regulations 2024</p>

Criteria No	Criteria	Where to provide information	Relevant Guidance
Section 1 - Legality and Compliance			
1.2	Permission for Greater Manchester LPAs to enter the land for spot checks Permission for spot inspections by Greater Manchester LPAs staff or a subcontractor to ensure habitat management is being undertaken as stipulated in verified plans.	Draft Section 106 / legal agreements	
1.3	Sale of units outside of Greater Manchester Combined Authority remit Is it proposed to sell units outside of the district the habitat bank is operating in? If yes, is it proposed to sell units outside of the wider Greater Manchester area?	Draft Section 106 / legal agreements	
1.4	Agreement on how to deal with a fundamental breach of management prescriptions The ability to enforce a breach if management prescriptions and targets promised are not delivered.	Draft Section 106 / legal agreements	
1.5	Is the landowner prepared to enter into a s.106 agreement with the relevant District Local Planning Authority (in partnership with the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit)? Is the landowner ready to enter into a Section 106 agreement with the LPAs? The agreement should detail the number and type of biodiversity units available, along with the management and maintenance schedule for the land, which must be maintained for at least 30 years from the date of each unit's transfer or lease. Requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landowner must demonstrate readiness and legal capacity to enter into this agreement. • The agreement must specify all parties involved, including any additional stakeholders necessary under the terms of the S106 agreement. • Planning Advisory Service have provided a suite of template S106 agreements, including a template relating to off-site BNG, which should be used as a basis for agreements with Greater Manchester Districts for habitat banking. 	Letter of Intent or Heads of Terms: Document signed by the landowner confirming their intention to enter into the Section 106 agreement. This document should clearly outline the commitment to the terms specified in the Habitat Bank template, including the provision of biodiversity units and the long-term management and maintenance of the land.	

Criteria No	Criteria	Where to provide information	Relevant Guidance
Section 1 - Legality and Compliance			
1.5		Legal Documentation: Include any additional legal documents that define the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved, as specified in the submitted Habitat Bank template S106.	
1.6	<p>Method of unit sale from habitat bank</p> <p>If the habitat bank is going to be selling units in the future but starting the habitat management work now or prior to sale, (thereby increasing the units available for sale) the 'habitat creation in advance' function in the metric should be used and a procedure for calculating and auditing this must be agreed between the LPA and Habitat Bank provider.</p> <p>If the habitat bank is to be split into 'phases' for selling at different dates into the future, the LPA and Habitat Bank provider need to agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) When the baseline is calculated from for each phase and; 2) When the 30 years for habitat creation / enhancement starts for any one 'phase' <p>The above should be provided on a spatial plan as recommended by Defra.</p> <p>Will the broker / owner provide a certificate and Unique Transaction Number for each sale.</p>	Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan, confirmed within legal agreements.	<p>The Biodiversity Gain Register (Financial Penalties and Fees) Regulations 2024</p> <p>The Biodiversity Gain Site Register Regulations 2024</p>
1.7	<p>Has the Habitat Bank already been registered on the National BNG Register and sold units to developers?</p> <p>If so, please provide details including NE Register number and planning application numbers.</p>	Provision of NE Register Numbers and Planning application references if applicable.	www.gov.uk/guidance/sell-biodiversity-units-as-a-land-manager

Criteria No	Criteria	Where to provide information	Relevant Guidance
Section 2 - Biodiversity Net Gain and Ecological Impact			
2.1	Location Plan Is a detailed and appropriately scaled location plan of the habitat bank provided?	Accurate GIS plans (submitted with a UKHab/ Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report). Note: If a GIS layer / shape file is available then helpful but this is not essential.	
2.2	Additionality Can evidence be provided of Legal, Financial & Ecological Additionality compliance for the habitats proposed at the habitat bank? Financial Additionality: Provide proof that separate funds, such as environmental stewardship or nutrient mitigation payments, are not already allocated for the same land management purposes. For example, checking whether there are any other environmental land management schemes tied to the site, such as the Higher-Level Stewardship Scheme. This should be screened to ensure correct stacking and bundling of biodiversity units has been considered. Legal Additionality: Ensure that the habitat provision is not already legally required for other regulatory or planning purposes. Ecological Additionality: Confirm that the habitats provided offer genuine ecological enhancements beyond the current baseline. Do you intend to sell other ecosystem services units from the land? Outline how you intend to stack and bundle any Nature market credits, including habitat units for BNG, in line with Best Practice Guidance.	Written confirmation of compliance with additionality principles, and 'stacking and bundling' rules, in line with guidance.	www.gov.uk/guidance/sell-biodiversity-units-as-a-land-manager Combining environmental payments and BNG and nutrient mitigation – Feb 2024 What you can count towards a development's BNG – May 2024

Criteria No	Criteria	Where to provide information	Relevant Guidance
Section 2 - Biodiversity Net Gain and Ecological Impact			
2.3	Irreplaceable Habitats Assurance is needed that habitat bank proposals will preserve irreplaceable habitats, as defined by the Statutory Metric, ensuring no adverse impacts. Additionally, this criterion encompasses the protection of other critical ecological features at the habitat bank site, including protected species such as European Species and notable habitats such as UK BAP Priority Habitats . These considerations may need integration with other related criteria to form a comprehensive ecological safeguarding approach.	Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report, Statutory Metric.	Statutory Metric and Associated Guidance
2.4	Provision of achievable uplift in biodiversity value A full Statutory Metric completed for the habitat bank / phase of a habitat bank for which units are to be released. Habitat creation and enhancement proposals within the Statutory Metric should be based on a realistic scenario (i.e. it is better to aim for habitats in worse condition that can later be upgraded, than an unachievable higher condition and face subsequent enforcement action).	Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report, Statutory Metric.	Statutory Metric and Associated Guidance
2.5	How does the habitat bank meet BNG Best Practice Principles? Outline of how the habitat bank meets the 10 key principles of BNG as per CIEEM, CIRIA & IEMA (2016) directly in relation to the habitat bank. Is the Habitat Bank compliant with best practice as outlined in the British Standard BS 8683: 2021 and other subsequent guidance on habitat banks provided by Natural England / Defra that is available at the time of the agreement / survey and report production? Providers should provide brief written justification text to demonstrate how the proposals fit with best practice on BNG. Extent and detail of information required should be linked to size and complexity of habitats provided by the habitat bank.	Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report.	CIEEM / CIRIA / IEMA 2016 BNG Good Practice Principles for development GMCA Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance for Greater Manchester

Criteria No	Criteria	Where to provide information	Relevant Guidance
Section 2 - Biodiversity Net Gain and Ecological Impact			
2.5	<p>Evidence will need to include but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All habitat parcels must be individually referenced and systematically measured with the same software throughout the lifetime of the project. • Management plans to have SMART targets. • Proportionate monitoring proposals for all Biodiversity Units, methods, frequency, timing and reporting procedures with procedures for remedial works if needed. • Roles and responsibilities and competencies of all those involved in implementing the BNG Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) (including contractors). <p>Legal, financial, and other resource requirements for delivery of the detailed management plan including the need for any public or statutory or non-statutory consultation if required.</p>		
2.6	<p>Biological records submission</p> <p>All ecological records collected during surveys from the habitat bank must be submitted to GMEU or relevant LPA local records centre/group. This also applies to each subsequent monitoring report submitted to the LPA.</p>	Additional ecological baseline reports.	
2.7	<p>Adequate ecological baseline, habitat survey and condition assessments completed</p> <p>Provision of full baseline and condition assessment survey information (dates, personnel, methods) undertaken using UK Habitat Classification system (UKHab) and the appropriate habitat condition assessment from the Statutory Metric. Where available, survey information should be submitted in a digital ESRI GIS Shapefile format.</p> <p>Where watercourses are present either within the site or within 10m of the site boundaries, these should be surveyed in accordance with river condition assessment methodology (see section 5.1 Competence for more information).</p> <p>Any baseline data collected should be done so during the appropriate survey season and by competent personnel. Limitations on survey methods and other assumptions made regarding proposed habitat creation and enhancement and their implications must be clearly explained.</p>	Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report, additional ecological baseline reports.	Statutory Metric and Associated Guidance

Criteria No	Criteria	Where to provide information	Relevant Guidance
Section 2 - Biodiversity Net Gain and Ecological Impact			
2.7	Depending on the complexity of the habitat bank site, protected species surveys and reporting may be required, and the need for such surveys and assessments should be determined by a suitably experienced ecologist. Where there is a potential for protected species to utilise the existing site, an assessment of the proposed habitat interventions and their potential impacts on protected species should be made, in light of legislative requirements.		
2.8	<p>Greater Manchester's Local Nature Recovery Strategy Pilot Inclusion of an assessment as to how the habitat bank proposals fit with Greater Manchester LNRS.</p> <p>Note: Provision of a brief assessment (e.g. a few short paragraphs at most) to ensure the conservation value in the landscape context of the site is being considered rather than unit delivery alone.</p> <p>This will be superseded by the final LNRS once available.</p> <p>Note: where overlapping and meeting criteria, has strategic significance been correctly assigned to generate additional units?</p>	Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report.	Statutory Metric and Associated Guidance
2.9	<p>Assessment of offsite need for and supply of biodiversity units</p> <p>Does the proposed habitat bank align with the estimated habitat losses and demands identified in the 'Biodiversity Net Gain in Greater Manchester - Assessment of offsite need for and supply of biodiversity units' report?</p> <p>Are the specific types of habitats being created/enhanced ones which are likely to be in demand within the Greater Manchester context, and is there a study or any data which can evidence demand to match supply within the same District?</p>	Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report – inclusion of details assessing the requirement for the provision of such habitat units.	Biodiversity net gain - Needs and Supply - Summary Report

Criteria No	Criteria	Where to provide information	Relevant Guidance
Section 2 - Biodiversity Net Gain and Ecological Impact			
2.10	<p>Habitat Bank should deliver the best outcomes for biodiversity in Great Manchester</p> <p>Under the updated mandates of the Environment Act 2021 and the strengthened section 40 of the NERC Act, it is essential that Habitat Banks not only meet legal requirements but actively contribute to conserving and enhancing biodiversity within Greater Manchester. Consequently, we will act as an enforcement body only where there is clear evidence that the Habitat Bank significantly enhances local biodiversity.</p> <p>Applicants must provide a detailed justification demonstrating that their habitat design and management plans are optimised for the best possible outcomes for biodiversity, considering local ecological contexts and specific site conditions. This should include how the habitat creation and enhancement align with the broader ecological goals of Greater Manchester.</p> <p>Whilst optional, applicants could consider using the Ecosystem Service Opportunity mapping tool Greater Manchester have created, to justify why they have chosen specific habitat interventions and how it aligns with the opportunities suggested by the tool. This could also help to reveal wider nature markets that might be accessible in the future.</p>		<p>Natural Capital User Guide - Greater Manchester Combined Authority</p> <p>Greater Manchester Produces First City Region-Wide Ecosystem Services Opportunity Mapping Tool Platform</p> <p>Greater Manchester Open Data Infrastructure Map MappingGM</p>
Section 3 - Management and Monitoring			
3.1	<p>Provision of a detailed and costed Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan and consider other legal and environmental constraints</p> <p>The Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) template and all associated guidance developed by Natural England should be used.</p>	Draft Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (including GIS habitat plans).	Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan Template

Criteria No	Criteria	Where to provide information	Relevant Guidance
Section 3 - Management and Monitoring			
3.1	<p>This must set out the detailed prescriptions required that will be undertaken in both the 'establishment' phase as well as the monitoring phase to achieve the desired habitats.</p> <p>Dates of commencement of both the establishment phase and the monitoring for 30 year phase to be agreed between parties before s.106 is signed.</p> <p>This shall consider practical environmental constraints and be supported by evidence. Best Practice should be followed.</p> <p>Ensure all maps are spatially accurate if using GIS the same software should be used throughout the scheme. GPS should be used where possible to allow appropriate monitoring.</p> <p>The proposed management should consider adaptive management techniques in the event that prescriptions may need to be flexible and change over time, for example due to a changing climate, or other changes in conditions outside of the habitat bank operator's control.</p>		
3.2	<p>No conflicting consents, licences or permissions for the site including extant restoration plans</p> <p>Are there any other legal barriers, consents / licences or permissions that are required to enter the habitat bank and undertake habitat management works over the specified 30-year period?</p> <p>Please provide details of any licences. E.g. (not an exhaustive list): shooting or mineral working rights, planning permissions, extant restoration plans, felling licences, aerodrome safeguarding considerations, rights of way issues, permit from Natural England on works to SSSIs (the latter only if government guidance confirms this is possible – BNG consultation response signposts to further guidance on this is forthcoming).</p>	Legal agreements.	<p>PENDING</p> <p><i>Further guidance on when and if SSSIs can be used for BNG or not – when available.</i></p>

Criteria No	Criteria	Where to provide information	Relevant Guidance
Section 3 - Management and Monitoring			
3.3	<p>Sufficient cash flow / funding for 30 years</p> <p>Discuss on a site by site basis</p> <p>Who is going to be responsible for the habitat management if different from the owner?</p> <p>What are the contingency plans should this / your firm fold or go into liquidation within the 30 years, to ensure the habitat proposed will continue to be enhanced and maintained as proposed?</p> <p>Provision of proof of funds: including: third party bond, guarantee, ring fenced fund etc. These must be sufficient to cover 'up-front capital' creation / enhancement works and the subsequent 30 years of management.</p> <p>Funds must be in held for duration of the agreement and held independently for large schemes. An appropriate payment schedule should be in place. All required prior to s.106 sign-off .</p> <p>Options to consider on case-by-case basis for proof of funds include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of 30 year cash flow model for running and management of habitat bank for council assurance only to sense check creation/management costs (using available industry bench mark calculators) but also from finance perspective in terms of underlying assumptions. • Assurance that separate code had been set up in your accounts i.e. ring fencing of funding in relation to habitat bank. • Potential to require the need to report on high level progress in line with cash flow model into the monitoring/reporting requirements in S106. • 'Inclusion of a remediation clause within S106. 	Legal agreements (to include proof of funds which could include 30 year cash flow model, assurance of finance codes, and commitment to financial reporting).	
3.4	<p>Pay LPAs a auditing fee for the habitat creation / enhancement for the duration of the Habitat Bank (at least 30 years)</p> <p>Agree to the provision of an auditing fee to be paid to the Council to monitor the establishment phase and on-going habitat maintenance agreement over a 30 year period</p>	Draft Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan, legal agreements.	

Criteria No	Criteria	Where to provide information	Relevant Guidance
Section 4 - Additional Ecological/Environmental Constraints			
4.1	<p>Contaminated land</p> <p>Is the habitat bank considered to be 'contaminated land' and if so, what costed remediation measures are provided to ensure habitats proposed are feasible?</p> <p>If contaminated land exists, a costed remediation plan will need to be provided in Stage 2.</p>	Additional environmental assessment reports.	
4.2	<p>Consideration of other environmental constraints</p> <p>Provider to have undertaken appropriate due diligence, surveys and assessments and considered all other environmental constraints to achieving suggested habitat enhancement / creation prior to approaching the Council with a proposal. e.g. (but not an exhaustive list).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • soil analysis data for specific habitat types. This may include details of any specific nutrient/ soil stripping and remediation techniques that may be required and evidence that these methods have been adequately costed into the management plan to ensure feasibility. • Are the hydrological conditions suitable for habitats proposed for creation or enhancement (e.g. risk of flooding)? • Are there historic / archaeological / landscape constraints / arboricultural to proposed habitat works? These must have been adequately considered? Please provide evidence that these considerations have been considered appropriately and any mitigation required is proposed employing professional. <p>Access available for required on-site machinery, movement of and infrastructure for cattle and sufficient storage on-site for machinery or other habitat management aspects (e.g. storage of logs from coppicing or provision of corals for cattle – provide evidence that machinery and cattle can access the habitat bank as required.</p>	<p>Additional environmental assessment reports.</p> <p>Note: We expect the applicant to submit all information required and to undertake due diligence, GMEU will not be liable for any missing information that prevents the habitat proposals being delivered as specified.</p>	

Criteria No	Criteria	Where to provide information	Relevant Guidance
Section 4 - Additional Ecological/Environmental Constraints			
4.3	<p>Greater Manchester's Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document</p> <p>An assessment of how the proposals fit with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater Manchester's current The Greater Manchester Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document. Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy. <p>Note: Provision of a brief assessment (e.g. a few short paragraphs at most) to ensure the conservation value in the landscape context of the habitat bank is being considered rather than unit delivery alone.</p>	Additional environmental assessment reports.	
Section 5 - Professional and Technical Requirements			
5.1	<p>Competence</p> <p>Can those involved in the scheme (including but not limited to ecological advisors) provide proof of their competence in BNG?</p> <p>This should include a brief paragraph of experience and skills to undertake relevant BNG surveys and provide appropriate habitat management recommendations as well as membership of an appropriate professional membership body that signs up to a code of professional conduct (e.g. CIEEM).</p> <p>Competence should be in line with definitions provided by CIEEM 2021, the British Standard on Biodiversity Net Gain (8683: 2021) and The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide.</p> <p>The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide defines competency as '<i>someone who can demonstrate they have acquired through training, qualifications or experience, or a combination of these, the knowledge and skills enabling that person to perform specified tasks</i>'.</p> <p>River Condition Assessment assessors must be trained and accredited in the River Condition Assessment methodology.</p>	Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report, additional ecological baseline reports.	

Criteria No	Criteria	Where to provide information	Relevant Guidance
Section 5 - Professional and Technical Requirements			
5.1	State who the project lead or manager is of the habitat bank. There should be named person who is ultimately responsible for the delivery of the habitat bank and state their competency to ensure its successful delivery. This may include an individual or organisation either leading on or supporting the project, with a demonstrable track record in delivery of long-term nature or environmental projects involving habitat interventions and/or land use-changes.	Note: We expect the inclusion of both surveyor competency and details of limitations where baseline surveys have been undertaken, plus the competencies of those ecological advisors responsible for developing plans etc.	

Appendix B - How will the regulation services work alongside the planning service

