

An introduction to the Statutory Biodiversity Metric

Planning Advisory Service & Natural England

24 January 2024

- Microphones are muted and cameras are off
- **Please join Slido to answer polls and ask questions**
 - Go to slido.com and enter this code: **#2033497**
 - Or scan the QR code with your smartphone
- ‘Like’ or thumbs up questions rather than repeat
- We’ll answer what we can / PAS BNG FAQs
- We will be using polls, so please answer these
- We’re recording - slides and the recording will be up on our website asap
- Technical issues – email: pas@local.gov.uk



Agenda

1. Welcome, PAS intro

Martin Hutchings, PAS

2. Introduction to the Statutory Metric

Katie Gowers, Defra

3. How the Metric works

Sam Wilson, Natural England

4. Q & A

PAS, Natural England, Defra

5. Summing up and feedback

PAS

Planning Advisory Service (PAS) and BNG

- PAS is part of Local Government family, Team of 16
- Funded by DLUHC to support **English planning authorities** (LPAs)
- Wide programme, including in 2023/24: design, infrastructure levy, Local Plans, Environmental Outcome Reports & development management designation
- Environmental planning, covering nutrient neutrality, nature recovery and biodiversity net gain



Home | Our work ▾ | Councillors ▾ | Plan Making ▾ | Development Mgmt ▾ | Topics ▾ | Find an event

Who we are and what we do

Getting planning right is important for councils. It allows them to manage development, ensuring that the best possible outcomes are delivered for places. It requires political and technical leadership and engaged communities. Helping councils is what we do.

What we do

The [Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities](#) provides a grant each year for the PAS so we can provide support to councils. We are funded to help get local plans up-to-date and to improve decision-making, as well as running event series on topical issues. We can also work with councillors and do thorough "peer challenge" reviews of planning departments. We believe in a 'sector led' improvement approach, where local authorities help each other to continuously improve.

[Privacy settings](#)

Bulletin

Sign up for our Bulletin, which brings you news of our latest support, case studies, events and muses.

PAS LPA Biodiversity Net Gain Support

- **Peer-to-peer learning:**
 - BNG practitioner network
 - Case studies, examples, sharing experience
- **Online resources, including**
 - FAQs and advice
 - Readiness checklist tool
 - BNG essentials module
- **Workshops and events**
- **Feeding back to Government** and Natural England and helping develop guidance
- **Joining it all up**

Networks

Products

Support

Events

Feedback

Joining it all up



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric

Katie Gowers, Defra BNG Metric Lead



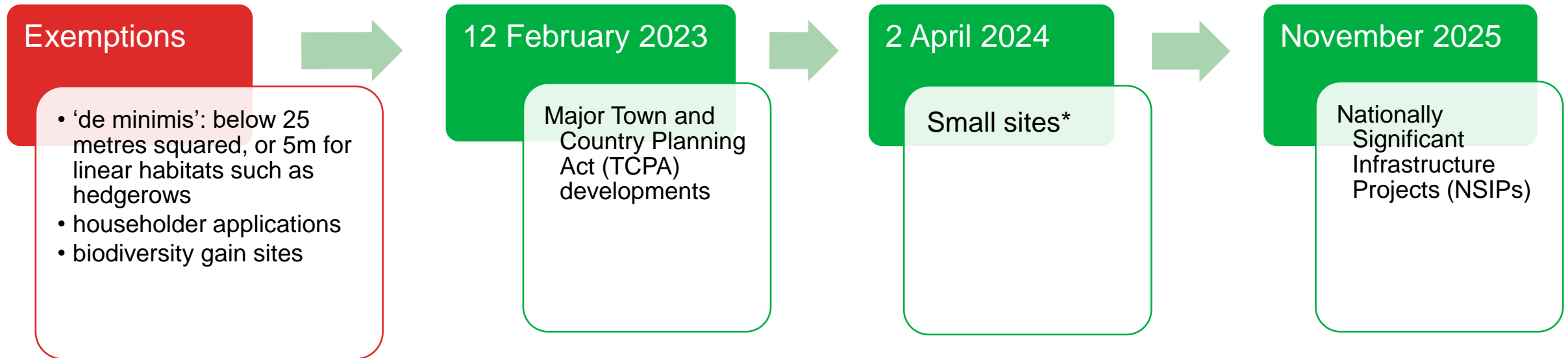
Forestry Commission
England



Environment
Agency

When will BNG apply to different developments?

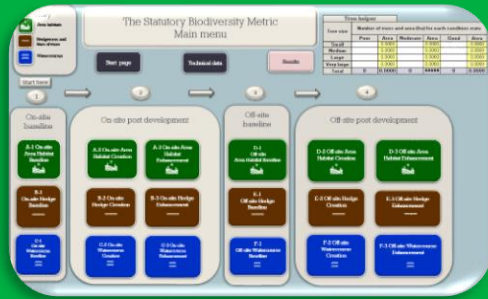
Completed statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool submitted with gain plan



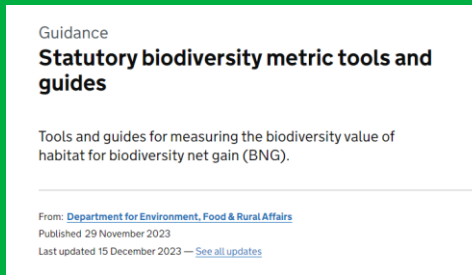
*Small sites being defined (i) for residential: where the number of **dwelling**s to be provided is **between one and nine** inclusive on a site having an area of less than one hectare, or where the number of dwellings to be provided is not known, a site area of less than 0.5 hectares; (ii) For non-residential: where the floor space to be created is less than 1,000 square metres OR where the site area is less than one hectare.



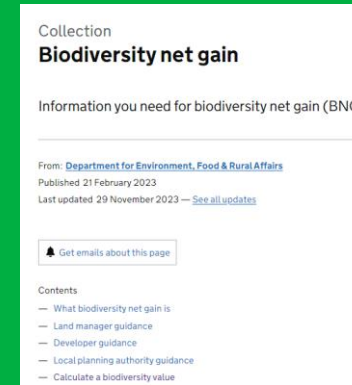
Roles and responsibilities for the metric



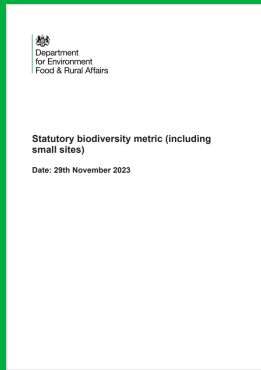
Owner of the statutory biodiversity metric



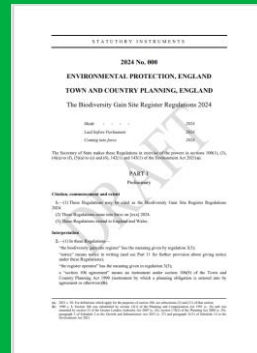
Hosting the metric package – calculation tools, user guide and condition assessments



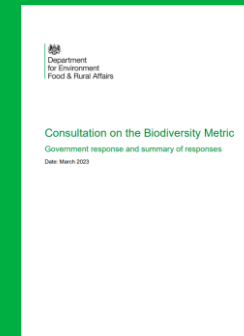
Producing gov.uk guidance



Laying the metric in Parliament



Laying the related secondary legislation for the BNG framework



Updating the statutory metric every 3-5 years after statutory consultation





How did we make the metric statutory?

Biodiversity value and the biodiversity metric

- 3 References to the biodiversity value of any habitat or habitat enhancement are to its value as calculated in accordance with the biodiversity metric.
- 4 (1) The biodiversity metric is a document for measuring, for the purposes of this Schedule, the biodiversity value or relative biodiversity value of habitat or habitat enhancement.
(2) The biodiversity metric is to be produced and published by the Secretary of State.
(3) The Secretary of State may from time to time revise and republish the biodiversity metric.
(4) Before publishing or republishing the biodiversity metric the Secretary of State must consult such persons as the Secretary of State considers appropriate.
(5) The Secretary of State may by regulations make transitional provision in relation to the revision and republication of the biodiversity metric.
(6) The Secretary of State must lay the biodiversity metric, and any revised biodiversity metric, before Parliament.



Statutory biodiversity metric (including small sites)

Date: 29th November 2023



- Biodiversity metric calculation tool must be used to demonstrate proper application of the statutory metric formula
- Regard must be given to the user guides to inform proper use of the tool
- The condition assessments must be used to properly determine habitat condition





User guides*: rules vs. principles

1. **4 Rules** = if broken metric must be rejected at validation

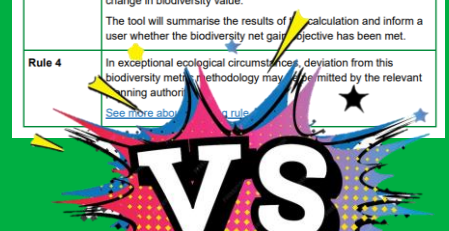
- Metric calculation tool has flags to show when rules have been broken

2. **'Must'** = we have a legal basis to require this

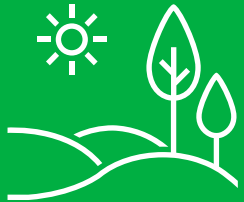
3. **Principles and 'should'** = we don't have a legal basis but there is still a requirement to have regard to the user guides so the methodology should still be followed

Rule number	Rule detail
Rule 1	The trading rules of this biodiversity metric must be followed.
Rule 2	Biodiversity unit outputs, for each type of unit, must not be summed, traded, or converted between types. The requirement to deliver at least a 10% net gain applies to each type of unit.
Rule 3	To accurately apply the biodiversity metric formula, you must use the biodiversity metric calculation tool or small sites biodiversity metric tool (SSM) for small sites. The tools remove the need for a user to manually calculate the change in biodiversity value. The tool will summarise the results of the calculation and inform a user whether the biodiversity net gain objective has been met.
Rule 4	In exceptional ecological circumstances, deviation from this biodiversity metric methodology may be permitted by the relevant planning authority. See more about the rules

Principle number	Principle detail
Principle 1	The metric assessment should be completed by a competent person.
Principle 2	The use of this biodiversity metric does not override existing biodiversity protection, statutory obligations, policy requirements, ecological mitigation hierarchy or any other requirements. This includes consenting or licensing processes, for example woodlands.
Principle 3	This biodiversity metric should be used in accordance with established good practice guidance and professional codes.
Principle 4	This biodiversity metric is not a complex or comprehensive ecological model and is not a substitute for expert ecological advice.
Principle 5	Biodiversity units are a proxy for biodiversity and should be treated as relative values.
Principle 6	This biodiversity metric is designed to inform decisions in conjunction with locally relevant evidence, expert input, or guidance.
Principle 7	Habitat interventions need to be realistic and deliverable within a relevant project timeframe.
Principle 8	Created and enhanced habitats should be, where practical and reasonable, local to any impact and deliver strategically important outcomes for nature conservation.
Principle 9	This biodiversity metric does not enforce a minimum habitat size ratio for compensation of losses. Proposals should aim to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain habitat extent - supporting more, bigger, better and more joined up ecological networks • ensure that proposed or retained habitat parcels are of sufficient size for ecological function



*currently draft, will be republished ahead of go-live



Statutory Biodiversity Metric



January 2024

What is Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and what is the Metric?



- When it comes into force, on 12th February 2024, BNG will be mandated in the planning process, making it a requirement for all appropriate major developments to deliver a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity
- Calculation of net gain will be by way of the **statutory biodiversity metric**:
 1. Calculation of the baseline biodiversity unit value of a piece of land prior to planning application
 2. A second calculation of the post-intervention biodiversity unit value
 3. Difference between the two calculations is biodiversity gain or loss

Day one of mandatory BNG = any applications submitted on or after this date

Evolution of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric



Over a decade of development:

- 2012 = Defra biodiversity metric published (no calculation tool)
- 2019 = Publication of Biodiversity Metric 2.0 (Natural England)
- 2021 = Publication of Biodiversity Metric 3.0 (Natural England)
- 2022 = Publication of Biodiversity Metric 3.1 (Natural England)
- April 2023 = Publication of Biodiversity Metric 4.0 (Natural England)

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric (draft) was published in November 2023

Natural England Role with Statutory Metric



- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric was published by the Secretary of State. It is NOT a Natural England metric but is based on the earlier Biodiversity Metric 4.0 released by NE
- NE will make recommendations every 3-5 years to the SoS about updates to the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, encompassing:
 - Technical aspects e.g. metric values, formulae changes etc
 - Usability and functionality
- NE metric team will provide ongoing advice + beta testing for Defra
- NE will work with EA and FC and seek external (eNGO, ecological consultants, LPA, academic etc) input to inform its advice to the SoS.
- Any metric change resulting in a change in unit values requires the SoS to consult before implementation

The Metric

Calculating the value of habitats using an Excel workbook



The Metric is fundamental to BNG

Consulted on by the Secretary of State (Sept 2022) and will be maintained and updated into the future on a 3-5 year review cycle

From day one of mandatory biodiversity net gain, all applications that need to submit a Metric must use the **Statutory Biodiversity Metric**.

There will be **NO** transition arrangements with regard to the Metric

The Metric



Defra's Statutory Biodiversity Metric was developed by Natural England with input from Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and others

- A tool for auditing and accounting for biodiversity losses and gains
- Uses habitat as a 'proxy' measure, translating it into biodiversity units
- All intertidal and terrestrial habitats plus linear habitat types
- Establishes a baseline and forecasts a proposed outcome

Best practice advice is that the metric should be used at site selection stage and then iteratively throughout the design process to quantify and evaluate the impacts of different design options, when there is more scope to influence design changes to achieve better ecological outcomes.

Accessing the Metric, associated guidance, condition assessments and FAQ's



Guidance

Statutory biodiversity metric tools and guides

Tools and guides for measuring the biodiversity value of habitat for biodiversity net gain (BNG).



The Statutory Biodiversity Metric

User Guide (draft)

Date: November 2023

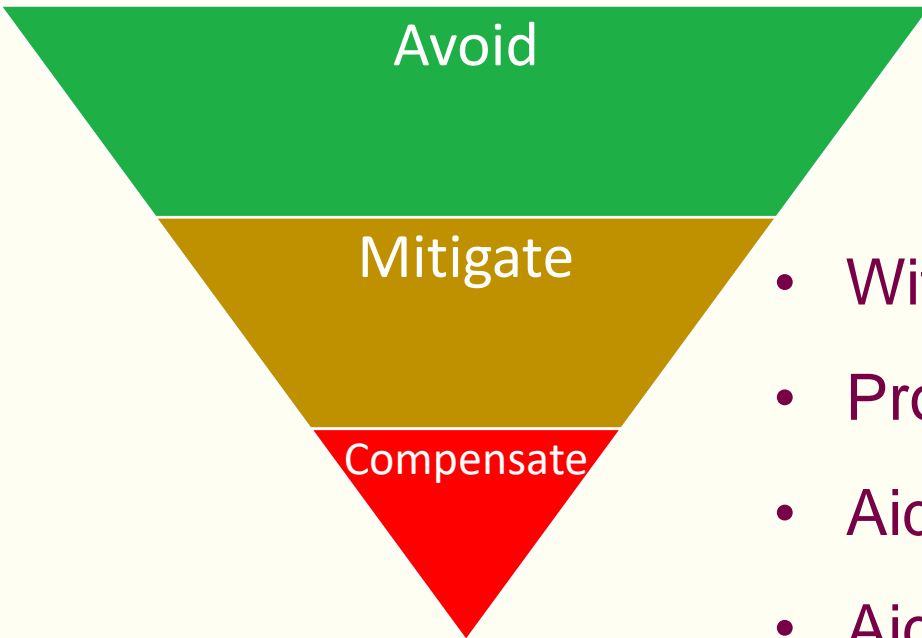
Hosted on GOV.UK (alongside User Guide)

[Statutory biodiversity metric tools and guides - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Hosted on Natural England Access to Evidence

[Metric supporting tools \(e.g. QGIS import tool\) download](#)

The Metric



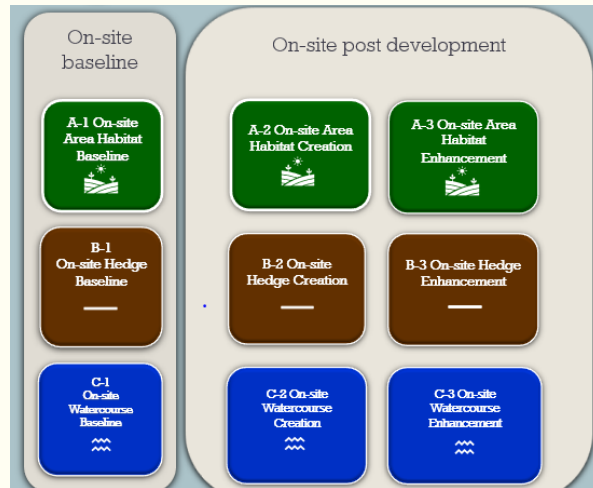
- Within a decision framework based on mitigation hierarchy
- Provides confidence and consistency of approach
- Aids communication to non-technical audience
- Aids decision making. NOT a decision tool

NB. Should be completed by a competent person.

Note, where there is a watercourse present, the river condition assessor must have completed river condition assessment training.

What is a biodiversity unit?

- Biodiversity units are a proxy to describe biodiversity



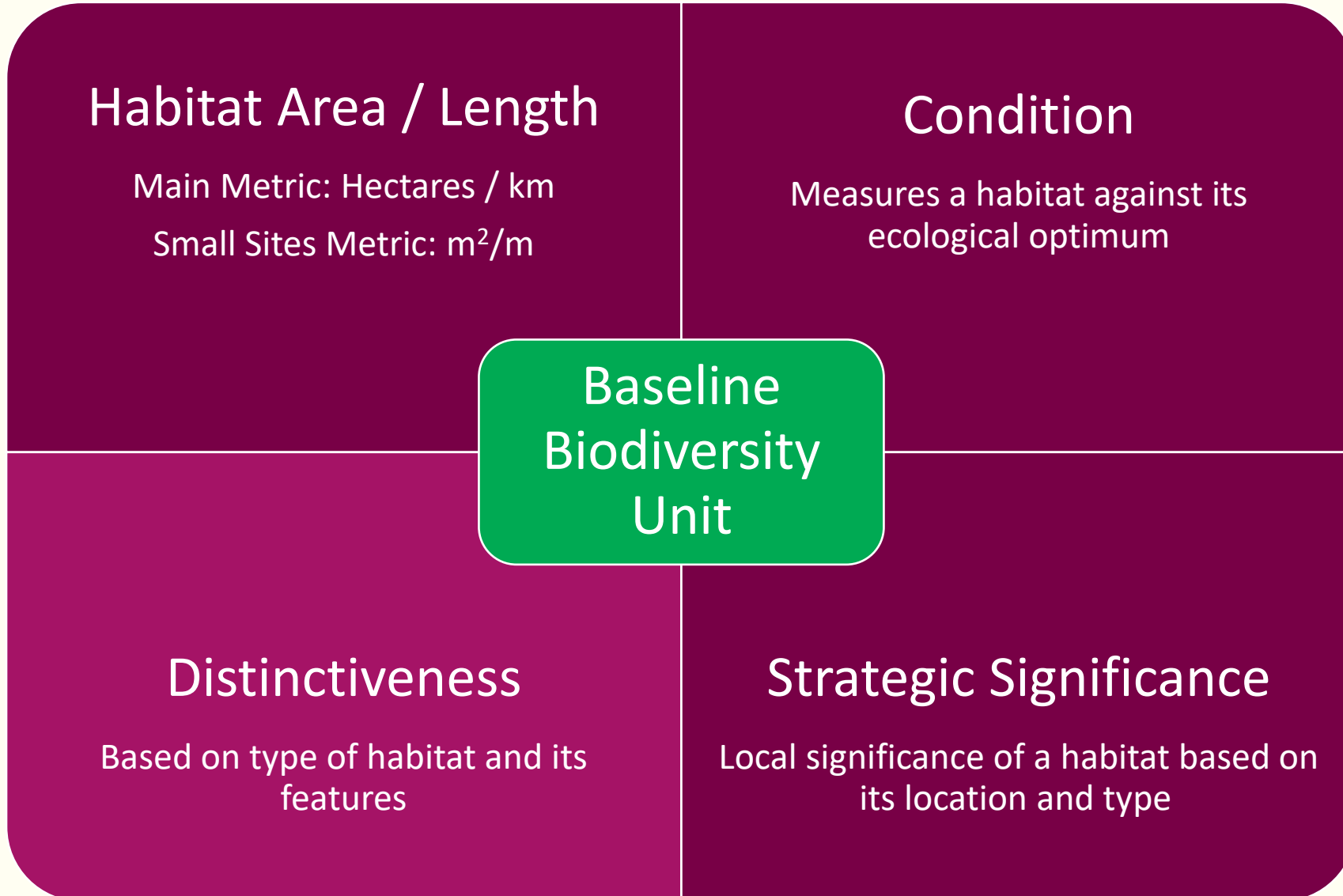
- **Area units**
- **Hedgerow units**
- **Watercourse units**

BNG applies to **each habitat type** that is **present at the baseline**.

For example, a site with **100 area units**, **20 hedgerow units** and **40 watercourse units** will need to provide as a minimum, post-intervention units of:

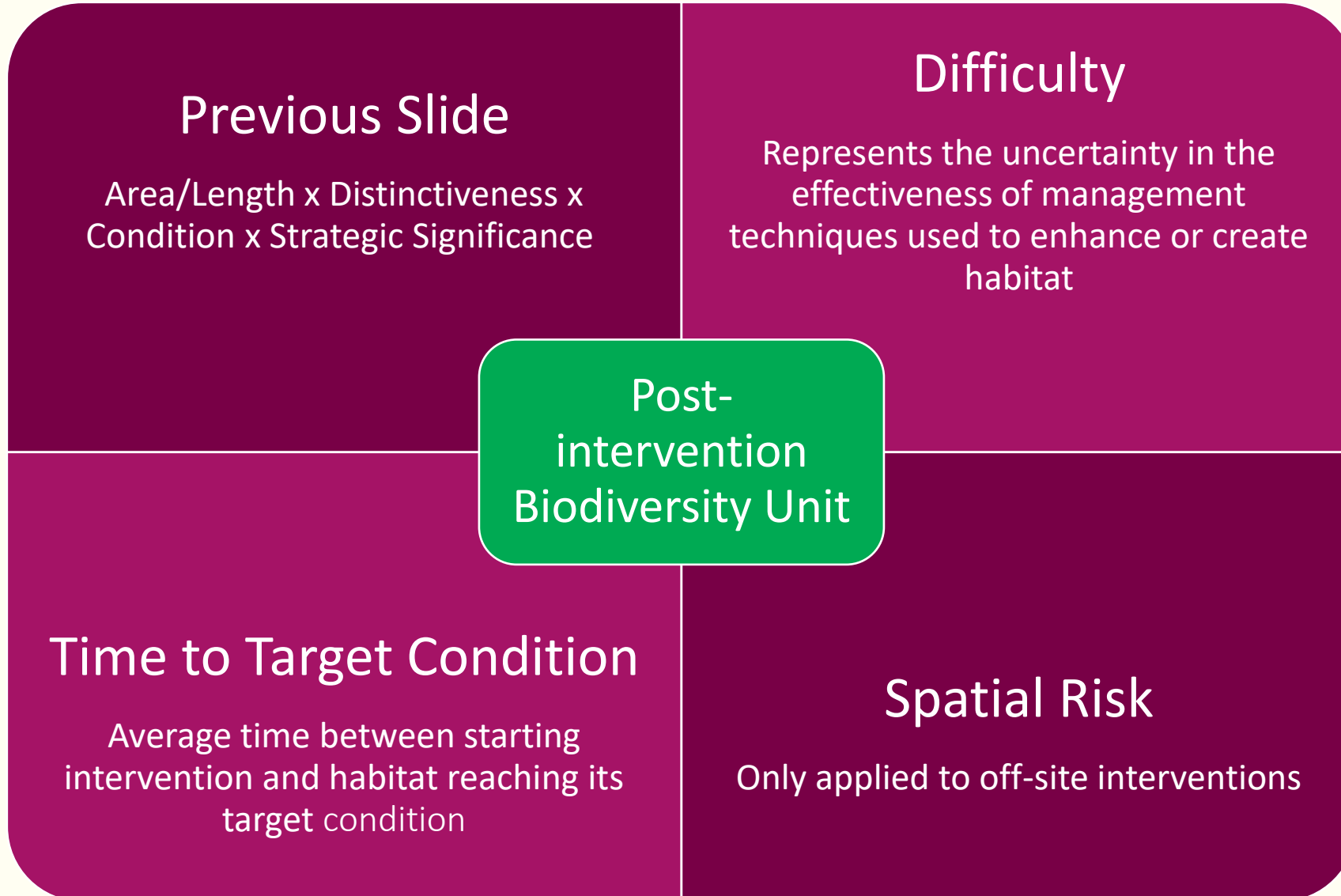
110 area units, **22 hedgerow units** and **44 watercourse units**

Baseline biodiversity unit



- Requires user input
- Automatically determined by habitat type

Post-intervention biodiversity unit



- Requires user input
- Automatically determined by habitat type

Mechanisms for delivery of BNG



On-site (units)

Potentially in full or combination



Habitat creation or enhancement; landscaping or green infrastructure

Off-site (units)



New habitat creation or enhancement on land holdings or via habitat banks

Statutory Credits

Only if units not available



Landscape-scale strategic habitat creation delivering nature-based solutions

Biodiversity Metric Tools

Calculation Tool

The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet with the following content:

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Start page

Completed by and *Date of metric completion* fields must be filled in ▲

Project details			
Planning authority:			
Project name:			
Applicant:			
Application type:			
Planning application reference:			
Completed by:			
Date of metric completion:			
Reviewer:			
Calculation iteration:			
Planning authority reviewer:			
Date of planning authority review:			
Target % net gain:	10%		
Irreplaceable habitat present at baseline:	No ✓		
Total site area - including irreplaceable habitat area (hectares):	0.00	Irreplaceable habitat site area (hectares):	0.00

Buttons: Main menu, Results

User Guide

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (draft)

Date: November 2023

Condition Assessments

The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet with the following content:

Condition Assessment Criteria

Indicator	Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per criterion	Notes (such as justification)
Presence and abundance of	Not more than one invasive non-native species is 'Occasional' on the SACFOR scale ³ , or is occurrence more than 1% of the	No invasive non-native species are present above 'Frequent' on the SACFOR scale ³ , or they occupy	One or more invasive non-native species are 'Abundant' on the SACFOR scale ³ , they occupy more than 10% of the habitat, or a high-risk species		

Additional text in the spreadsheet includes: 'The following information should be recorded within the condition assessment sheet:' and a list of criteria such as 'Extent of lagoon waterbody', 'Description of presence of typical communities and biotopes', etc.

Statutory Small Sites Metric (SSM)

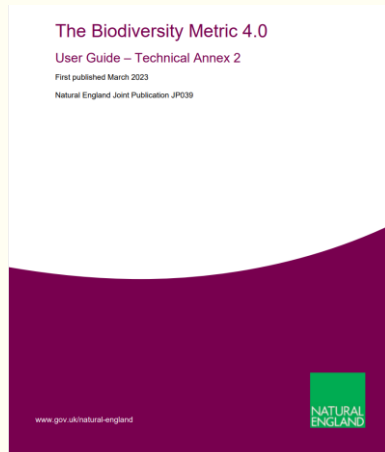


- Alternative tool for use in specific circumstances, where no priority habitats, protected sites or European protected species are present
- Competency requirements are lower
- Many values fixed
- **Only certain habitats and interventions are available for use**
- Small sites become statutory from **2nd April 2024** – must use a version of statutory metric (including SSM)

Site Name	Metric Site		
Sheet Name	Headline Results		
Headline Results			
Headline	BNG Targets Met ✓		
Trading Rules	Trading Rules Satisfied ✓		
Next steps	Submit metric to LPA		
Baseline Units	Habitat units	0.4000	
	Hedgerow units	0.4000	
	River units	0.8000	
Post-development Units	Habitat units	0.4674	
	Hedgerow units	0.8403	
	River units	0.8930	
Total net unit change	Habitat units	0.0674	✓
	Hedgerow units	0.4403	✓
	River units	0.0930	✓
Total net % change	Habitat units	16.84%	✓
	Hedgerow units	110.08%	✓
	River units	11.62%	✓
Habitats units required to meet target		0.0000	
Hedgerow units required to meet target		0.0000	
River units required to meet target		0.0000	

Other Biodiversity Metric Tools

Technical Information

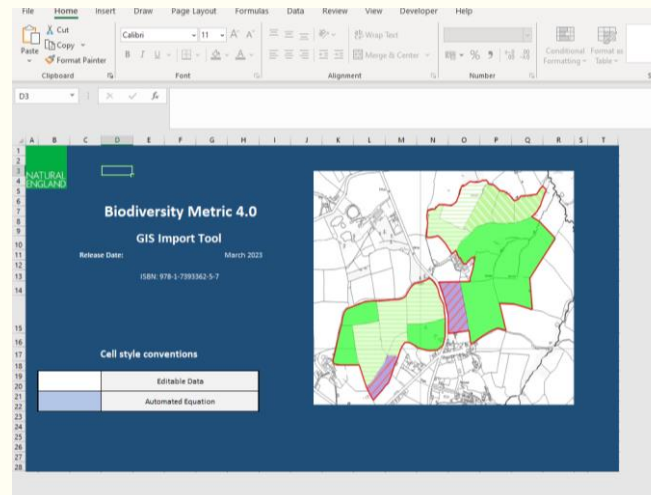


Case Studies

Table 3. Scenario 2 - Losses and gains of habitat and hedgerow biodiversity units. Data extracted from biodiversity metric

Biodiversity unit type	Description
Area habitat	Baseline habitat biodiversity units
	Net on-site enhancement and creation of habitats
	Habitat enhancement
	- 0.42ha of other neutral grassland from poor to good condition, low strategic significance
	- 0.16ha of mixed scrub from poor to good condition, low strategic significance
	- 0.12ha of other woodland; broadleaved' from moderate to good condition, medium strategic significance
Area habitat	- 0.53ha of other woodland; broadleaved' from poor to moderate condition, low strategic significance
	Habitat creation (all low strategic significance)
	- 0.81ha of vegetated gardens ('condition assessment N/A')
	- 1.89ha of developed land; sealed surface (condition 'N/A - other')
	- 0.1ha biodiverse green roof in good condition
	Total net gain in habitat biodiversity units
Hedgerow	Baseline hedgerow units
	Net on-site retention, creation, and enhancement of hedgerows
Hedgerow	Hedgerow enhancement
	- 0.05km of native species rich hedgerow in moderate condition enhanced to good condition and medium strategic significance
	Hedgerow creation
	- 0.11km of native species rich hedgerow in good condition and medium strategic significance
	- 0.04km of native species rich hedgerow in good condition and low strategic significance
	- 0.02km of native species rich hedgerow in moderate condition and low strategic significance
	Total net gain in hedgerow biodiversity units
Habitat	Overall percentage net gain/loss of habitat biodiversity units
Hedgerow	Overall percentage net gain/loss of hedgerow biodiversity units

GIS Import Tool and Guidance



Metric – main menu



Key

- Area habitats
- Hedgerows and lines of
- Watercourses

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Main menu

Tree helper

Tree size	Number of trees and area (ha) for each condition state					
	Poor	Area	Moderate	Area	Good	Area
Small		0.0000		0.0000		0.0000
Medium		0.0000		0.0000		0.0000
Large		0.0000		0.0000		0.0000
Very large		0.0000		0.0000		0.0000
Total	0	0.0000	0	0.0000	0	0.0000

Start page

Technical data

Results

Start here!

1

2

3

4

On-site baseline

A-1 On-site Area Habitat Baseline

B-1 On-site Hedge Baseline

C-1 On-site Watercourse Baseline

On-site post development

A-2 On-site Area Habitat Creation

A-3 On-site Area Habitat Enhancement

B-2 On-site Hedge Creation

B-3 On-site Hedge Enhancement

C-2 On-site Watercourse Creation

C-3 On-site Watercourse Enhancement

Off-site baseline

D-1 Off-site Area Habitat Baseline

E-1 Off-site Hedge Baseline

F-1 Off-site Watercourse Baseline

Off-site post development

D-2 Off-site Area Habitat Creation

D-3 Off-site Area Habitat Enhancement

E-2 Off-site Hedge Creation

E-3 Off-site Hedge Enhancement

F-2 Off-site Watercourse Creation

F-3 Off-site Watercourse Enhancement

Start

Main Menu

+

Example Changes from 4.0

Unit Value

Calculation Tool

User Guide

Corrections to errors to enhancement times

Corrections to enhancement options for hedgerows

Corrections for enhancement of watercourse by re-meandering

Corrections for area calculations involving intertidal hard structures

Off-site reference required

SRM bug fixed

General fixes to improve useability

Enhancement tabs no longer autofill proposed habitat

Enhanced IH automatically highlighted

Irreplaceable habitats tab

Unit shortfall tabs – summary and calculations

New error messages and check flags

Formatting and accessibility changes

Tree helper

Methodology re restoration of intertidal habitats

Methodology for recording individual trees

Applying spatial risk for intertidal habitats

Information on preparing a metric for submission

Descriptions for strategic significance categories

Information on phased construction

Methodology on assessing floodplain wetland mosaic

Information on irreplaceable habitats

Metric Checks and Flags



File Home Insert Draw Page Layout Formulas Data Review View Automate Developer Help

Rockwell Light 11 A A

Clipboard Font Alignment Number Styles Cells

SECURITY WARNING Macros have been disabled. Enable Content

A1

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric
Start page

'Completed by' and 'Date of metric completion' fields must be filled in ▲

Project details

Planning authority:	
Project name:	
Applicant:	
Application type:	
Planning application reference:	
Completed by:	
Date of metric completion:	
Reviewer:	
Calculation iteration:	
Planning authority reviewer:	
Date of planning authority review:	
Target % net gain:	10%
Irreplaceable habitat present at baseline:	No ✓
Total site area - including irreplaceable habitat area (hectares):	0.00
Irreplaceable habitat site area (hectares):	0.00

Main menu

Results

Start

Traffic Light Flag System

Red: Major issue reject

Amber: Potential issue / Warning
- Check Data

Green: No metric rule breaks

Statutory Metric Rules...



Rule 1: Trading rules must be followed

Rule 2: Outputs of a Metric are unique cannot be compared

Rule 3: The correct tool must be used

Rule 4: Only to be used in exceptional circumstances with clear ecological benefit and where there is agreement with the LPA

Statutory Metric Principles...



Principle 1: Completed by a competent person

Principle 2: The metric does not override existing protections

Principle 3: Existing professional best practice still applies

Principle 4: The Metric is not a complex ecological model

Principle 5: The Metric offers a proxy for biodiversity

Principle 6: The Metric is designed to inform decisions

Principle 7: Interventions must be appropriate and realistic

Principle 8: Compensation should be local and strategic

Principle 9: There is no minimum habitat size ratio



Reviewing Metrics

Metric Checklist for use at planning application validation

Updated draft – January 2024

NB. This checklist is subject to change

1. Is a Metric required? All major developments from 12th February 2024:
 - a. erection of ten or more dwellings or housing development on a site of 0.5 hectare or more
 - b. erection of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created is 1,000m² or more
 - c. development on a site of 1 hectare or more
 - d. minerals and waste development
2. If the development is exempt from BNG a metric is not required to be submitted – self-build, biodiversity gain site, de minimis threshold
3. Has the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool been submitted in Excel format (not pdf or other form)? No other versions of the Metric or any other metrics are allowable
4. Are sufficient details on start page? date of assessment, assessor.
5. Are there any red boxes in the Metric. If not, passes validation.
6. If a red box is present, it only passes validation if it is one of the following:
 - a. An outline planning application
 - b. Applicant is requesting permission to purchase statutory biodiversity credits
 - c. Rule 4 of the metric has been instigated

PAS note: the information in 5. and 6. is incorrect as a post-development Biodiversity Metric is not a requirement at planning application stage. We will provide more information on this in our BNG in DM toolkit available very soon!

FINAL RESULTS

Total net unit change <small>(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>	-90.61
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00

Total net % change <small>(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>	-40.82%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00%
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%

Total net gain achieved is less than target set ▲

Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲
---------------------------------	--------------------------------

Area created must match area lost for both onsite and offsite ▲				
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
<i>Habitat units</i>	10.00%	221.97	244.17	112.80
<i>Hedgerow units</i>	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Watercourse units</i>	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
 No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

Input errors/rule breaks present in metric ▲

FINAL RESULTS

Total net unit change <small>(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.19
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
Total net % change <small>(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>	23.67%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00%
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
<i>Habitat units</i>	10.00%	0.80	0.87	0.00
<i>Hedgerow units</i>	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Watercourse units</i>	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

Unit requirement met or surpassed ✓
 Unit requirement met or surpassed ✓
 Unit requirement met or surpassed ✓



Questions

Questions and answers

- Please submit your questions through Slido:
 - Go to slido.com and enter this code: **#2033497**
 - Scan the QR code
- We will answer as many as we can today
- We will add answers to FAQs on the PAS website



Summing up & next steps

What do you think – please use polls

Next steps:

- Adding relevant questions to FAQs
- Ongoing support on biodiversity net gain and nature recovery through PAS projects

For more information:

- <https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/topics/environment>
- Sign up to the PAS bulletin:
<https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/our-work/keep-touch>
- Join our BNG practitioner network

The image shows two screenshots. The top one is a screenshot of a 'Message Board' for 'Biodiversity net gain forum for LPAs'. It features a 'New message' button, a search bar for 'All messages', and a sorting option 'SORTED BY LATEST COMMENT (CHANGE)'. Under 'Pinned to top', there are four messages: 'Notification Settings: BNG Practitioner Network Basecamp' (1 reply), 'Introduction to Basecamp' (1 reply), 'Joining the BNG practitioner network' (2 replies), and 'Finding old messages/threads on topics' (1 reply). The bottom screenshot is a webpage titled 'Biodiversity Net Gain FAQs - Frequently Asked Questions'. It includes a navigation menu with 'Home', 'Our work', 'Councillors', 'Plan Making', 'Topics', 'Find an event', and 'Development Mgmt'. The breadcrumb trail is 'Topics > Environment > Biodiversity Net Gain for local authorities'. The main heading is 'Biodiversity Net Gain FAQs - Frequently Asked Questions'. The text below states: 'Most recent page update 16 October 2023. We have worked with Defra, Natural England and DLUHC to answer the questions we are most frequently asked by local authority officers and members about biodiversity net gain and those that have come up at events so far. We will be adding answers to more questions as we get them. Please do email pas@local.gov.uk if you spot any errors. If you have questions that are not covered on this page and are a local authority officer, you can join our BNG practitioner network, which has an online forum for posting questions, discussing issues and sharing knowledge. Email pas@local.gov.uk for more information.'