

What does biodiversity net gain mean for the planning system in England?

The House Briefing:
Preparing for Biodiversity Net Gain
30 June 2022

Rebecca Moberly

local.gov.uk/pas

Planning Advisory Service (PAS) and BNG

- PAS is part of Local Government family
- Funded by DLUHC to support **English planning authorities** (LPAs)
- Wide programme, including in 2022/23: design, developer contributions, Local Plans & development management designation
- Environmental planning a recent addition currently covering nutrient neutrality and biodiversity net gain
- Two-year BNG project funded by Defra – 1 FTE, started March 2021
- Overarching aim is to enable LPAs to be ‘day one ready’ for **mandatory BNG in Nov 2023**
- Developing training and support programme for 330+ LPAs England-wide



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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.

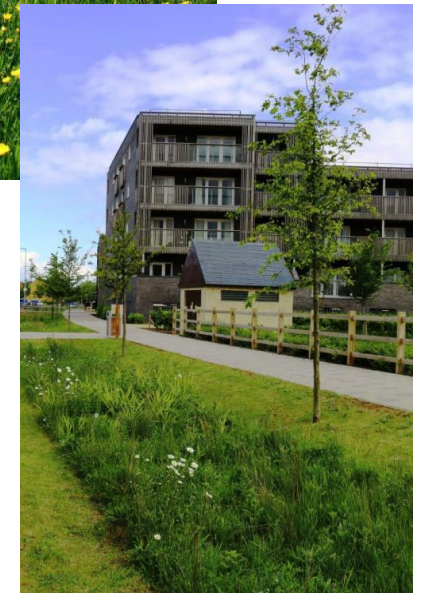
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Bulletin

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

Key components of mandatory BNG

- Amends Town & Country Planning Act (TCPA)
- **Minimum 10% gain required calculated using Biodiversity Metric & approval of net gain plan**
- **Habitat secured at least 30 years** via obligations/ conservation covenants
- Delivered on-site, off-site or via a new **statutory biodiversity credits** scheme
- **National register** for net gain delivery sites
- Does **not change existing legal protections** for important habitats and wildlife species
- **Maintains mitigation hierarchy** of avoid, mitigate, compensate
- Will apply to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) but not marine development (yet)



BNG delivery mechanisms

Onsite (units)

Potentially in full or combination



Delivered via habitat creation/enhancement via landscaping/green infrastructure

Offsite (units)



Delivered through new habitat creation/enhancement on land holdings or via habitat banks

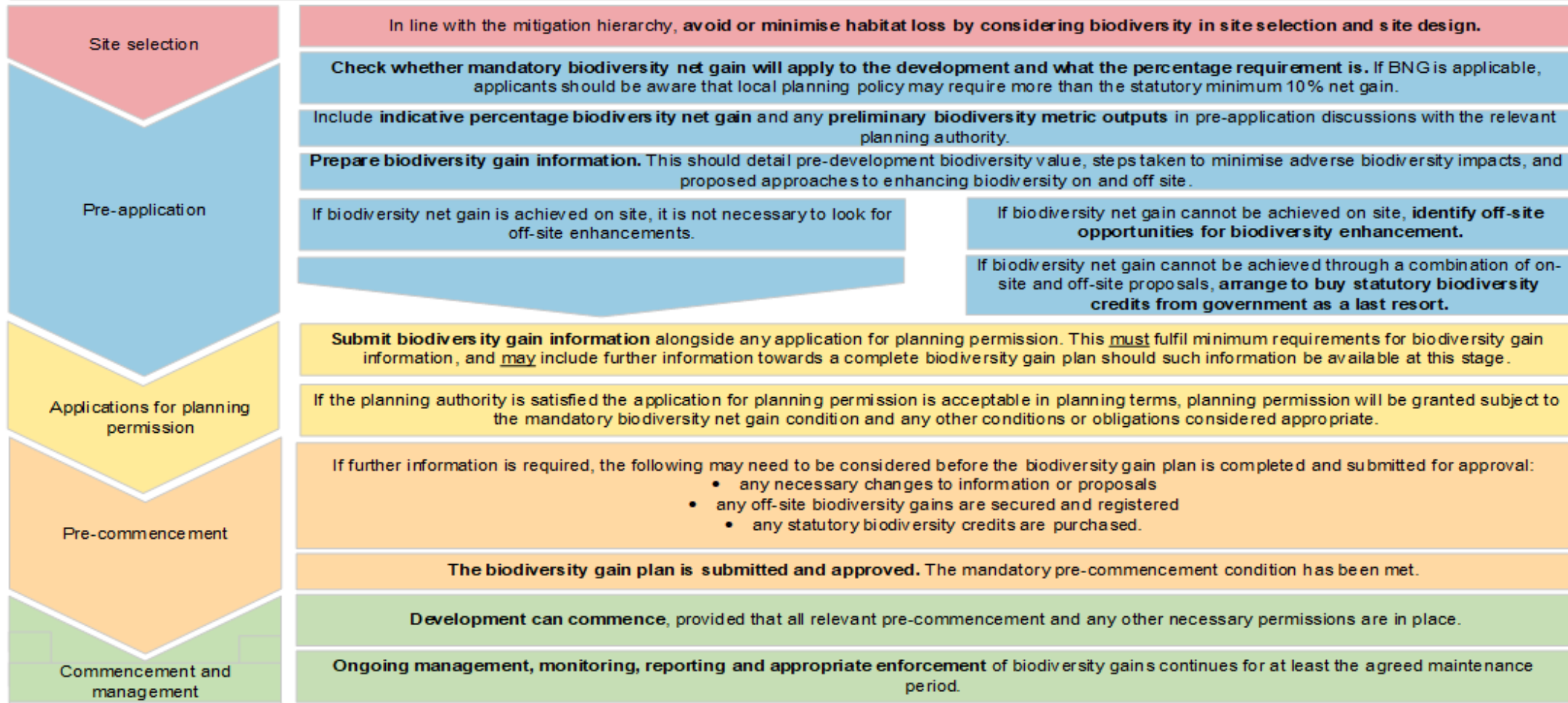
Statutory Credits

Only if units not available

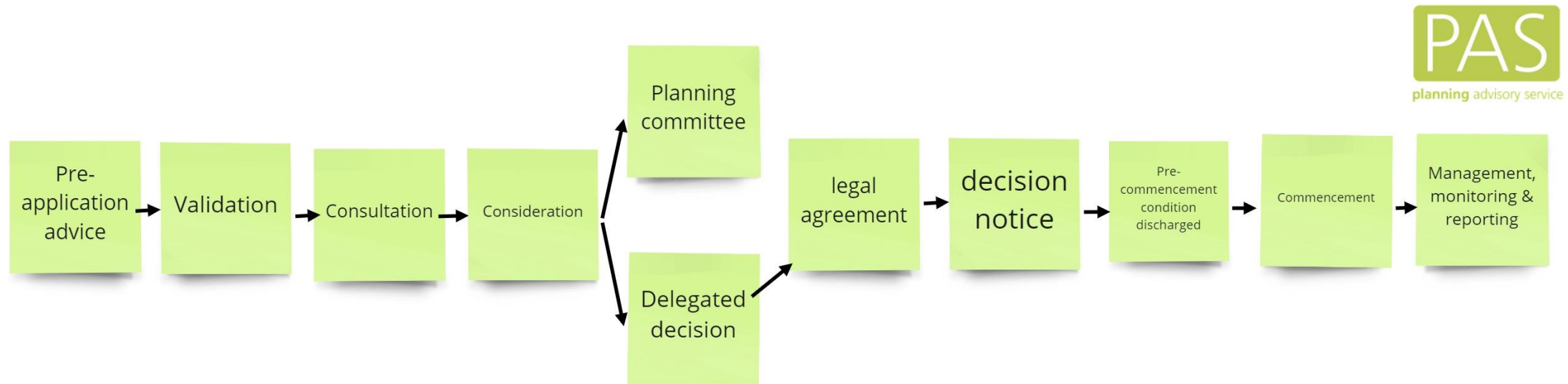


Delivered through landscape-scale strategic habitat creation delivering nature-based solutions

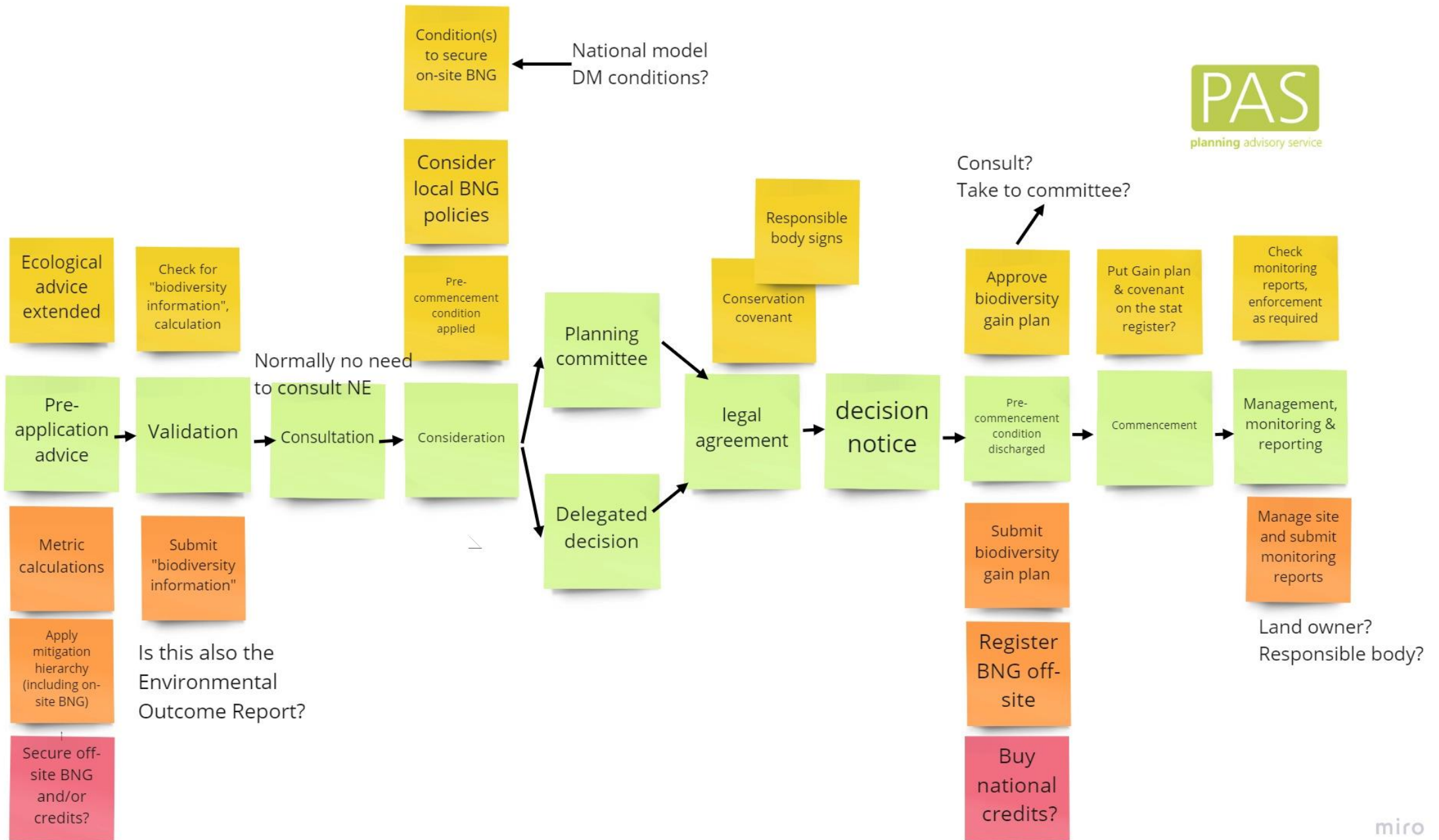
Proposed biodiversity net gain process for Town and Country Planning Act 1990 development (indicative process only – not representative of all routes to permission)

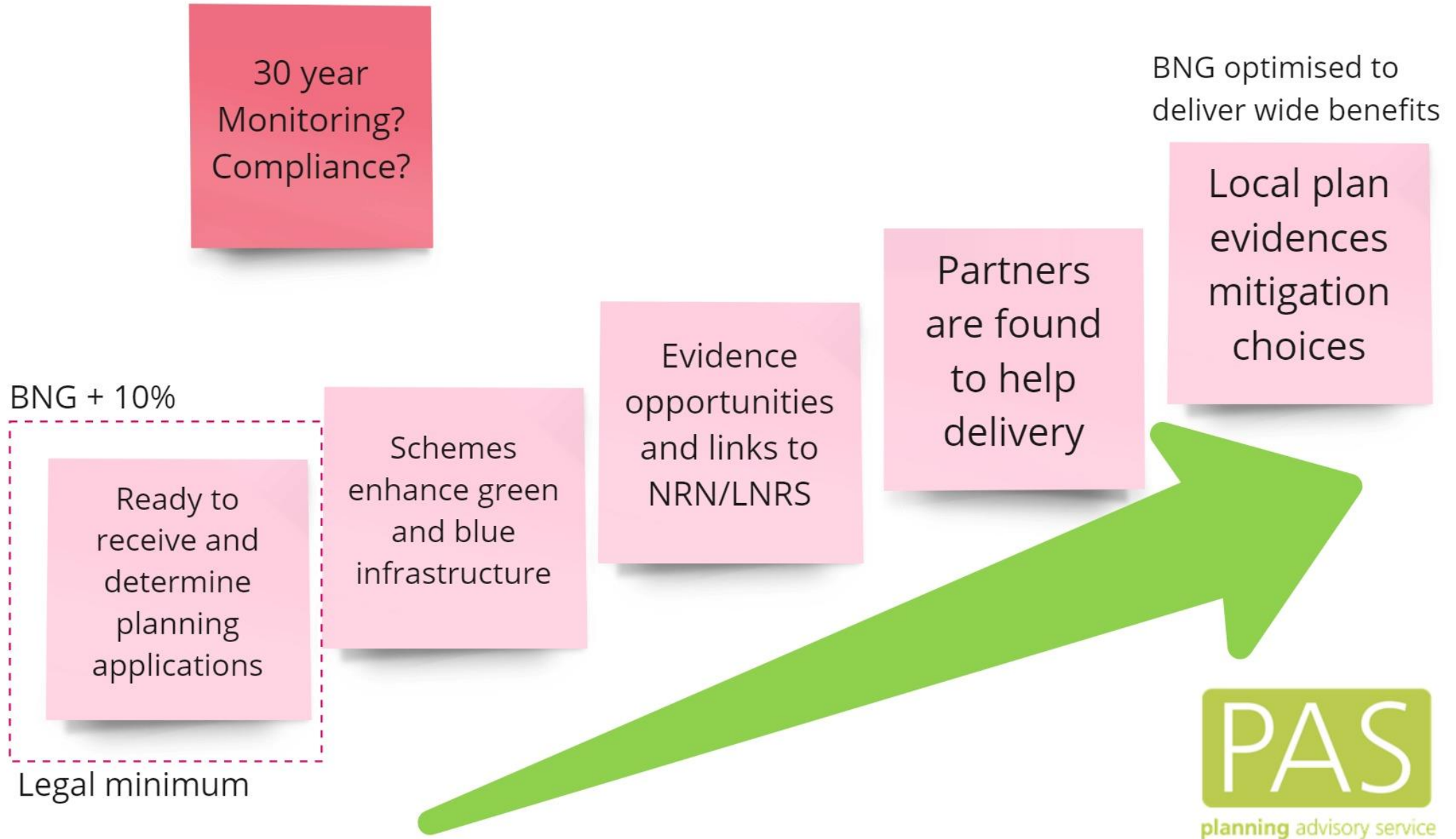


Planning application process with BNG



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BNG now and in the future

We've identified six key themes from what we've heard from local authorities at our workshops.



1) Resources,
capacity &
expertise



2) Delivering
strategic local
ambitions



3) Managing the
transition period



4) Flexibility for
local approaches



5) Monitoring
and enforcement



6) Making
decisions and
securing BNG

Lessons from local authorities doing BNG ‘well’

- Collaborate across council services and with partners
- Think beyond planning; embed the approach corporately
- Think about links to other priorities and political drivers
- Plan and start early
- It's a journey...



Questions?

For further information please visit our website:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/topics/environment/biodiversity-net-gain-local-authorities>

Sign up to the PAS bulletin:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/our-work/keep-touch>

Email: pas@local.gov.uk

