

DECISION TAKER: Councillor Jackie Porter – Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan

REPORT TITLE: BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN - TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTE

5 JUNE 2023

Contact Officer: Rick Smith Tel No: 01962 848532

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WARD(S): ALL

DECISION:

1. That the Biodiversity Net Gain Technical Advice Note, as interim guidance in respect of the assessment of relevant planning applications by the Council as local planning authority, be approved.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

This report presents interim technical guidance on how Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) should be applied by Winchester City Council in the assessment of relevant planning applications.

BNG is an approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. BNG is currently voluntary under National Planning Policy, but it will become mandatory for developers to deliver under the Environment Act in November 2023. This TAN allows the council to clearly apply the BNG in a constructive, consistent manner that fits in with national guidance on what is expected when BNG becomes mandatory.

The Technical Advice Note (TAN) sets out procedures to follow when applicants apply for planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) with outcomes including a measurable 10% uplift in biodiversity on applicable sites in line with Natural England guidance.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

1. Defra have encouraged local authorities to begin preparations for BNG in

anticipation of the coming into force of the relevant provisions of the Environment Act 2021 and so the option of doing nothing has been discounted as it would leave the council unprepared for a change in planning requirements.

2. The council could formulate its own policy on BNG which could differ in detailed effect from the Natural England guidance. For instance, council policy could state that applicable developments achieve a higher level of measurable BNG than 10%. However, it is considered to be more appropriate for developers and the council if our TAN (and policy) is in line with national standards and guidance. This question was discussed amongst neighbouring Hampshire local authorities and the consensus was to aim to be as consistent with each authority as possible, as well as with national standards.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE:

None

APPROVED BY: Jackie Porter

DATE: 05.06.2023

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APPENDICES:

Appendix 1. Biodiversity Net Gain Technical Advice Note – April 2023 draft

Appendix 2. Equality Impact Assessment – BNG TAN April 2023