

Biodiversity Net Gain for Greater Manchester



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Biodiversity Net Gain for Greater Manchester Introductions



Sam Evans,
Head of Natural
Environment,
GMCA



Nick White,
Principal Advisor
– Net Gain,
Natural England



Derek
Richardson,
Principal Ecologist



Dr Julia
Baker, Biodiversity
Technical Specialist,
Balfour Beatty



Tom Butterworth,
Technical Director,
WSP

Biodiversity Net Gain for Greater Manchester contents 1

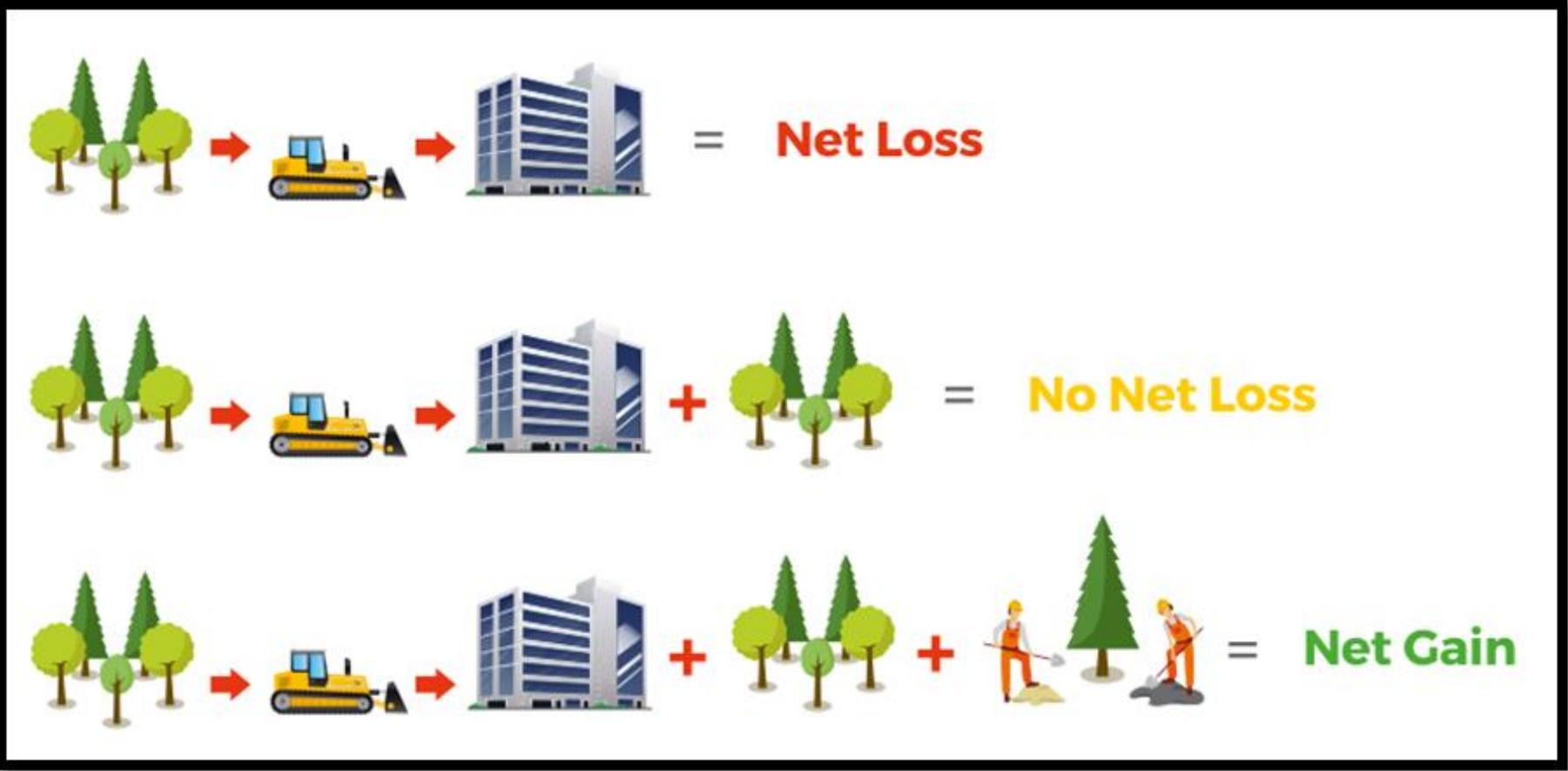
- What is BNG and good practice?
- National legislation and policy
- Development process and planning requirements
- Nature Recovery and Green Infrastructure
- The role of local authorities and the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit



What is Biodiversity Net Gain?

An approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than before (Defra)

Biodiversity loss/gain



Biodiversity Net Gain is when a development leaves biodiversity in a better state than which it was found

Biodiversity Net Gain now

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- National Design Guide
- National Policy Statements



Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain – Key Components



The Environment Bill

- England only
- Amends the Town & Country Planning Act (TCPA)
- Minimum 10% gain required calculated using Biodiversity Metric net gain plan
- Habitat secured at least 30 years
- Further detail to be set out in secondary legislation (consultation)
- National register for net gain sites
- Likely to become law – autumn 2023
- Does not change existing legal protections
- Does not apply to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) or Marine



Mechanisms for Biodiversity Net Gain delivery



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

Other developments

- **Marine Net Gain**
- **Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPS)**
- **Environmental Net Gain**
- **Planning White Paper**



10 guiding principles

1. Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy
2. Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere
3. Be inclusive and equitable
4. Address risks
5. Make a measurable Net Gain contribution
6. Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity
7. Be additional
8. Create a Net Gain legacy
9. Optimise sustainability
10. Be transparent

Biodiversity Net Gain

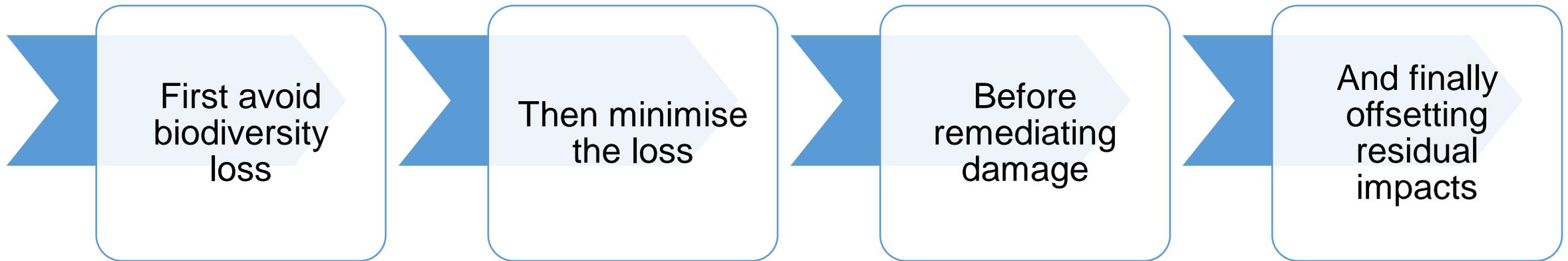
Good practice principles for development



IEMA

Transforming the world
to sustainability

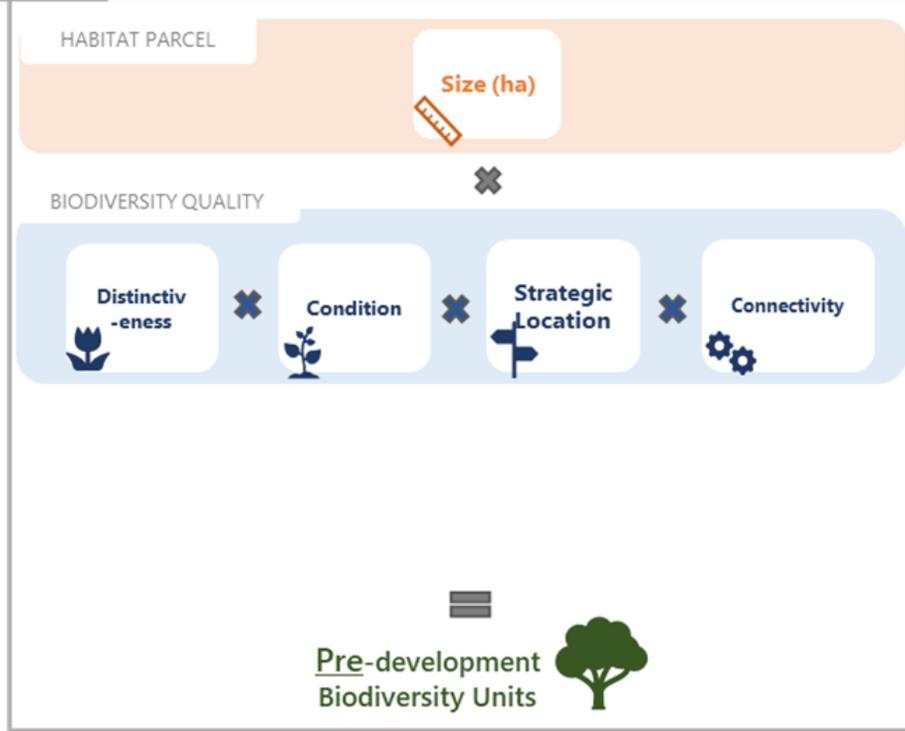
Achieve BNG through the Mitigation Hierarchy



Calculating net gain

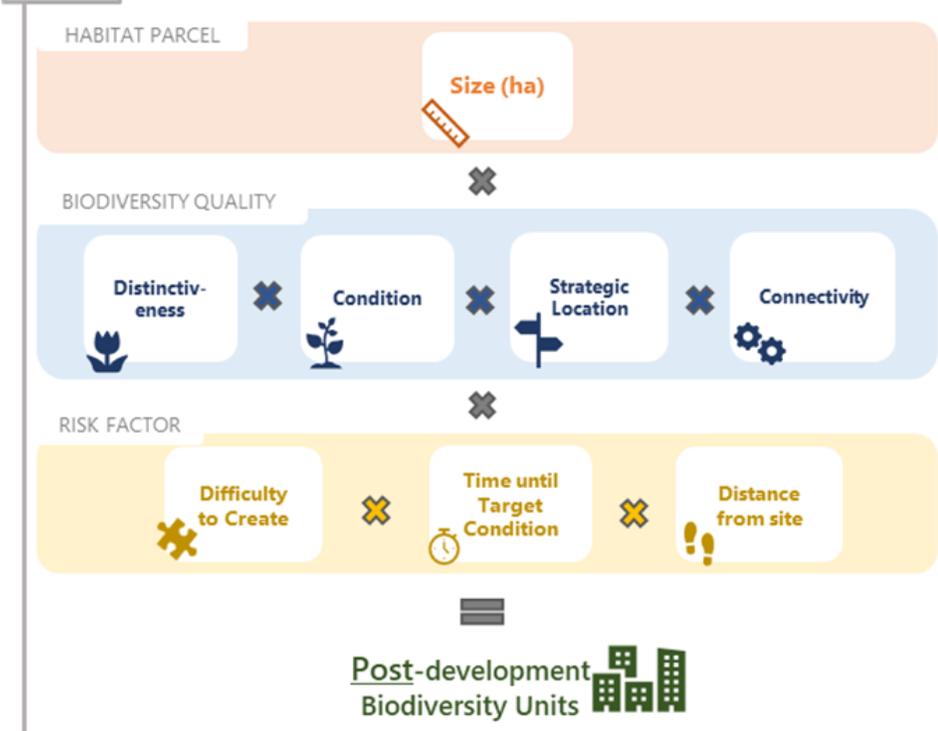
1-2

Pre-development (existing habitat)



3-4

Post-development (new habitat)



5

Outcome



What is not Biodiversity Net Gain?

Not all biodiversity

Irreplaceable habitats

Not just about numbers

Measurable outcomes are important, but BNG must be about meaningful ecological outcomes

Not side-stepping the Mitigation Hierarchy, existing good practice or legal compliance



Biodiversity Net Gain for Greater Manchester contents 2

- What is BNG and good practice
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Greater Manchester's environmental ambitions



Protect, maintain and enhance,
and take steps to achieve
environmental net gain

Strategic Planning in Greater Manchester

- There is a national deadline for all Local Planning Authorities to have a Local Plan in place by December 2023.
- The Draft GMSF (October, 2020) included specific policies on protection and enhancement of the green infrastructure network, and urban green space and a commitment to:
 - the development of standards for access to natural green space
 - a Greater Manchester green factor ratio, and,
 - achieving a measurable net gain in biodiversity of no less than 10%.
- These policies were strongly supported through the consultation on the 2019 GMSF

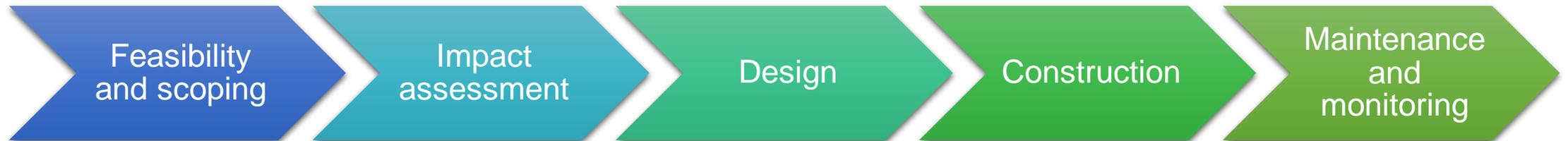


What did the draft Greater Manchester Net Gain Policy say?

A net enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity across the plan as a whole,

- Increasing the quality, quantity, extent and diversity of habitats
- Improving connections between habitats, to protect and enhance the provision of corridors, ecological networks (including Nature Recovery Networks)
- Enhancing the management of existing habitats
- Protecting sites designated for their nature conservation and/or geological importance,
- Facilitating greater access to nature, particularly within urban areas
- Supporting the development and implementation of the Greater Manchester Wetlands Nature Recovery Network; and
- Development will be expected to follow the mitigation hierarchy
- For any remaining harm to biodiversity achieve a net gain in biodiversity' and make appropriate provision for long-term management of habitats and geological features
- Whilst off-site habitat enhancement and creation required as part of the mitigation hierarchy (or to achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity of no less than 10%) should be local to the site regard should be had to supporting strategic biodiversity priorities and initiatives.

Biodiversity Net Gain – Greater Manchester Guidance





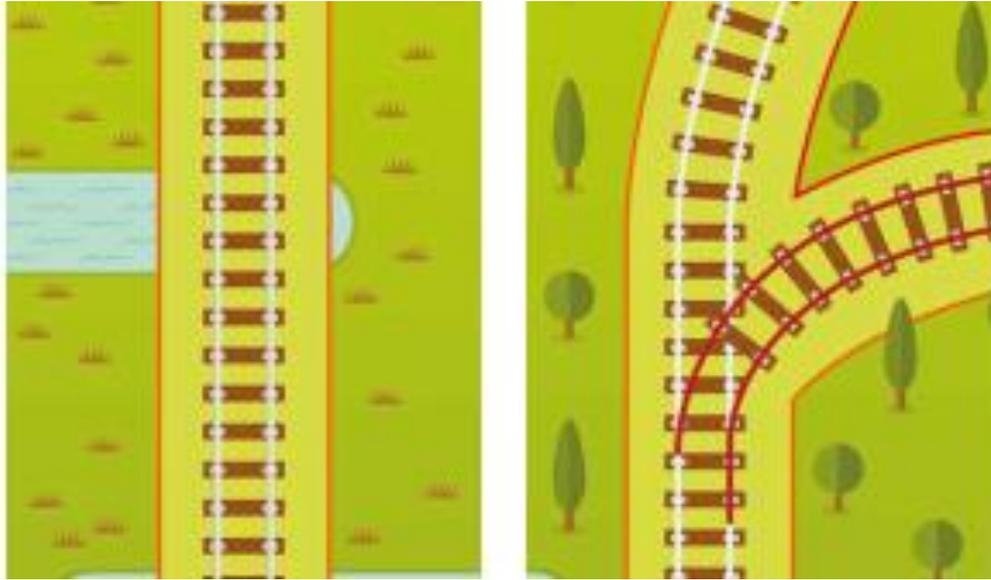
Feasibility and scoping

- Identify stakeholders
- Assess feasibility
- Set a goal
- Apply the mitigation hierarchy
- Engage stakeholders
- Report



Impact assessment

- Assess and measure the project baseline
- Apply the mitigation hierarchy



Design

- Clarify the starting point
- Set the outcomes
- Design for net gain
- Avoid or minimise risks
- Measure the predicted net gains
- Finalise the outputs and report
- Plan for the long term

and round again....



Construction

- Update the biodiversity baseline
- Include net gain in the construction documents
- Avoid or reduce the time lag
- Act on risks and opportunities
- Collect evidence and data
- Train key staff



Maintenance and monitoring

- Monitor progress and outcomes
- Employ adaptive management
- Report on outcomes

Evidencing delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain

As part of the planning application

- GIS layers of pre and post development
- Reports
- Metric
- Long Term Management Plan (*)
- (Net Gain Plan – 2023)

Biodiversity Net Gain for Greater Manchester contents 3

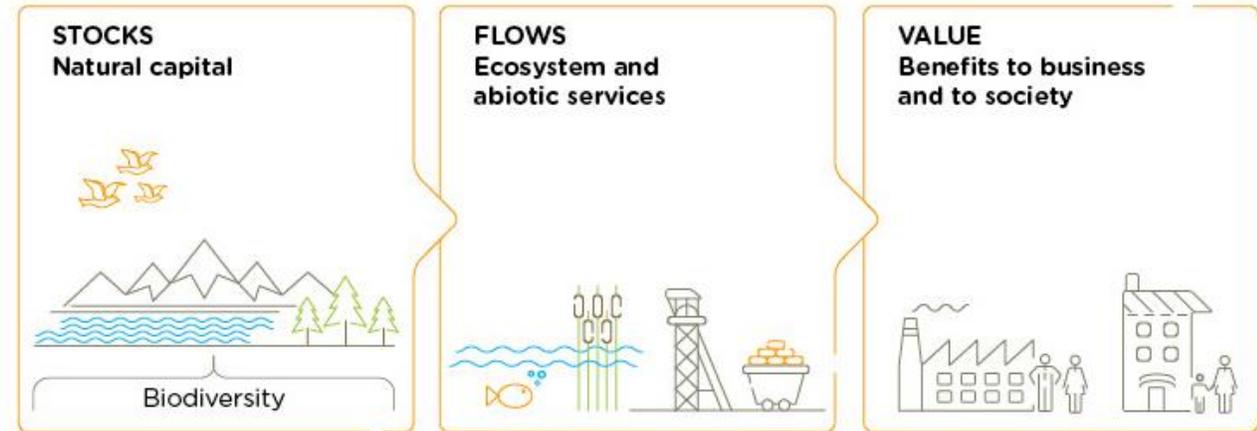
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Optimise sustainability



Prioritise Biodiversity Net Gain and, where possible, optimise the wider environmental benefits for a sustainable society and economy.



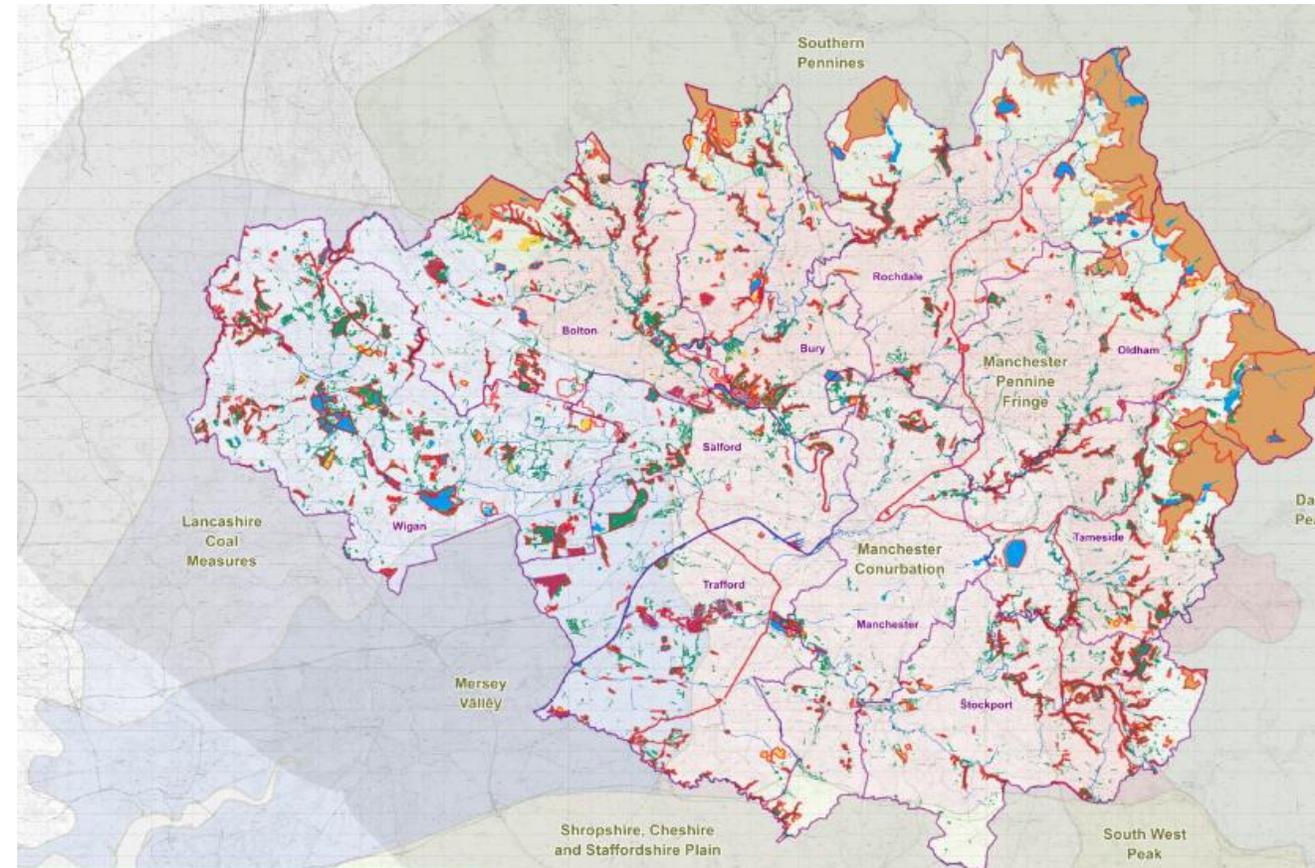
**Carbon
capture**

**Flood risk
management**

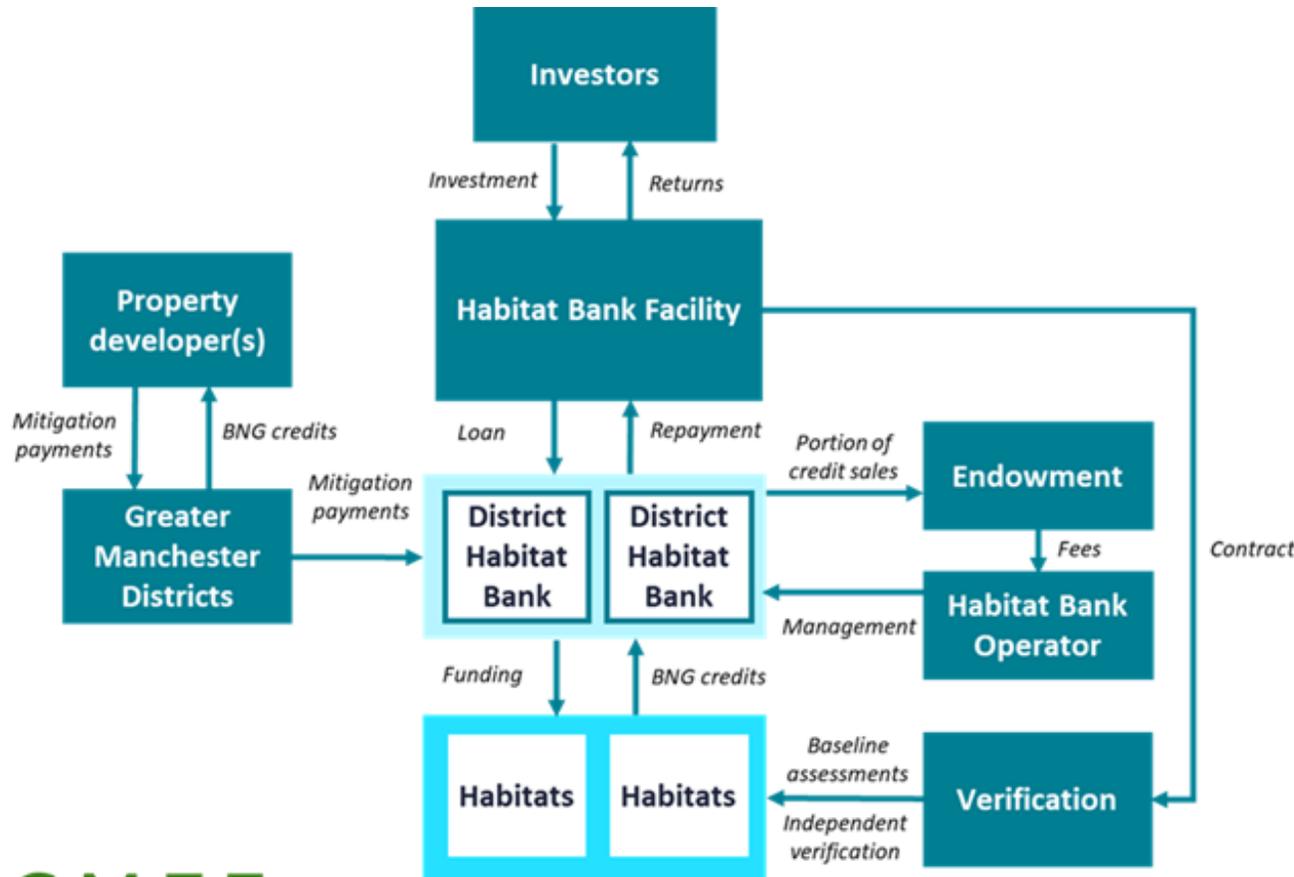
**Recreational
space**

Local nature recovery strategy

- Local nature recovery strategy will be required for each local authority/Combined Authority by the Environment Bill.
- Greater Manchester is 1 of 5 pilot areas.
- They will set out the priorities for nature's recovery targeting BNG (and other investment) for nature and other environment benefits.
- By March - draft plan setting out our priorities and a map showing the best opportunities for change.



Greater Manchester Environment Fund (habitat banking)



Generating new investment in strategic delivery of GM's Nature Recovery Network and ensuring funding is optimally spent



Increasing the quality and quantity of local greenspaces to benefit community well-being



Supporting a green city region and delivering the Mayor's zero carbon target



Local Authority Nature-based Solutions Guide – IGNITION project

Available May, with webinars in Summer

The IGNITION project will be producing a **finance-focused** guide that enhances **investor confidence** regarding public sector funding of Nature-based Solutions (NBS).

The guide will highlight the ways in which Local Authorities can **innovate** their operations to deliver on **Climate Emergency pledges** and provide **resilient communities**. It will include:



- GM-specific spatial data
- GM citizen perceptions on nature and our parks
- Key environmental, social and economic evidence for nature-based solutions

- Innovative funding mechanisms and business models
- How NBS can address LA priorities
- How to overcome some barriers for NBS



Biodiversity Net Gain for Greater Manchester contents 4

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Local planning authority role

- Developing appropriate Local Plan policies supported by Supplementary Planning Documents
- Ensuring Strategic Land Allocations have clear biodiversity requirements
- Providing advice for developers promoting early consideration of BNG
- Ensuring BNG information is submitted at outline and detailed planning application and checking planning application BNG claims
- Setting up Section 106 agreements to deliver BNG
- Potential providing offset sites
- Oversight of offset sites in the area (including registering habitat banks)
- Liaison with Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU)



Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU)

The GM Ecology Unit (GMEU) is a specialist shared service providing Ecology and Nature Conservation advice to, and on behalf of, the ten Councils of Greater Manchester.

GMEU also provides advice to local planning authorities in Warrington and Lancashire.

GMEU also acts as the Local Biological Records Centre for GM and as the Habitat Delivery Partner for the great crested newt District Level Licensing scheme.



GMEU – development management role

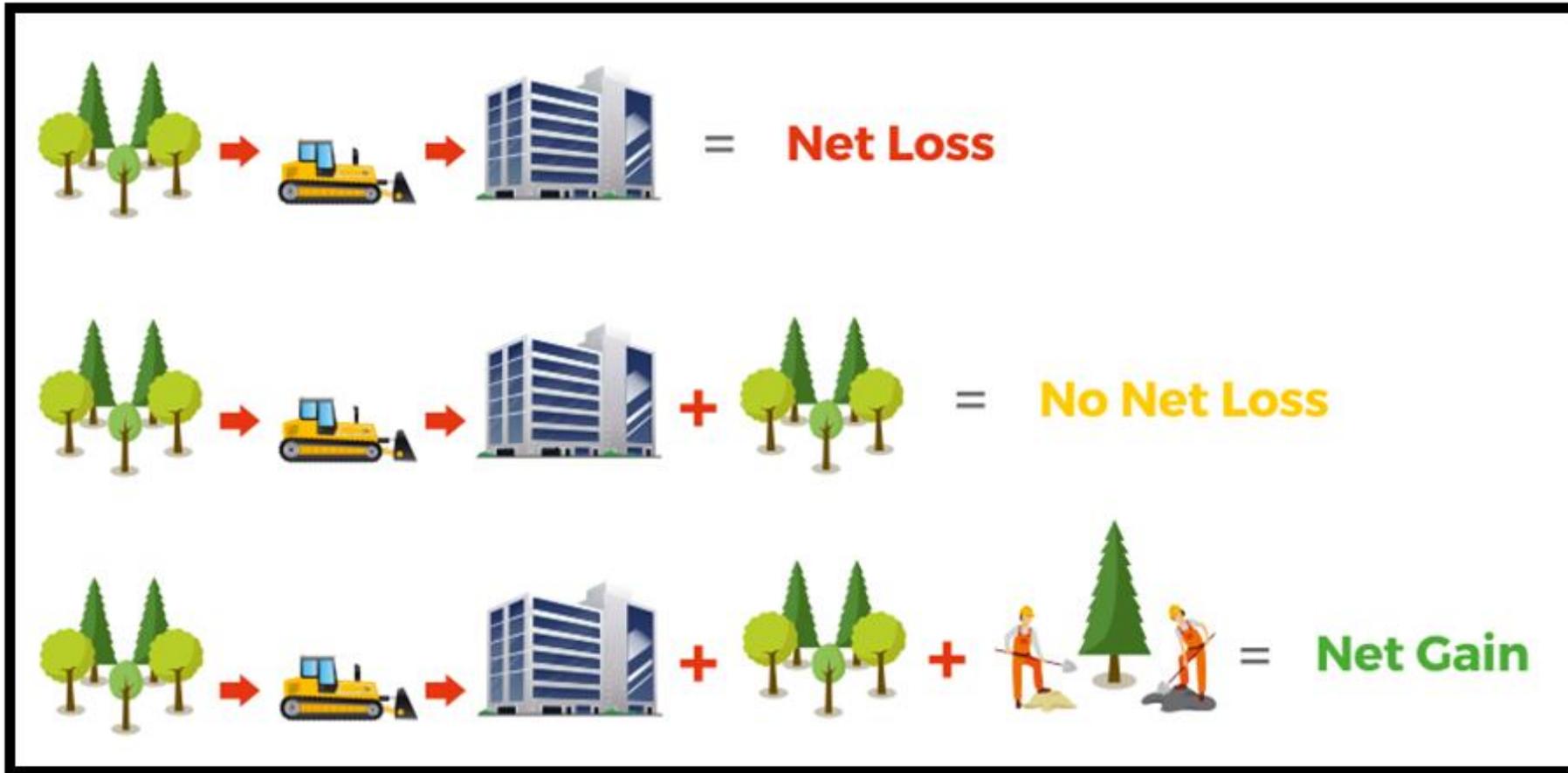
- Seek Net Gain wherever we can, across all planning applications
- Encourage application of the Metric
- Help applicants and consultants to use the Metric
- Check and interpret Metrics and advise on the suitability of habitat creation and repair proposals
- Advise on on-site and off-site provision
- Advise on financial contributions for off-site provision
- Advise on the application and discharge of Net Gain Conditions, S106 agreements and Unilateral Undertakings



GMEU - future role

- Applying Net Gain will require the involvement of suitably qualified ecologists at every stage of the development process
- Accredit and maintain a Register of Biodiversity gain sites
- Advise on the suitability of Habitat Banks
- Advise on, or prepare, long-term management plans for Habitat Banks and off-set sites
- Monitor the effectiveness of Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain is coming



Biodiversity net gain is when a development leaves biodiversity in a better state than which it was found

Questions



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