

Associated guidance for this document can be found [here](#). Each section has a link to the relevant section within the guidance document.

1 Details of the activity (i.e. the policy, strategy, service, project or function)

1.1 Directorate	City Development
1.2 Service	Economic Regeneration

1.3 Title of the activity (i.e. the policy, strategy, service, project or function):
Biodiversity Net Gain

1.4 Brief description of the activity:
Utilisation of Council owned land to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain

1.5 If the activity involves working with other directorates, partners or joint commissioning please state who is involved:
Property Services, Legal Services and Durham Wildlife Trust

1.6 Will all or part of the activity be delivered through a provider external to the Council? If Yes, please refer to the Corporate Procurement Processes
Yes

1.7 If Yes, please explain what element(s) of the activity will be delivered through an external provider:
Delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain will be undertaken by Durham Wildlife Trust initially, but other delivery partners may also be utilised in the future.

1.8 Which areas of the city will be impacted?	
Whole City	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Coalfield	<input type="checkbox"/>
East	<input type="checkbox"/>
North	<input type="checkbox"/>
Washington	<input type="checkbox"/>
West	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internal Council Activity – Impact on employees	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.9 Is the activity targeted at protected characteristics or any other key groups?	
All of the below	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age (e.g. older people, younger people/children, a specific age group)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability (e.g. mobility, long term health conditions, sensory impairment or loss, learning disability, neurological diversity or mental health)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity (including breastfeeding)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief (including no belief)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Rights	<input type="checkbox"/>
Care Experienced People	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other vulnerable groups and people with complex needs (e.g. veterans, children and young people who are cared for or care experienced, carers, domestic abuse victims and survivors, ex-offenders etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
People vulnerable to socio-economic deprivation (e.g. unemployed, low income, living in deprived areas, poor/no accommodation, low skills, low literacy etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please complete the Completed By and Version Table below

Completed by:	Gary Baker
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Version	Status	Author	Comments	Date Issued
1.1	Draft	GB	First Draft completed for circulation	06/02/2024

2 Data and Intelligence

[Guidance for this section](#)

2.1 What data and intelligence has informed the activity?

The Environment Act is introducing a new requirement for development to deliverable a measurable biodiversity net gain of at least 10%. The requirement will be mandatory for any major planning applications submitted after 12 February 2024 and most minor planning applications submitted after 2 April 2024.

Whilst it is a developer's responsibility to deliver any net gain required as a result of their development, it is acknowledged that it may not be possible to deliver the necessary net gain on the development site and therefore off-site mitigation may be necessary.

As the Council has considerable land holdings within the city, including areas of nature conservation value, it was considered that utilising Council owned land to delivery biodiversity net gain should be investigated, as this would support development within the city and also improve the management and ecological value of Council owned land.

In order to investigate the best mechanism to utilise Council owned land as a BNG resource, Council officers have been gathering intelligence through online resources, training and conversations with other relevant stakeholders such as Durham Wildlife Trust and neighbouring authorities.

After considering all options, it is considered that entering into long-term lease agreements with Durham Wildlife Trust (or other delivery partners as appropriate) would represent the best option.

2.2 Summary of data / intelligence / consultation outcomes to inform understanding of differences in:

- the way people use, access or experience your activity;
- how the activity may impact; and/or
- outcomes for different groups?

The intelligence gathered has been primarily focussed on the best mechanism to use Council owned land holdings for the delivery of biodiversity net gain.

Notwithstanding this, it is recognised that improving biodiversity and nature access within communities can have wider benefits to the resident population. It is intended that existing access arrangements will be retained.

3 Equality and Human Rights

[Guidance for this section](#)

3.1 Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

What impact will the activity have?

Not Applicable

Explain how/why:

A number of the potential BNG sites have public access and are accessible by all members of the community. It is intended that these existing access arrangements will be retained.

3.2 Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
A number of the potential BNG sites have public access and are accessible by all members of the community. It is intended that these existing access arrangements will be retained.
3.3 Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
A number of the potential BNG sites have public access and are accessible by all members of the community. It is intended that these existing access arrangements will be retained.
3.4 Age (older ages, children and young people, middle ages, an age range or a specific age)
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
A number of the potential BNG sites have public access and are accessible by all members of the community. It is intended that these existing access arrangements will be retained.
3.5 Disability (mobility, long-term health conditions, sensory, learning disability, neurological diversity or mental health)
What impact will the activity have?
Positive
Explain how/why:
A number of the potential BNG sites have public access and are accessible by all members of the community. It is intended that these existing access arrangements will be retained. Improvement of the management of these sites and enhancing their value, will improve access to nature and the health and wellbeing benefits associated with this.
3.6 Gender reassignment (the process of transitioning from one sex to another)
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
A number of the potential BNG sites have public access and are accessible by all members of the community.
3.7 Marriage and Civil Partnership
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
A number of the potential BNG sites have public access and are accessible by all members of the community. It is intended that these existing access arrangements will be retained.
3.8 Pregnancy and maternity (including breastfeeding)
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
A number of the potential BNG sites have public access and are accessible by all members of the community. It is intended that these existing access arrangements will be retained.

3.9 Race (colour, ethnicity, country of origin, culture, etc.)
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
A number of the potential BNG sites have public access and are accessible by all members of the community. It is intended that these existing access arrangements will be retained.
3.10 Religion / Belief (including no belief)
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
A number of the potential BNG sites have public access and are accessible by all members of the community. It is intended that these existing access arrangements will be retained.
3.11 Sex (male or female)
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
A number of the potential BNG sites have public access and are accessible by all members of the community. It is intended that these existing access arrangements will be retained.
3.12 Sexual orientation
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
A number of the potential BNG sites have public access and are accessible by all members of the community. It is intended that these existing access arrangements will be retained.
3.13 Will the activity impact on an individual's Human Rights as enshrined in UK law?
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
A number of the potential BNG sites have public access and are accessible by all members of the community. It is intended that these existing access arrangements will be retained.
3.14 Other vulnerable groups and people with complex needs (e.g. veterans, children and young people cared for and care experienced, carers, domestic abuse victims and survivors, ex-offenders, homeless or multiple complexities/characteristics)
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
A number of the potential BNG sites have public access and are accessible by all members of the community. It is intended that these existing access arrangements will be retained.

4 Reducing socio-economic and digital inequalities

[Guidance for this section](#)

Will the activity:

4.1 Impact on residents' financial circumstances	Not Applicable
4.2 Impact on housing, including type, range, affordability, quality and/or condition	Not Applicable
4.3 Impact on digital inclusion or access	Not Applicable
4.4 Impact on education, skills and lifelong learning	Positive
4.5 Impact on employment, including quality and access	Positive

4.6 Outline the impact your activity will have, including how you propose to mitigate any negative impacts and maximise positive outcomes
The Council will be working in partnership with Durham Wildlife Trust to deliver BNG on Council owned land. This will provide employment opportunities for local communities, with the Trust in delivering management of the sites. The Council will also work closely with the Trust to maximise employment of local labour where possible and to facilitate education, skills and lifelong learning, including the use of apprenticeships where possible.
4.7 Outline how you will measure the anticipated impact(s)
The outcomes will be measured through gathering information from the Trust in terms of the number of people employed managing Council owned sites. Information will also be gathered in terms of apprenticeships and education undertaken.

5 Improving population health and reducing health inequalities

[Guidance for this section](#)

Will the activity:

5.1 Help promote healthy living	Positive
5.2 Help promote safe and inclusive environments	Positive
5.3 Impact on children, young people and families	Positive
5.4 Impact on natural and built surroundings	Positive
5.5 Impact on accessibility and active travel encouraging active behaviours	Positive
5.6 Impact on living independently	Not Applicable

5.7 Outline the impact your activity will have, including how you propose to mitigate any negative impacts and maximise positive outcomes
A number of the potential sites have public access and are accessible by all members of the community. It is intended that these existing access arrangements will be retained. Use of these sites for biodiversity net gain purposes will ensure that they are protected and enhanced, which will improve access to nature and the health and wellbeing associated with this.
5.8 Outline how you will measure the anticipated impact(s)
All net gain improvements secured will be informed by a management plan which has been approved by the local authority. All net gain sites will be subject to ongoing monitoring which requires the submission of regular monitoring reports to the local authority.

6 Carbon reduction and sustainability

[Guidance for this section](#)

Will the activity:

6.1 Adapting our behaviour (environmentally significant)	Not Applicable
6.2 Impact on biodiversity and natural environment	Positive
6.3 Impact on energy efficient built environment	Not Applicable
6.4 Impact on renewable energy generation and storage	Not Applicable
6.5 Impact on travel and active transport	Positive
6.6 Impact on the green economy	Not Applicable
6.7 Impact on waste, recycling and consumption	Not Applicable

6.8 Outline the impact your activity will have, including how you propose to mitigate any negative impacts and maximise positive outcomes
Utilising Council owned land for biodiversity net gain purposes will have a positive impact on biodiversity and the natural environment through positive management of sites for to deliver measurable biodiversity net gain. Depending on the type of improvements delivered, this may also act as a carbon store and may potentially also be able to be delivered alongside or in addition to carbon credits.
Through the positive management of sites for biodiversity net gain, this may make them more attractive routes for active travel.
6.9 Outline how you will measure the anticipated impact(s)
The impacts will be measured through the number of carbon credits created on sites being managed for biodiversity net gain purposes.

7 Community wealth building

[Guidance for this section](#)

Will the activity:

7.1 Impact on community wealth and social value	Positive
7.2 Impact on social inclusion, integration, and fostering good relations	Positive
7.3 Impact on crime reduction, anti-social behaviour and community safety	Positive and Negative
7.4 Impact on access to services	Not Applicable

7.5 Outline the impact your activity will have, including how you propose to mitigate any negative impacts and maximise positive outcomes
The use of Council owned land for biodiversity net gain ensures that existing habitats will be protected and enhanced. The management of sites may create potential volunteering opportunities to raise awareness and create a greater sense of community stewardship. These will be considered through the management plans. It is possible that increasing public access to these sites may have a negative impact upon anti-social behaviour by providing enhanced access to wildlife sites which are often isolated and not overlooked. Signage and interpretation will be considered as part of the management plans, where appropriate.
7.6 Outline how you will measure the anticipated impact(s)
It will be a requirement for management plans to be prepared and approved by the Council. The impact upon community wealth building will be calculated by monitoring the number of volunteering opportunities created and the number of people who have actively engaged in these. Any potential anti-social and community safety risks will be identified and mitigated as part of respective management plans. Through greater access to nature and opportunities for volunteering it is hoped that increased sense of ownership will gradually lead to a reduction in any antisocial behaviour that may occur. It is a requirement that

regular monitoring reports are submitted to the local authority.

8 Key Actions

Any key actions identified throughout the IIA should be recorded here. This will be the action plan linked to your activity and should be implemented to ensure all inequalities or negative impacts are mitigated.

Key Actions	Timescale	Responsible Officer	Review Date
Approval of Management Plans	Ongoing	Tom Stephenson	
Consideration of submitted monitoring reports	Ongoing	Tom Stephenson	

Please complete the Responsible Officer information below

Responsible officer sign off:	
Name	Gary Baker
Job Title	Strategic and Sustainable Plans Manager
Responsible officer for reviewing actions:	
Name	Tom Stephenson
Job Title	Principal Ecologist

To support the council's reporting processes in relation to IIA, please use the following naming convention: IIA_(Name_of_activity).

Once you have completed the IIA and it is signed off, please send the final document as an **attachment** to: IIA@sunderland.gov.uk

IIAs will be stored in this central database for corporate analysis. **No feedback will be returned on an individual basis as IIAs are received.**