

Biodiversity net gain monitoring fee calculator guidance note

Background

Under mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements, all off-site and significant on-site biodiversity net gain provision must be secured for a minimum of 30 years by legal agreement of planning obligation. The local authority is legally required to monitor the delivery of this provision. To ensure the effective long-term monitoring of biodiversity net gain, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk BC requires a monitoring fee for significant on-site and all off-site BNG provisions.

A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan will form part of the legal agreement (s106) and/or planning obligation for the site. We will review monitoring reports sent in by the owner of the site at times set out within the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan. The monitoring reports will be considered by the ecology team to ensure that these are appropriate and in line with the expected habitat condition at that point in time. A monitoring fee is charged to cover our costs for monitoring the obligations within the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan.

The monitoring fee covers our costs over the full 30 year term of the agreement/obligation. This includes reviewing submitted monitoring reports, conducting site visits where necessary and collaborating with the site owner to agree on any required remedial measures. The fee covers costs of the ecology officer time and liaison with our other colleagues including but not limited to legal services, planning and enforcement.

Significance Threshold

The [Government Planning Practice Guidance](#) (PPG) defines significant enhancements as areas of habitat enhancement which contribute significantly to the proposed development's biodiversity net gain, relative to the biodiversity value before development. As per the PPG, the maintenance of these significant enhancements must be secured with a [legal agreement](#) or planning obligation for 30 years.

A Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan condition will be applied to any application delivering on-site significant or off-site gain. A Unilateral Undertaking agreement will be required to secure a biodiversity net gain monitoring fee or, the fee will be secured within any existing Section 106 agreement.

Monitoring Fee

We have developed a biodiversity net gain monitoring fee calculator to determine an appropriate monitoring fee. For each project a single fee shall be levied, following the approval of a Biodiversity Gain Plan which secures the habitat management and monitoring plan and our oversight of the progress of that plan. The fee is established using the calculator. The calculator reflects our minimum requirements. It is based on:

- the size of the biodiversity net gain site (total area of habitat parcels to be monitored)
- the highest technical difficulty of the habitats to be created and/or enhanced
- the day-rate for an ecology officer at the time the fee is set
- the schedule and number of monitoring intervals
- the current figure applied for inflation (reviewed annually)

A fee will not be levied for commercial applications that do not exceed 5ha. This does not include campsite or other tourist accommodation.

Guidance on the application of the calculator

Size category - the applicable size category shall be determined by the total area in hectares of biodiversity net gain habitats covered by the agreement. For on-site biodiversity net gain this shall only include those habitat parcels retained or created for the purposes of biodiversity net gain and which are subject to the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan secured in the legal agreement. The area boundary should align with that provided within the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan to be legally secured for 30 years.

For avoidance of doubt, this is the area of habitats to be monitored not the red-line area of the development site. Areas not deemed to be 'significant on-site biodiversity net gain' including areas within domestic curtilage should be excluded, so it will not necessarily equate to the total area of habitats scored within the metric post-development metric. Non-significant on-site biodiversity net gain may be secured separately by planning condition which is not liable to a monitoring fee.

Technical difficulty category - the applicable technical difficulty level relates to the most difficult habitat for the site, irrespective of the size of that parcel in relation to the total area of habitats. Technical difficulty categories are defined by the Statutory Biodiversity Metric as low, medium, or high.

Monitoring intervals - the number of intervals and which years the monitoring reports will be submitted to us for consideration will be set out in the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan. As a minimum we require monitoring reports to be submitted at one, three, five, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 years after the establishment of the habitats, thus the number of monitoring events is eight. If a different schedule or number of monitoring intervals is agreed in the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan, then the calculator will be adjusted to reflect the additional events.

Review of the fees calculator - the tool calculates a figure based upon certain input assumptions, namely the officer day-rate, the number and timing of monitoring events and an inflation-adjustment figure. The calculator tool and the input assumptions will be reviewed periodically by us. As the fees are levied up-front, any changes to the calculator will only apply to new 30-year monitoring arrangements agreed after that point - the changes will not affect existing monitoring agreements once signed. The fee is determined using the iteration of the calculator in use at the time of signing the agreement.

Bespoke monitoring arrangements - the calculator was devised for sites of less than 40 hectares and for a single phase of works after which the 30-year monitoring commences. For sites of 5 hectares or greater, or different intervals, a bespoke monitoring fee arrangement must be agreed.

Linear Habitats - Hedgerows and ditches are linear habitats calculated in km/m. An additional cost will be incurred where both Linear Units and Area Units are proposed in order to cover additional time required to monitor additional features. Where only linear habitats are proposed a proportionate fee will be levied. A bespoke fee will be calculated for any other watercourse type to account for the technical difficulty of monitoring such habitats.

Monitoring fees standard look-up table

Area Habitats

Table 1: Area Habitat Fees lookup table

Monitoring Fee standard lookup table (Area Habitat)	Technical difficulty of creating/enhancing habitat proposed		
	Low	Medium	High
Area of habitat creation/enhancement proposed (hectares)			
Below Threshold [0-0.25]	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Very Small [0.25-0.5]	£2,405.07	£3,750.95	£4,171.52
Small [>0.5-1]	£4,338.01	£5,950.24	£8,427.85
Medium [>1-2]	£6,314.21	£9,405.72	£14,298.58
Large [>2-5]	£11,245.32	£15,105.82	£24,716.97
Very large [>5]	Bespoke	Bespoke	Bespoke

Hedgerow Habitats

Table 2: Hedgerow Habitat Fees lookup table

Monitoring Fee standard lookup table (Hedgerow)	Technical difficulty of creating/enhancing habitat proposed		
	Low	Medium	High
Length of habitat creation/enhancement proposed (meters)			
Below Threshold [0-10]	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Very Small [>10-25]	£1,005.18	£1,036.19	£2,214.52
Small [>25-50]	£1,036.19	£1,060.99	£2,297.47
Medium [>50-100]	£1,060.99	£1,092.00	£2,363.83
Large [>100-200]	£1,092.00	£1,846.31	£2,463.37
Very large [>200]	Bespoke	Bespoke	Bespoke