

| QUESTION NUMBER | QUESTION | RESPONSE | DETAIL (when requested) |
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| Ecology Capacity and Expertise | | | |
| 1 | Would you like to receive the analyses of this nationwide benchmarking survey? If so, please tell us the email address of the person we should send the outputs to. | Yes - Please provide details | planningpolicy@dover.gov.uk |
| 2 | How many in-house ecologists does your LPA have, in total (please state in number of Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs))? | 0.8 | |
| 3 | How many in-house ecologists does your LPA have, in roles working on assessing planning applications (please state in number of FTEs)? | 0.8 | |
| 4 | How many of your in-house ecologists have at least two years' professional experience working as an ecologist? | 0.8 | |
| 5 | Do you get ecological support from external advisors? If so, how many days' / hours' support did you obtain in financial year 2024/25, and how much did this cost the LPA? | Yes - Please provide details | |
| 6 | Planning application fees increased significantly on 1 April 2025. How much of this additional funding do you plan to spend on improving your capacity to process BNG (e.g. on ecologists, other staff, software, other) | 0 | The cost didn't cover a specific number of hours / days but was set at a flat rate to retain ecological advice capacity by the provider while the level of additional work that BNG would bring was assessed. The cost was covered by the Defra BNG grant - £14,647 |
| Pre-Application Advice | | | |
| 7 | Do you offer Biodiversity Pre-Application advice as a paid-for service? | Yes | |
| Validation | | | |
| 8 | Has your LPA introduced local validation requirements for BNG submissions, in addition to the national validation requirements? (Yes/No) If yes, please briefly outline these or provide a link to the relevant documentation. | No | We are currently preparing a validation checklist which will be adopted later this year. |
| 9 | Do you require that all planning applications subject to mandatory BNG include a Biodiversity Metric in its original Excel format (not another format such as pdf)? | Yes | We use Mycelia software which performs the checks and flags when there is an issue |
| 10 | Do you ensure that the Biodiversity Metric is a statutory version? If so, how? | Yes - Please provide details | |
| 11 | Do you ensure that the Biodiversity Metric has not been tampered with, for example by changing the Excel formulae? If so, how? | Yes - Please provide details | |
| 12 | Do you ensure that the Biodiversity Metric contains information about the baseline habitats and that this information does not contain any errors (such as incomplete rows or Excel formulae violations)? If so, how? | Yes - Please provide details | |
| 13 | Do you ensure that the area covered by the baseline information in the Biodiversity Metric matches the area within the red line boundary? If so, how? | No | |

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| 14 | If an application claims the de minimis exemption from BNG, do you check whether the exemption applies before validating the application? If so, how? | Yes - Please provide details | |
| 15 | If an application claims the self-build / custom-build exemption from BNG, do you check whether the exemption applies before validating the application? If so, how? | No | |
| 16 | Since 1 January 2025, how many retrospective applications have you received, that if they had not been retrospective would have been subject to mandatory BNG? | 28 | |
| Determination/Assessment | | | |
| 17 | Prior to determining an application, do you check whether the biodiversity data and information submitted as part of the application create any concerns, for example risks to valuable habitats and/or unrealistic proposals? If so, how? | Yes - Please provide details | The submission is reviewed by an ecologist, or by a planning officer with ecology support when needed. |
| 18 | Prior to determining an application, do you make an assessment as to whether any on-site habitats are likely to be defined as significant (and therefore need to be secured)? If so, how? | Yes - Please provide details | Guidance for the identification of significant on-site habitat has been prepared and agreed between Kent and Medway LPAs. |
| 19 | Prior to determining an application, do you make an assessment as to whether any legal instruments are likely to be required to secure habitats, such as planning conditions or Section 106 Agreements? If so, how? | Yes - Please provide details | An internal BNG process note ensures that officers can make this judgement |
| 20 | Prior to determining an application, do you seek information from the applicant as to how they plan to discharge the BNG condition? (E.g. through what combination of on-site BNG, off-site BNG, and statutory credits.) | Yes | |
| 20 a) | Where the applicant is likely to have a shortfall of on-site BNG, do you proactively inform them of options for sourcing off-site Biodiversity Units? If so, how? | Yes - Please provide details | The Kent Biodiversity Net Gain Site Register shows locally available options |
| 20 b) | Where the applicant is likely to have an on-site shortfall of less than 0.25 Biodiversity Units, do you proactively inform them that they are permitted to proceed straight to the use of statutory credits? If so, how? | No | |
| Condition Discharge | | | |
| 21 | Prior to discharging the Biodiversity Gain deemed condition, do you check whether the condition discharge application includes a Biodiversity Metric in its original Excel format (not another format such as pdf)? If so, how? | Yes - Please provide details | We use Mycelia software which performs the checks and flags when there is an issue |
| 22 | Do you ensure that the Biodiversity Metric is a statutory version? If so, how? | Yes - Please provide details | We use Mycelia software which performs the checks and flags when there is an issue |
| 23 | Do you ensure that the Biodiversity Metric has not been tampered with, for example by changing the Excel formulae? If so, how? | Yes - Please provide details | We use Mycelia software which performs the checks and flags when there is an issue |

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| 24 | Do you ensure that the Biodiversity Metric follows all of the BNG requirements for discharge, including that it contains no errors whatsoever unless the applicant has purchased statutory credits? If so, how? | Yes - Please provide details | We use Mycelia software which performs the checks and flags when there is an issue |
| 25 a) | If the applicant has purchased statutory credits as part of their approach to discharging the condition, do you ensure that the applicant had the LPA's permission, where necessary, to use statutory credits? If so, how? | Yes - Please provide details | |
| 25 b) | Do you require proof of purchase of the statutory credits? | Yes | |
| 25 c) | Do you ensure that the applicant has purchased the correct numbers and types of statutory credits? If so, how? | Yes - Please provide details | |
| Monitoring | | | |
| 26 | What legal approach do you use to collect BNG monitoring fees from applicants? | Section 106 | Schedule determined on a case by case basis, agreed through Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans. Fees due on the submission of habitat monitoring reporting |
| 27 | Do you collect BNG monitoring fees in a single lump sum, or spread out over the 30 years? If spread out, on what schedule? | Spread Out - Please detail schedule | |
| Enforcement | | | |
| 28 | How do you inform applicants that planning permission is subject to the Biodiversity Gain deemed condition? E.g. is this listed as part of the main set of conditions, noted in a separate informative, or notified in some other way (please specify)? | Noted in a separate informative | There is no pro-active review of pre-commencement condition discharges prior to developments commencing. One known 24/00181, though the LPA ecologist's review concluded that the deemed condition could be discharged, this was not done in a timely manner due to an administrative error. |
| 29 | Do you ensure that development does not commence without discharging the Biodiversity Gain deemed condition? If so, how? | No | |
| 30 | Have any developments in your area, where permission was subject to the Biodiversity Gain deemed condition, commenced without discharging the condition? If so, please state how many and identify them e.g. by planning reference number. | Yes - Please provide details | |
| Biodiversity Duty Reporting | | | |
| 31 | Has a specific officer or role been designated as responsible for preparing and delivering your LPA's Biodiversity Duty report, due in Q1 2026? If yes, please state the job title responsible. | Yes - please state the job title responsible | Senior Planning Policy Officer |
| 32 | Does your LPA currently have software or specific digital tools in place to support the data collection and reporting requirements for the Biodiversity Duty? If yes, please provide the name of the tool(s). | Yes - please provide name of tool(s) | Mycelia |
| END | | | |