

Derby City Council – Response

ID Reference FOI737750065

Date 01/07/2025

Information Requested	Response
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.	No
2. How many in-house ecologists does your LPA have, in total (please state in number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTEs))?	Nil
3. How many in-house ecologists does your LPA have, in roles working on assessing planning applications (please state in number of FTEs)?	Nil
4. How many of your in-house ecologists have at least two years' professional experience working as an ecologist?	Nil
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. 80 hours at an annual cost of £23, 304.
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	The Monitoring and Management fees suffice at the moment.



process BNG (e.g. on ecologists, other staff, software, other)	
7. Do you offer Biodiversity Pre-Application advice as a paid-for service?	No
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.	Yes link is here : Local List of Validation Requirements
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
10. Do you ensure that the Biodiversity Metric is a statutory version? If so, how?	Yes, we use Mycelia (BNG Software by Verna Earth Solutions) which performs a check.
11. Do you ensure that the Biodiversity Metric has not been tampered with, for example by changing the Excel formulae? If so, how?	Yes. Mycelia performs the check
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. Mycelia performs the check
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?	Planning officers check the plans



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. Officers validating the application check the information provided and ask for a statement from the applicant
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?	Yes. Officers validating the application check the information provided, discuss this with the applicant, and ask for a statement from the applicant
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?	None
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?	Mycelia provides the initial assessment and the Wildlife Trust provides comments on major applications. The case officer also discusses the application with colleagues.
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?	Mycelia compares the metric with the national definitions and highlights any onsite significant habitats.
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. Mycelia provides an initial heads-up. The Wildlife Trust also provides advice and then the case officer discusses the application with the Council's Implementation Team.



<p>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.)</p>	<p>Yes. We ask an applicant to submit a draft Metric with their application so we can see their proposed BNG solution.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>Yes. The Validation Team check all applications.</p>
<p>22. Do you ensure that the Biodiversity Metric is a statutory version? If so, how?</p>	<p>Yes. See the answer to the same question above.</p>
<p>23. Do you ensure that the Biodiversity Metric has not been tampered with, for example by changing the Excel formulae? If so, how?</p>	<p>Yes. See the answer to the same question above.</p>
<p>24. Do you ensure that the Biodiversity Metric follows all of the BNG requirements for</p>	<p>Yes. See the answer to the same question above.</p>



discharge, including that it contains no errors whatsoever unless the applicant has purchased statutory credits? If so, how?	
25a. 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?	We haven't had an applicant who has done this yet but of course we will
25b. Do you require proof of purchase of the statutory credits?	Yes
25c. Do you ensure that the applicant has purchased the correct numbers and types of statutory credits? If so, how?	We haven't had an applicant who has done this yet but of course we will.
26. What legal approach do you use to collect BNG monitoring fees from applicants?	Unilateral Undertaking.
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?	We collect a lump sum at the start 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)?	Separate Informative.
29. Do you ensure that development does not commence without discharging the	We are alerted when an applicant submits a Discharge of Condition for other aspects of an



Biodiversity Gain deemed condition? If so, how?	application or when officers undertake the annual housing, retail & employment surveys.
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.	No 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. Senior Planning 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. Mycelia by Verna Earth Solutions.

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