Norfolk Coast
Protected Landscape

Nature Recovery Guidance

Supporting positive action
for nature across the
Norfolk Coast National Landscape

Published 2025 by Norfolk Coast Protected Landscape

Contents

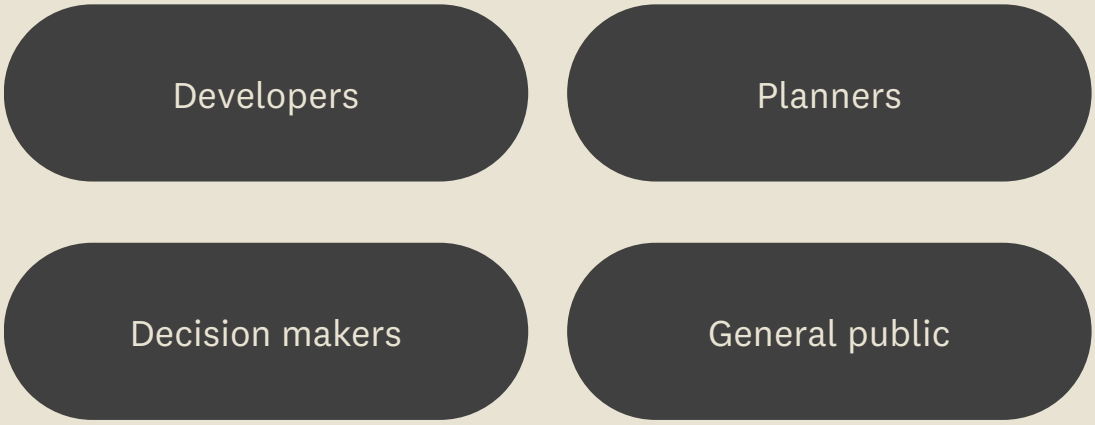
1. Introduction

This guidance supports the Norfolk Coast National Landscape (NCNL) Management Plan. It is designed to empower those living and working within or around our protected landscape to take positive action for nature. This document sets out why action is needed and the resources available to support nature recovery efforts.

The purpose of this guidance is to:

- Raise awareness of the opportunities to support nature recovery in and around the NCNL
- Empower people to take action for the protection and recovery of nature in and around the NCNL
- Support the special qualities of the NCNL through the protection and recovery of nature.

This guidance is aimed at:



2. The need for nature recovery

The UK is among the most nature-depleted countries in the world, ranking in the bottom 10% of countries globally for the proportion of its original biodiversity that remains intact (Natural History Museum, Biodiversity Intactness Index). According to the 2023 State of Nature report, wildlife populations across the UK have declined on average by 19% since the 1970s. These losses are also evident along the Norfolk Coast.

Our protected landscapes have a vital role to play in reversing this trend — by expanding, buffering, restoring, and carefully managing habitats, both natural and those shaped by people, to support nature recovery.

3. Relevant policy

Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy
The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Norfolk is a collaborative plan for restoring nature across Norfolk. It includes a map showing areas that are already at the heart of nature recovery, and areas where it is best to locate new habitat creation and restoration activities in order to connect nature and maximise benefits for people and wildlife.

The LNRS also identifies priority habitats and species, with associated measures to help contribute to nature recovery. These are detailed in the Habitat Priority Profiles (Draft Norfolk LNRS 2025, Table 4-23) and the 15 habitat-based assemblages that relate to groups of species within a habitat type, each represented with a flagship species (Draft Norfolk LNRS pp 114-129).

Information from Norfolk's LNRS has supported development of a series of nature recovery goals and targets within the NCNL Management Plan and the associated Action Plan for Nature Recovery, as outlined below.

NCNL Management Plan
The NCNL Management Plan outlines a five-year strategy to protect and enhance this nationally designated coastline. It contains four goals and 21 targets for nature recovery, which are supported by an Action Plan which sets out the steps for practical delivery of nature recovery in and around the Norfolk Coast.

Protected Landscape Targets and Outcomes Framework
In 2024, the Government established ambitious national targets for Protected Landscapes to deliver their potential for nature, climate, people and place. These targets are outlined in the Protected Landscape Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF) and included within the nature recovery goals and targets of the NCNL Management Plan.

Enhanced Biodiversity Duty
The Environment Act 2021 introduced an enhanced Biodiversity Duty for all public bodies. In response, the Norfolk Association of Local Councils (NALC) has published guidance to support compliance with this duty. The Association has developed a model biodiversity policy for use by its member Parish Councils, helping them meet their legal obligations. This policy sets out commitments to protect biodiversity through the planning system, and to manage land in ways that actively promote and enhance local biodiversity.

4. Underpinning legislation

The UK Government has several important pieces of legislation which underpin nature recovery. These include:

- The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) is one of the UK's principal laws for wildlife protection. It safeguards wild birds, as well as numerous other animal and plant species, and established a system of nationally designated conservation sites.
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) strengthens the protection of nationally designated landscapes and threatened species. It also places a duty on Relevant Authorities to 'have regard' to the purposes of National Landscape designations in carrying out their functions.
- The Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act) established the biodiversity duty for public bodies, requiring them to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. The Act also introduced a list of priority species and habitats that these organisations must consider in their decision-making and management activities.
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Habs Regs) provide protection for species and habitats of international importance, ensuring the conservation of designated sites across the UK.
- The Environment Act 2021 commits the UK Government to achieving nature recovery targets and introduces a range of new tools, including Biodiversity Net Gain, Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Species Conservation Strategies, Protected Site Strategies and Conservation Covenants. The Act also strengthens the Biodiversity Duty for Local Authorities, supporting them in protecting and enhancing local biodiversity.
- The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) covers a broad range of areas, but in terms of nature recovery, it introduced several key measures. The Act strengthened the duty of Relevant Authorities to seek to further the purposes of National Landscape designations, required Local Authorities to take account of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) and identified 'Sensitive Catchments' where planning decisions must consider potential impacts on nutrient levels.

5. Local nature

Habitats and species

Our protected landscapes encompass some of the UK's largest and best-preserved examples of saltmarsh, freshwater grazing marsh, and sand dune habitats. Alongside extensive areas of mudflat, shingle, wetland, and grassland, these ecosystems make the Norfolk Coast an important stronghold for coastal biodiversity.

In addition, smaller patches of semi-natural habitats — including fens, chalk grassland, heathland, and ancient woodland — play a vital role. Despite their limited extent, they support a high concentration of priority species and are essential components of the wider ecological network.

Since 1980, an incredible 10,759 species have been recorded along the Norfolk Coast. Of these, more than 1,200 are identified as priority species by the Norfolk Coast Biodiversity Audit (Phases 1–3), due to their local significance or wider conservation concern. Among them, beach-nesting and wetland birds are considered the most sensitive to habitat loss and human disturbance. Protecting, extending, connecting and managing habitats across the Norfolk Coast is therefore critical to maintaining natural ecological functions and safeguarding the species that depend on these diverse land and seascapes.

The following resources provide guidance on considering habitats and species as part of activities in the protected landscapes:

- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act. Lists species and habitats of principal importance in England. These should be taken into account by public bodies fulfilling their Biodiversity Duty, as well as by landowners and developers designing proposals or planning nature recovery projects.
- Protected Species Guidance (gov.uk). Provides full lists of protected species, details of their likely distributions and guidance on appropriate survey methods.
- Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Identifies locally important habitats and habitat assemblages, along with flagship species that can help guide planning and action for nature recovery.

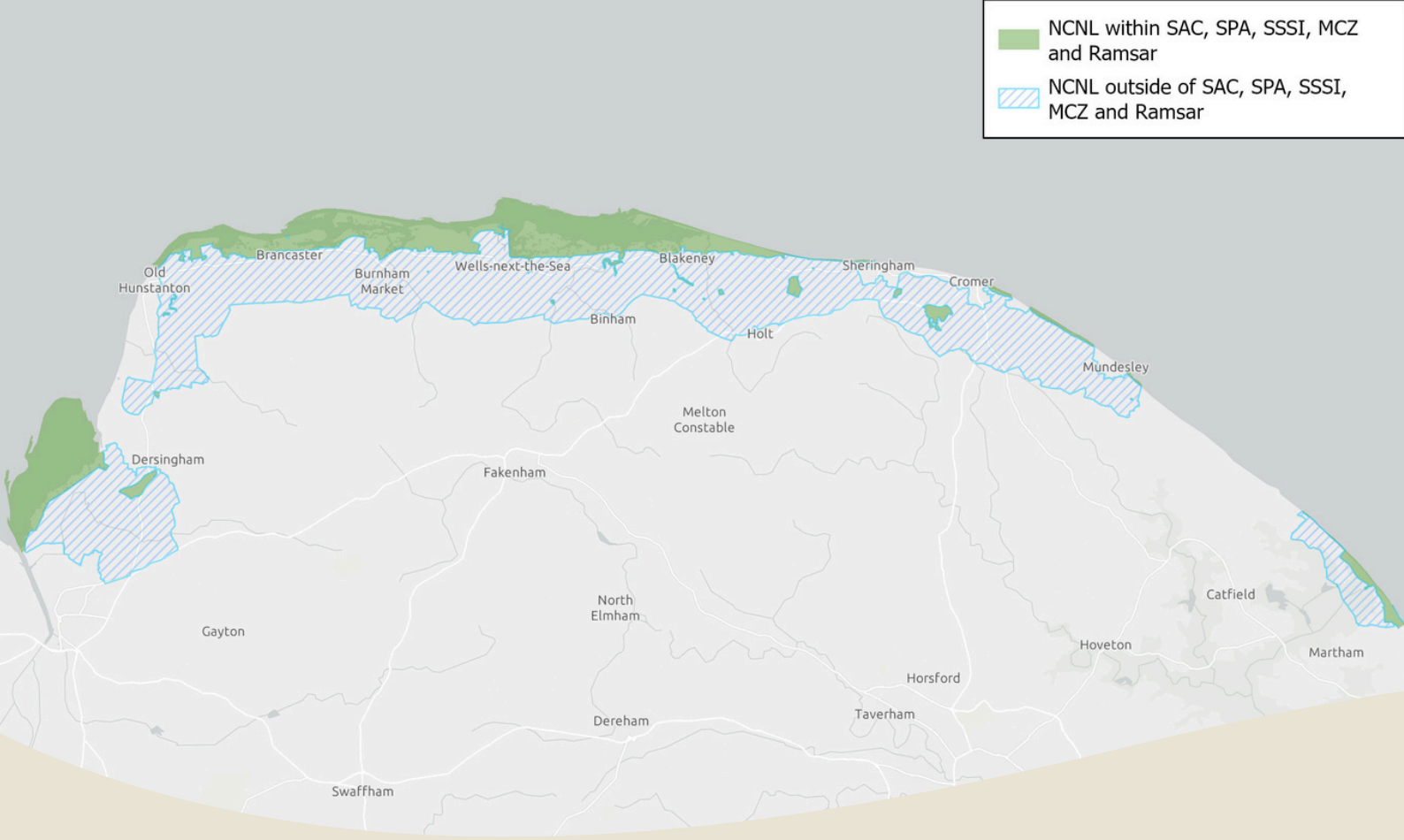


Figure 1: Map showing the area of the Norfolk Coast National Landscape designated as a statutory protected site for nature (in green) and the area that is not designated a statutory protected site for nature (in blue hatch). Sources: Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS.

Designated sites

At the heart of nature recovery are sites that hold legal protection for their exceptional biodiversity value. Within our protected landscapes, a wide range of designated sites — spanning international, national, and local levels — help to conserve and sustain wildlife and habitats. Protection is afforded through legislation and the planning system, ensuring that these areas are managed and safeguarded for the long term.

Designations include:

- Internationally protected sites such as Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and Ramsar sites.
- Nationally protected sites including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs).
- Locally designated, non-statutory sites such as County Wildlife Sites (CWSs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), and Roadside Nature Reserves (RNRs).

While statutory sites form the backbone of habitat protection, non-statutory designations offer valuable opportunities to enhance connectivity, resilience, and ecological function across the wider landscape. On the Norfolk Coast, the extensive network of County Wildlife Sites and Roadside Nature Reserves plays a particularly important role in linking habitats and supporting species movement and recovery.

County Wildlife Sites

County Wildlife Sites (CWS) range from tracts of heathland and wildflower meadows to small copses or village ponds. Though they vary in size and character, all CWS are important for nature and benefit from protection through the planning system. Many lie on private land, and their designation does not imply public access.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) leads the CWS Partnership, which oversees identification of sites, condition monitoring and working with landowners and local decision-makers to support positive management for wildlife. NWT has produced an information leaflet explaining the value of CWS for biodiversity, along with practical guidance and support available to landowners, planners, and developers to help manage them appropriately.

Roadside Nature Reserves

Norfolk's roadside verges form an often-overlooked but vital part of the county's ecological network. Many verges are home to plant species that were once widespread but are now nationally rare or scarce. To conserve these important habitats, selected verges are designated as Roadside Nature Reserves (RNRs) and managed specifically to benefit the plants and animals that depend on them.

Many RNRs follow historic routes that have changed little for centuries, preserving fragments of the unimproved, semi-natural grassland that was once common across Norfolk.

Since the mid-1990s, Norfolk County Council, working in partnership with NWT and other organisations, has designated more than 300 RNRs which now cover more than 100km. These sites are carefully managed: verges are cut in late summer or early autumn — after flowering and seed-setting — and the cut vegetation is removed to maintain low nutrient levels. Management is carried out by specialist conservation contractors on behalf of the County Council, supported by volunteers who assist with monitoring and identifying new sites.

6. Sensitive sites and how to avoid disturbance

The Norfolk Coast attracts many visitors who come to the area to enjoy its stunning landscapes and rich wildlife. However, some of the area's most valuable habitats and species are highly sensitive to disturbance. The following section highlights key features of the coast that require particular careful protection.

Beach-nesting birds
Beach-nesting birds often choose the same open sandy areas that people and dogs enjoy visiting. Along the Norfolk Coast, ringed plover, oystercatcher, and little tern are of particular conservation concern, while sandwich tern and common tern also rely on these coastal habitats.

Disturbance (e.g. such as people or dogs entering nesting areas) can cause birds to abandon their nests, leaving eggs or chicks vulnerable to predators and harsh weather. To help protect these sensitive species, visitors are asked to:

- Follow signs and guidance, avoiding areas where birds are nesting or roosting.
- Keep dogs on leads where requested, especially on beaches known to support nesting birds.

By taking these simple steps, visitors can help ensure that wildlife continues to thrive alongside those who come to enjoy the Norfolk Coast's natural beauty.

Non-breeding waders
Non-breeding wading birds are a key feature of several internationally designated sites around The Wash and the Norfolk Coast. At low tide, these birds feed across the mudflats, while at high tide they gather at established high-tide roosts.

Human activity at either feeding or roosting sites can cause significant disturbance, leading to stress, reduced feeding time, or avoidance of otherwise suitable habitat. Minimising disturbance in these areas is therefore critical to supporting the health and survival of these important bird populations.

Seals
The Norfolk Coast is home to populations of grey seals and harbour seals. In recent years, harbour seal numbers have declined, in part due to recreational disturbance. Harbour seals are therefore protected around The Wash and the Norfolk Coast to ensure their continued survival.

Large grey seal colonies also attract many visitors, particularly during the pupping season. To help protect these animals from disturbance and injury, detailed guidance is provided by Friends of Horsey Seals, including practical advice for observing seals responsibly.

Ground disturbance

The Norfolk Coast attracts large numbers of visitors each year, and activities such as walking, cycling, riding or driving can impact sensitive soils and habitats. Trampling and soil compaction can damage fragile ground structures, which may take years to recover naturally. To help protect these important landscapes, visitors are encouraged to:

- Check information about designated nature and geological sites before visiting, and follow any site-specific guidance.
- Follow the Norfolk Coast Protected Landscape 'Know Before You Go' guidelines, particularly by keeping to marked paths to minimise ground disturbance.

Dog walking

The Norfolk Coast offers fantastic opportunities for dog walking, with guidance in place to help walkers enjoy these landscapes responsibly while protecting wildlife. Between 1 March and 31 July (the main breeding season for ground-nesting birds) some sites have temporary dog restrictions, so it's important to check access maps and follow local signage.

In line with the Dog Walking Countryside Code, please:

- Keep your dog under effective control at all times.
- Stick to paths or publicly accessible land to minimise habitat disturbance.
- Prevent your dog from chasing wildlife, including birds and other animals.
- Always clean up after your dog and dispose of waste responsibly.

By following these simple steps, dog walkers can help safeguard sensitive habitats and species while enjoying the Norfolk Coast.

7. Navigating nature requirements for planning

In addition to Natural England, four Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) work closely with the Norfolk Coast Partnership (NCP) to safeguard and promote the area's special qualities. When addressing nature conservation requirements within planning applications, it is important to recognise that each LPA has its own specific policies, processes and decision-making criteria. Please refer to the table below for detailed guidance for each authority.

Local Authority	Website	Local Plan/policies	Biodiversity Net Gain guidance	Other documents/ guidance
Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk	www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/downloads/20082/protected_trees_and_hedges	www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20220/site_allocations_and_development_management_policies_plan/514/adopted_plan	www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/homepage/391/biodiversity_net_gain	www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/downloads/download/31/biodiversity_documents
Broads Authority	www.broads-authority.gov.uk/looking-after/managing-land-and-water/biodiversity-and-nature-recovery	www.broads-authority.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/local-plan-for-the-broads	www.broads-authority.gov.uk/planning/planning-permission/biodiversity-net-gain	www.broads-authority.gov.uk/planning/planning-permission
Great Yarmouth Borough Council	www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/protecting-people-and-the-environment	www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/article/2489/Current-Local-Plan		docs.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/article/10768/Sustainability-Strategy
Norfolk County Council	www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/38862/Environment-and-planning-policies	www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/39049/Adopted-policy-documents	www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/55567/Biodiversity-net-gain	www.norfolk.gov.uk/environmentpolicy
North Norfolk District Council	www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/planning-services/landscape-ecology-and-trees/ecology/	www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/info/planning-policy/current-local-plan/policies/policy-en9-biodiversity-and-geology/	www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/planning-services/development-management/biodiversity-net-gain/	

Table 1: Local Authority nature policies and resources

Though guidance and requirements may vary across Local Authorities, all planning applications must provide clear and complete information. This allows officers to assess whether proposals align with Local Plans and policies and ensures that impacts on protected sites, habitats, and species are minimised.

For planning applications or land management projects supporting nature, professional ecological advice is recommended. The Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) is the leading professional body for ecologists and environmental managers in the UK and maintains a directory of members to help source qualified advice.

Other networks and organisations, such as Norfolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and Wildlife Trust Consultancies, also bring together experienced ecological professionals. When commissioning advice from individuals or organisations outside these networks, it is important to verify credentials and relevant experience.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a mechanism designed to ensure developments leave nature in a better state than before. DEFRA's BNG guidance outlines which developments must demonstrate BNG as part of the planning process. BNG involves:

- Assessing habitats on-site prior to development.
- Calculating their ecological value in 'units' using the Statutory Metric.
- Proposing habitat enhancements or creation to achieve at least 10% net gain over 30 years.

At the planning application stage, all eligible proposals should include:

- A baseline ecological assessment.
- An indication of how BNG requirements will be met.
- A habitat baseline plan of the site.

While Local Authorities may apply slight variations, the Government provides detailed planning practice guidance on the process and mandatory information requirements. Importantly, BNG is addressed post-approval through a Biodiversity Gain Condition, which requires developers to prepare a Biodiversity Gain Plan demonstrating how ecological gains will be delivered.

Understanding how the Statutory Metric works is key when planning habitat enhancements or creation. Habitats and sites identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), as well as other medium- or high-distinctiveness habitats, are scored more highly in the metric. These habitats should generally only be replaced with the same type or higher-distinctiveness habitats. Guidance strongly recommends avoiding impacts on medium- or high-distinctiveness habitats wherever possible; where avoidance is not feasible, any losses must be appropriately compensated.

By aligning compensation proposals with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), applicants can maximise biodiversity gains and benefit from higher scores through the application of the 'strategic significance' multiplier. Gains can be delivered in several ways:

On-site: the priority for all developers is to achieve BNG on site wherever possible, with the first goal always being avoidance of habitat loss or impact. Integrating biodiversity considerations early in the design process is crucial. Projects should aim to support the local ecological network while meeting the sheltering, foraging, and water needs of local species.

Effective site selection and design can retain and protect existing habitats, benefiting both nature and project costs. Incorporating the principles of "more, bigger, better, and joined" (The Lawton Review: Making Space for Nature) ensures functional, connected habitats and maximises ecological outcomes.

Off site: where on-site gains are limited, off-site options such as habitat banks allow biodiversity enhancements in larger, less disturbed areas. The Future Homes Hub provides a free, non-commercial tool to locate available off-site units or to offer units for use. Other commercial providers are also available through local and national networks. Purchased units must be registered on the National Register.

Statutory credits: if there is no other alternative, statutory credits can be purchased. This involves developers making a financial contribution which counts towards their mandatory BNG.

For both on-site and off-site gains, a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) is typically appended to the BNG plan. This plan outlines management over a minimum of 30 years, detailing the skills, knowledge and resources required. When setting targets, consider practical deliverability, including who will manage the site, how management will be undertaken and when activities will occur.

Where a development achieves more than the required 10% BNG uplift, the additional units can potentially be sold to other developers. Generating extra biodiversity can create income while delivering greater benefits for nature and local communities.

Small sites

Even small sites can make a valuable contribution to nature recovery. Developments under one hectare (or nine houses or fewer) use a dedicated Defra metric. Small-scale enhancements — such as creating scrub pockets, ponds, planting trees, or retaining and enhancing grassland — can provide meaningful biodiversity benefits. Grassland improvements might include changing mowing regimes or sowing wildflowers. Green roofs and walls also count toward BNG calculations.

Embedding biodiversity into small developments ensures that nature is intrinsic to the project, supporting local species and enhancing ecological connectivity.

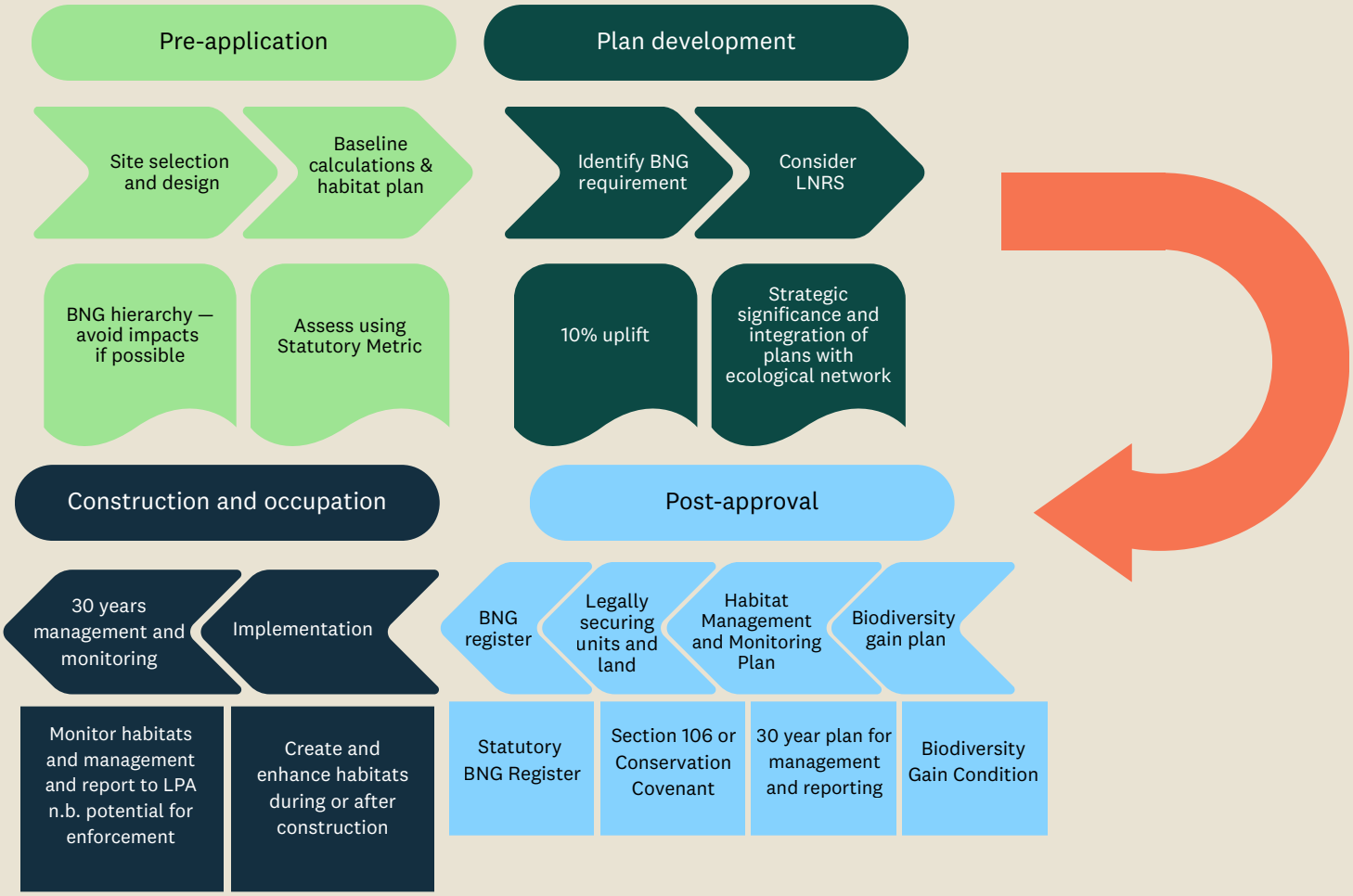


Figure 2: A flow diagram of the Biodiversity Net Gain process

BNG guidance

The table below signposts resources for additional BNG guidance.

Source	Purpose of guidance
CIEEM	Best practice guidance for different stakeholders, which should be referenced by those involved in the delivery of BNG.
Future Homes and the Planning Advisory Service	BNG best practice process flow diagram to illustrate how BNG can be considered at all stages of the planning process.
Natural England	Introduction to the benefits of BNG.
UK Green Building Council	Infographics to help developers and planners to understand BNG.

Table 2: Overview of BNG guidance resources

Nutrient neutrality
Several internationally designated sites along the Norfolk Coast are highly sensitive to nutrient inputs, particularly phosphates and nitrates. Developments in identified 'sensitive catchments' must ensure they do not increase nutrient levels in aquatic ecosystems beyond existing concentrations.

Planning mechanisms exist to reduce or mitigate nutrient loading from new developments. Nature-based solutions can also help offset impacts while contributing to broader nature recovery goals. Examples of on-site, nature-based mitigation include:

- Creating or integrating wetland habitats into sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), which retain water for longer periods, allowing nutrients to settle before reaching rivers and wider catchments.
- Planting trees, establishing cover crops, or converting arable land to semi-natural grassland, which improves soil health, reduces soil erosion (and the associated nutrient loss), and filters nutrients from water before it enters aquatic systems.

Several Local Authorities have partnered to create Norfolk Environmental Credits, which developers can purchase to meet nutrient neutrality requirements when on-site mitigation is insufficient.

District Level Licensing
The great crested newt (GCN) is a protected species in England due to its rarity and sensitivity. Developments likely to impact GCN populations can participate in District Level Licensing in Norfolk, a strategic approach that streamlines planning applications while delivering conservation outcomes.

Developers within areas identified as supporting significant GCN populations can:

- Apply to the scheme and make a conservation payment.
- The payment is used to create or restore ponds in locations that benefit GCN populations.
- These ponds are secured, monitored, and managed for 25 years, ensuring long-term protection and habitat enhancement.

This approach provides a practical, strategic solution for developers while safeguarding a rare and sensitive species.

8. Green Infrastructure (GI)

Green Infrastructure (GI) encompasses natural and semi-natural areas in public spaces that support human wellbeing while delivering broader environmental benefits. Whether it's walking the dog, playing with children, or finding some quiet headspace, GI plays a vital role in our health, wellbeing, and communities.

When designed with nature in mind, GI can also act as stepping stones for biodiversity, contributing to the wider nature recovery network. Furthermore, funding associated with legally secured Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in public spaces can help secure long-term management and improvements, supporting co-benefits for both people and wildlife.

Planting
Planting in public spaces need not be purely ornamental. Using locally native seed mixes provides greater ecological uplift for wildlife, though BNG also recognises well-planned non-native mixes where plants offer wildlife benefits (e.g., for pollinators).

Consider replacing some ornamental planting with native mixed scrub to further enhance biodiversity. Additionally, green walls and green roofs can be incorporated on buildings of all types, providing BNG benefits while enhancing the visual setting of developments.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are often installed for flood management, but with minor adjustments, they can also deliver biodiversity benefits and contribute to BNG requirements. Examples include:

- Using species-rich grassland mixes instead of standard amenity mixes.
- Incorporating rain gardens or more detailed wetland designs to support wildlife.
- Integrating wetland features created for nutrient neutrality to also contribute toward BNG.
- Converting arable land to green open space, supporting both biodiversity and nutrient management goals.

With thoughtful design, GI and SuDS can deliver multiple benefits, enhancing resilience, biodiversity, and wellbeing across the Norfolk Coast.

9. Everyday actions for nature

Nature-friendly homes
Everyone can play a part in supporting nature's recovery at home. Even once-common species, like the hedgehog, are now classified as 'vulnerable to extinction' in the UK. This highlights the importance of providing food, water, shelter, and breeding opportunities for native wildlife. By incorporating simple measures into your garden or outdoor space, you can help local species thrive.

Food

- Grow native fruiting and flowering trees/bushes for birds and invertebrates
- Grow wildflowers for pollinators
- Eliminate/reduce use of herbicides and pesticides, to allow more insects to flourish.

Shelter

- Leave areas of long grass so that small creatures can move about
- Reduce the cutting frequency of hedges and avoid cutting during summer months to allow birds to nest
- Install bird and bat boxes
- Build a log pile for over-wintering invertebrates and amphibians.

Water

- Build/install a pond (it can be as small as a bucket, or as large as you can offer) or a bird bath to provide water for wildlife.

Breeding habitat

- Allow your hedges to grow to provide nesting habitat for birds
- Build a pond and put a water plant in it, to provide egg-laying habitat for amphibians

Leave/create some holes in fences so that hedgehogs can move between gardens and find a mate.

The following organisations provide comprehensive resources on creating nature-friendly spaces, offering guidance to support local wildlife in settings ranging from private gardens to communal areas:

- **Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT)** — Wilder Gardens resources
- **RSPB** — Design a wildlife garden guide
- **Norfolk Green Care Network** — Connecting People with Nature
- **The Royal Horticultural Society** — Wildlife gardening advice
- **Natural History Museum** — Ways to help your local wildlife

Volunteering

Volunteering provides a chance to connect with nature, stay active, and make a positive impact in your local community. The following list offers guidance for different groups interested in volunteering across Norfolk:

- General guidance for conservation volunteering in Norfolk
- Parents or carers
- Young people or career changers
- School students
- Campaigners

Volunteering opportunities with are also available through The Conservation Volunteers.

10. Case studies

These case studies showcase best-practice nature recovery initiatives along the Norfolk Coast and offer inspiration for similar projects elsewhere.

Churchyard Conservation Scheme
Norfolk is home to 650 churches, including 45 within the NCNL, many of which play a vital role in nature recovery. Historic buildings provide nesting and roosting sites for bats and birds, and churchyard grounds often contain veteran trees and some of the last areas of undisturbed grassland, making them important wildlife refuges highlighted in the LNRS.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) runs the Churchyard Conservation Scheme in partnership with the Diocese of Norwich, offering advice to communities on managing churchyards for wildlife. Volunteers have visited over 300 churchyards, recording wildlife and helping communities enhance species diversity, plant rare species, and provide features for wildlife. The scheme is open to all church communities, enabling widespread participation in local nature recovery efforts.

The Diocese of Norwich is also pursuing broader environmental goals through the Eco Church Award Scheme. In November 2023, the Diocese was awarded the Bronze Eco-Diocese Award and is now working toward the Silver Award by 2026. This programme encourages church communities to:

- Promote and preserve biodiversity in churchyards.
- Enable local people to connect with nature.
- Develop an environmental policy and land management plan to support biodiversity and carbon reduction across diocesan land.

Through these combined efforts, Norfolk's churchyards are being transformed into thriving habitats for wildlife, while also fostering a strong connection between communities and nature.

Stiffkey Integrated Constructed Wetland
In 2022, the Norfolk Rivers Trust, in partnership with the Norfolk Coast Partnership (NCP), created 15 hectares of wetland in the Stiffkey catchment. The wetland provides a sustainable, low-carbon wastewater treatment system while boosting biodiversity. Pollution from water recycling centre effluent, intensive agriculture, sediment run-off, and septic tanks posed a significant threat to the catchment.

The wetland now naturally filters wastewater before it enters the Binham Stream, and 400m of the stream have been re-naturalised, meandering across the floodplain.

Together, these interventions enhance biodiversity, water quality, and carbon sequestration, representing an ideal nature-based solution for Norfolk. This project was part of the 'Norfolk's Two Chalk Rivers' initiative, funded by the Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Thornham Jubilee Meadow
Thornham Jubilee Meadow was created to provide over seven hectares of wildflower meadow parkland, supporting both biodiversity and community access. Funded through the Norfolk Coast Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme and supported by the Norfolk Rivers Trust on behalf of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Air Wick partnership, the project has enhanced habitat for native insects and pollinators while offering a green space for the villagers of Thornham.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) has hosted bioblitz events to record wildlife, and local contractors and farmers contributed their expertise and labour to implement the plan. This initiative is a strong example of a partnership project delivering benefits for both nature and people.

Find out more

norfolkcoast.org

Get in touch

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