



Nature Recovery
Shropshire and
Telford & Wrekin

Helping nature to recover by...

Integrating Biodiversity Net Gain into Farm Infrastructure Development



A hypothetical development that delivers economic development and nature priority improvements.

A local farmer required new storage infrastructure to support ongoing agricultural operations. They submitted a planning application to build a new grain store. The proposed development site was located on under-used hardstanding and adjacent coarse grassland, raised above the floodplain and near the main farmstead.

Challenge

The farmer aimed to secure planning permission and had concerns that his land was within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) opportunity network map.

The proposed site was adjacent to a brook and the LNRS map recommended that actions were taken to buffer the riparian habitat and improve wetland.



Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

This is a now statutory requirement for many planning applications.

It requires all non-exempt developments to quantify their planning application site's biodiversity and deliver a minimum of 10% uplift via the development that will be retained for at least 30 years.

Developers who cannot meet their onsite 10% must then look to buy units from the open market.

Biodiversity is quantified via a standard metric calculator which gives a 15% bonus for appropriate uplifts in a Local Nature Recovery Opportunity Area to incentivise delivery via developments.

This is known as the Strategic Significance multiplier.

Map key:

- Proposed new building
- Proposed the creation of wet scrapes
- General project area
- LNRS Opportunity Area



Species that benefit from habitat creation include Lapwing, a wader that is declining in the U.K.

Approach

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy guidance made it clear that the LNRS is not a planning restriction or a designation and that the farmer did not need to take the proposed actions in the LNRS.

However, the farmer found that the LNRS provided useful guidance when looking at how to meet the Biodiversity Net Gain and sustainable drainage requirements required by the planning department.

To meet these mandatory planning requirements, the farmer proposed the creation of wet scrapes in the floodplain between the raised development area and the brook near the area where the grain store would be sited.

This aligned with his business objectives as the previously farmed area had become less viable due to its reduced size and periodic flooding.



Young pond by Sarah Jameson



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Outcomes

- **Ecological Impact:** Within a year, lapwings had been seen occasionally feeding in the new wetland area, indicating successful habitat creation.
- **Farmer Engagement:** Encouraged by the results, the farmer explored further scrape creation through agri-environment schemes in other low-lying, uneconomic areas near the brook.
- **Planning Success:** The project met planning requirements while enhancing biodiversity and maintaining farm operations.

Implementation

The facility was sited on elevated, under-utilised land to minimize flood risk and avoid prime agricultural areas. The wet scrapes were created in the floodplain, aligning with LNRS recommendations for wetland improvement.

By situating the scrapes within the LNRS Opportunity Area, the project achieved an additional 15% biodiversity uplift. The wetland creation also met the sustainable urban drainage requirements while also contributing to natural flood management and improved water retention.