

BNG, Habitat Banks & the LNRS

Hastingleigh Habitat Bank Site Example

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The biodiversity experts



Today...

1.

Introduction to
Environment Bank

2.

Introduction to BNG

3.

The Habitat
Banking Model

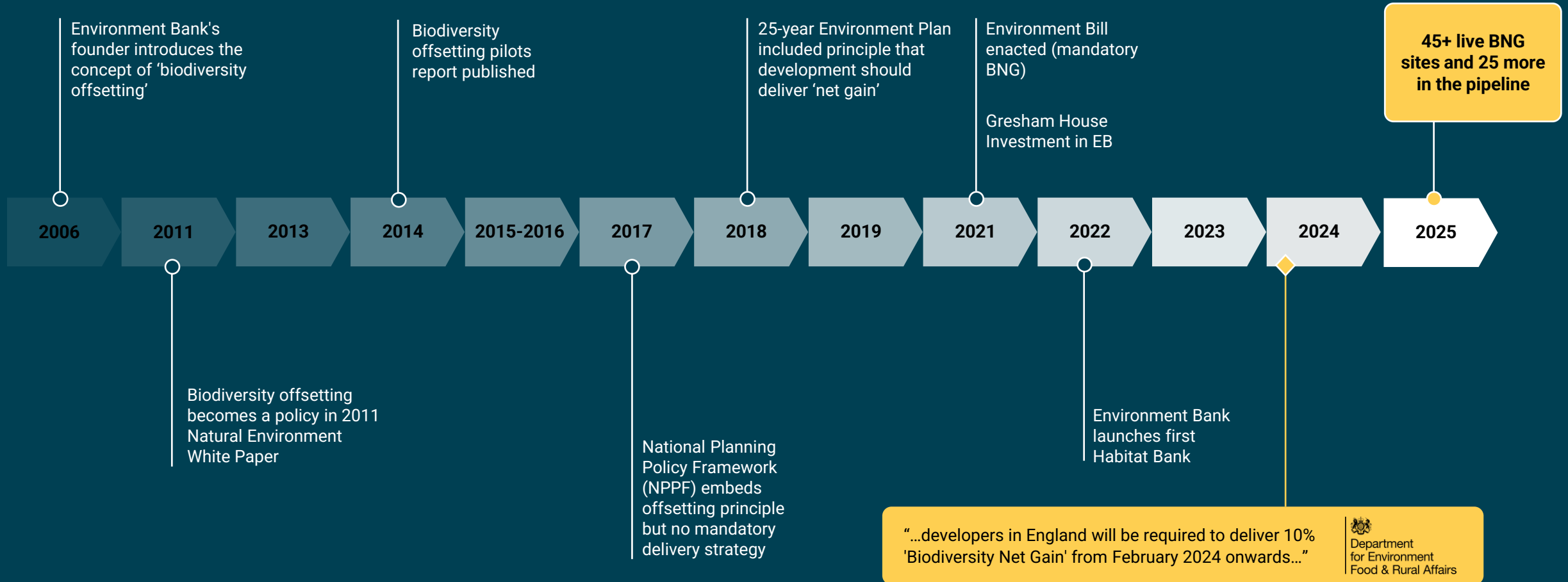
4.

Hastingleigh
Habitat Bank &
the LNRS

Introduction to Environment Bank



BNG and Environment Bank Timeline



Our expert multidisciplinary team cover all aspects of BNG delivery and support



Land

In-house land specialists to work in partnership with local landowners and secure our future pipeline of BNG Habitat Banks in strategic areas.



Ecology

In-house ecologists to design and manage our BNG Habitat Banks from baseline assessments and metric completion, to habitat creation and ongoing monitoring.



Data

In-house geospatial data technicians and analysts that deliver skilled mapping and data management that is essential to effective off-site BNG delivery.



Legal

In-house legal experts specialising in BNG, land leases, planning law, and land governance through s106 agreements and conservation covenants.



Planning and Sales

In-house advisors, analysts, and Chartered Planners to support our clients through the planning process and supply high-integrity off-site Biodiversity Units.

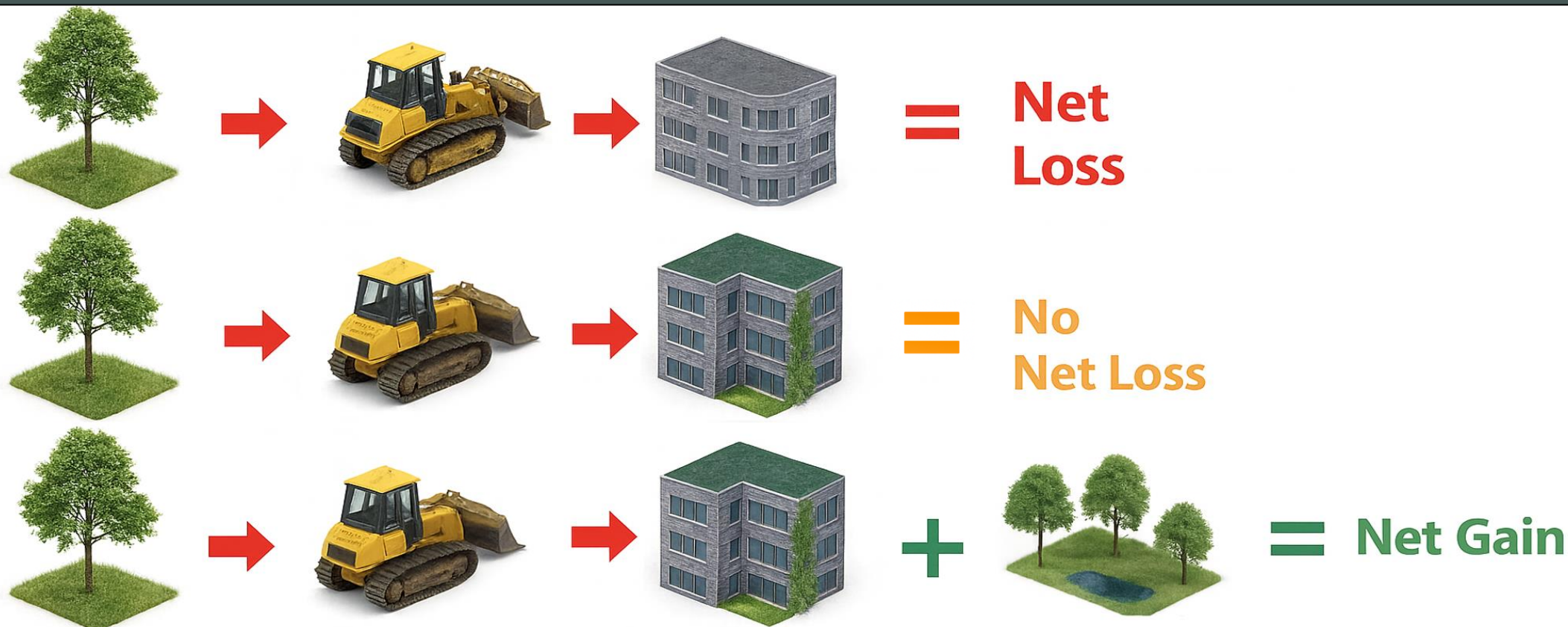
Introduction to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

What is Biodiversity Net Gain?

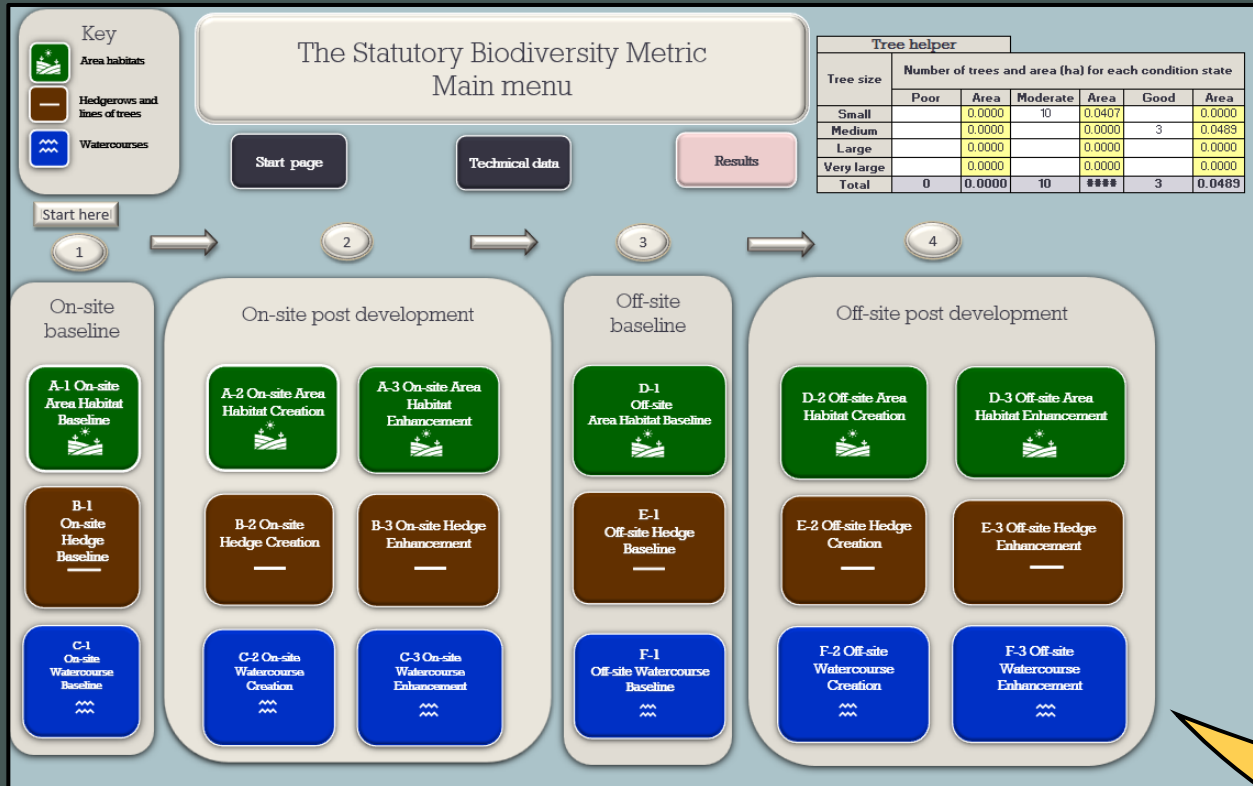
1. Since February 2024 developers have been required to deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity increase.

2. Developers must try to achieve BNG on-site. If they cannot, BNG can be delivered off-site, often by purchasing BNG Units.

3. Environment Bank provides high-integrity off-site BNG Units from its national network of Habitat Banks.



The BNG Metric



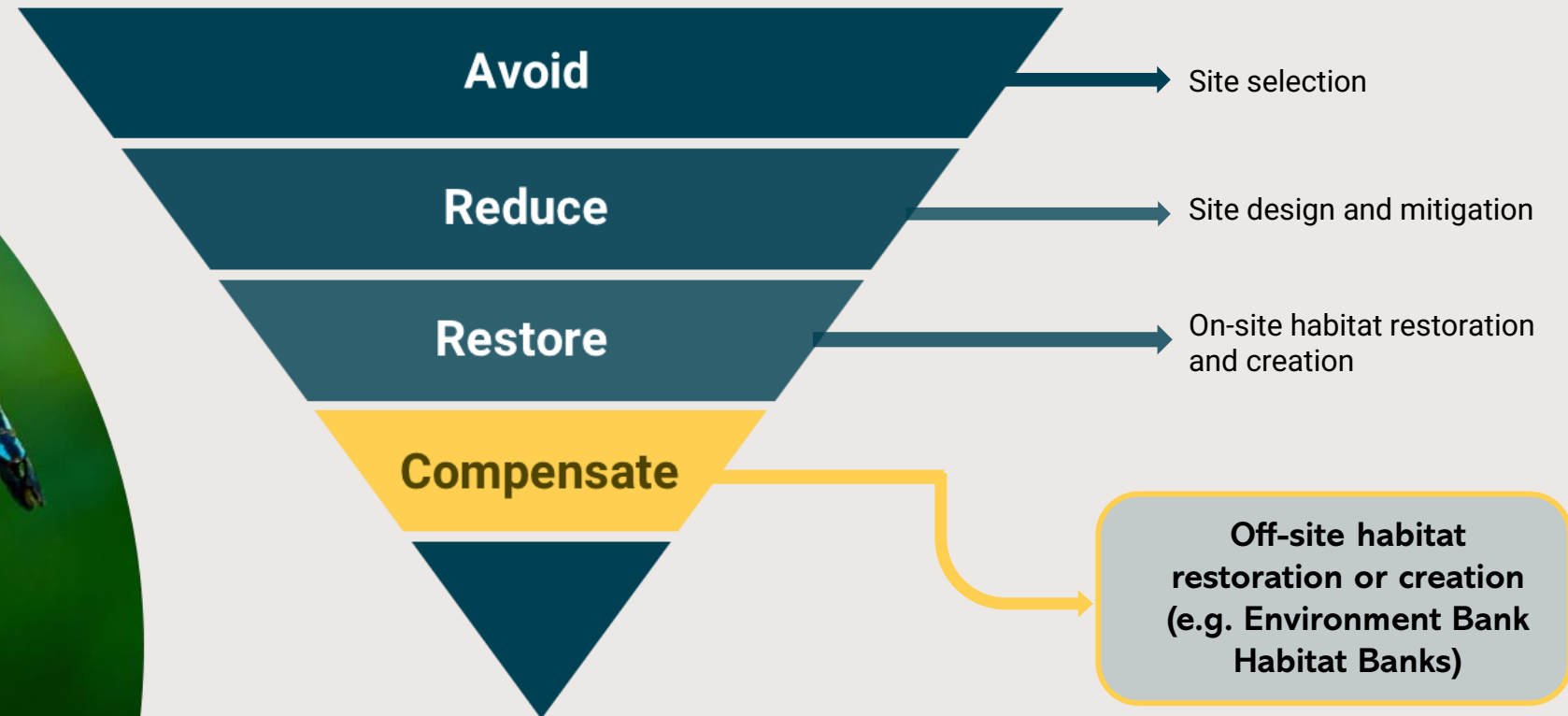
Biodiversity is measured through the 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric' and uses habitats as a proxy for measuring biodiversity

The output is **Biodiversity Units**



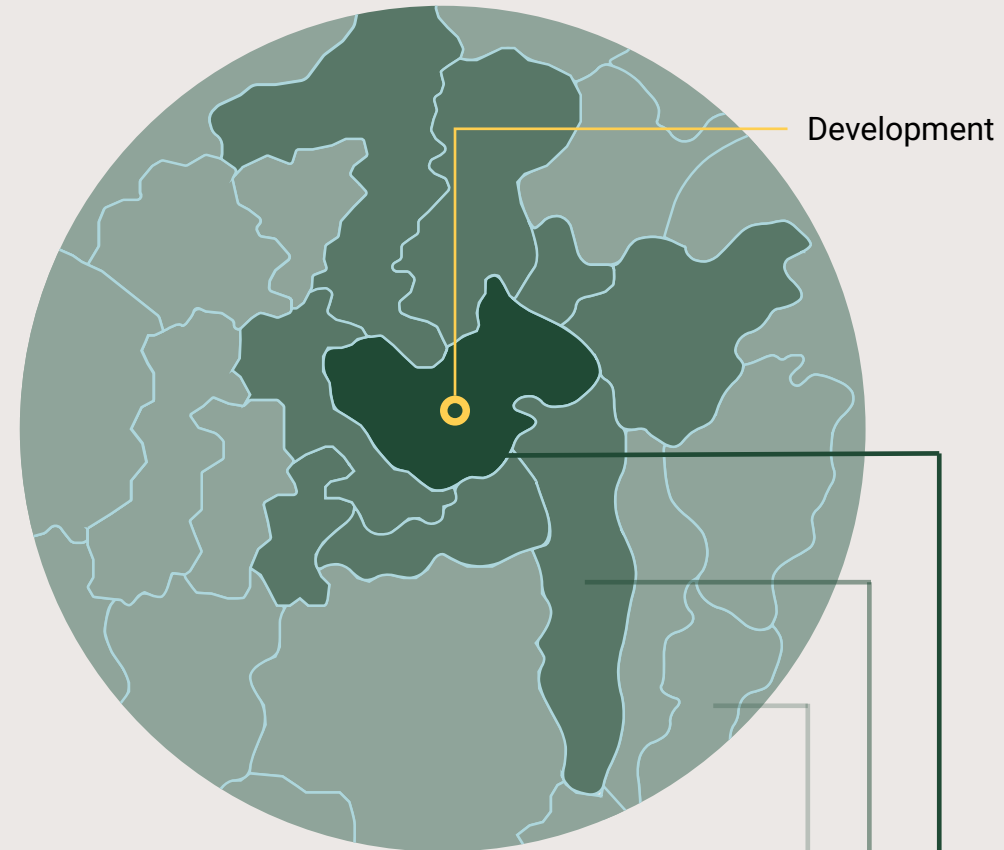
BNG follows the biodiversity gain hierarchy

Habitat loss from development must first be avoided, then appropriately mitigated, and then compensated for off-site.



BNG: Spatial risk multiplier

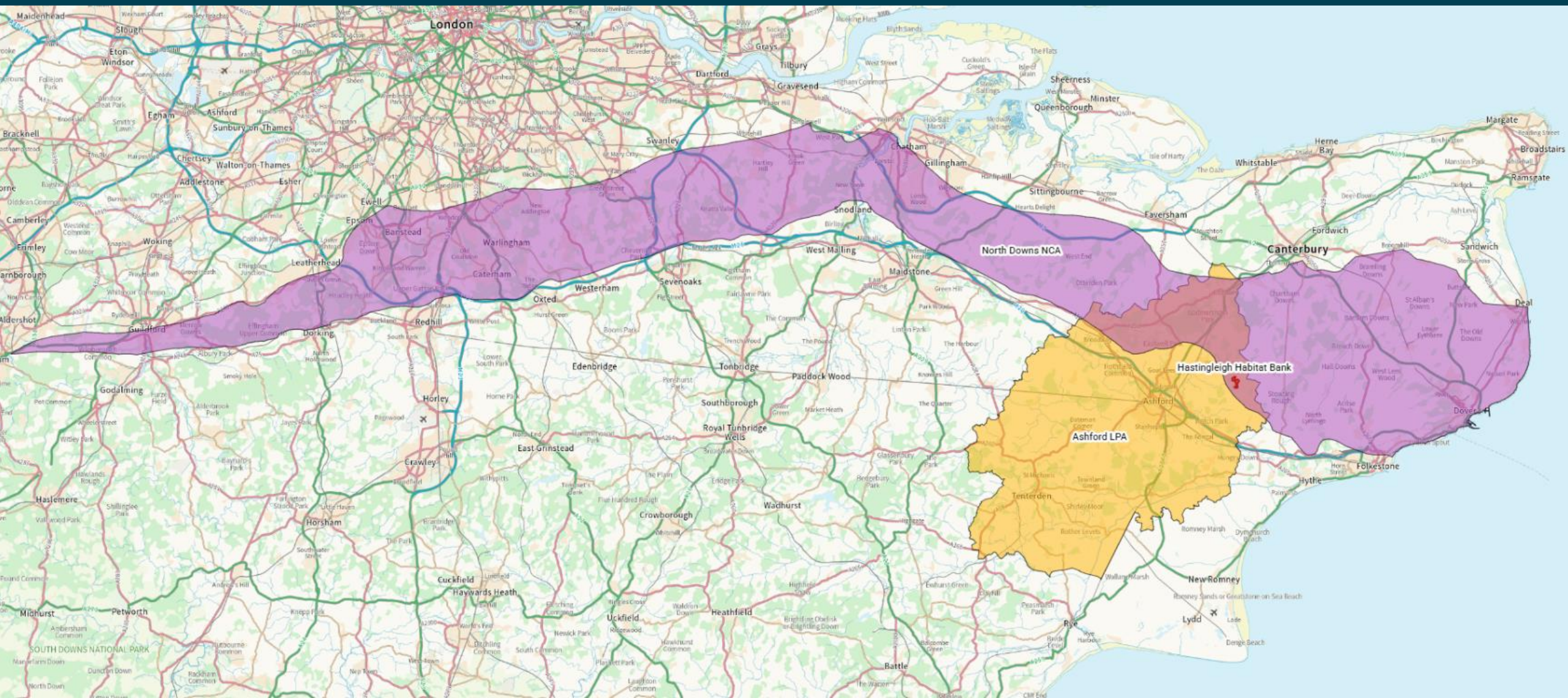
- The **spatial risk multiplier** penalises proposals where off-site habitats are delivered far from the impact site.
- This **incentivises local delivery** by developers and encourages suppliers to deliver a network of sites across the country.
- When suitable off-site Biodiversity Units cannot be found, **Statutory Biodiversity Credits** may be purchased from Natural England.



Spatial risk category (LPA/NCA/catchment)	Additional Units required
Within the same local	None
Neighbouring local	One third
Outside	Double

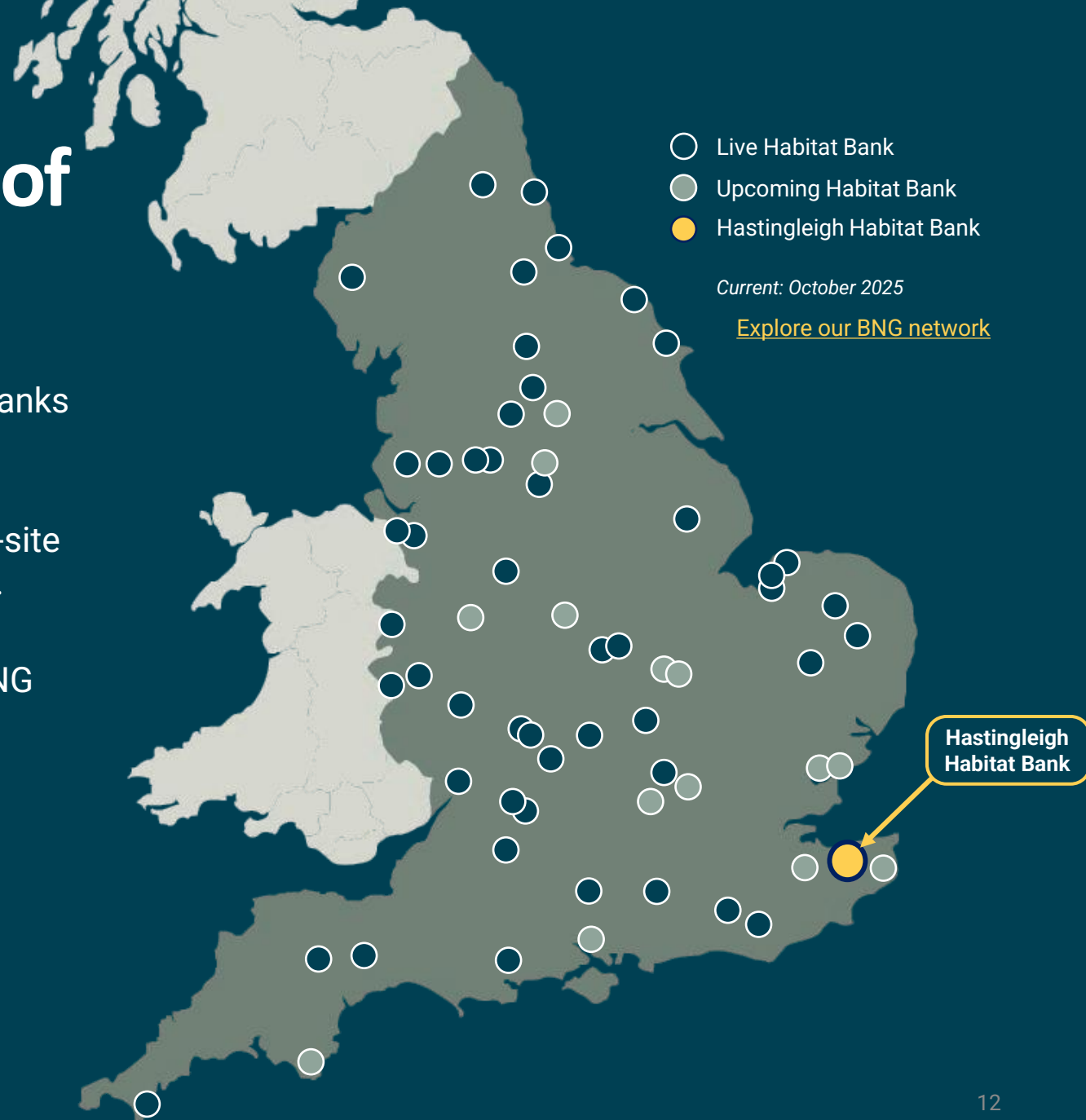
BNG: Spatial risk multiplier

Hastingleigh Habitat Bank



England's largest network of BNG Habitat Banks

- We have an expanding national network of Habitat Banks and a pipeline of new sites coming forward.
- This network already provides local and adjacent off-site Biodiversity Unit coverage to the majority of England.
- Environment Bank is aiming to launch twenty new BNG Habitat Banks each year



The Habitat Bank Model



What is a Habitat Bank?



Nature restoration project generating **uplift in biodiversity value**.



Measured uplift translated into **Biodiversity Units that can be sold** to developers.



Fully forward funded and **secured** for its lifetime (33 years)



Landscape scale restoration that delivers for nature at scale.



A Habitat Bank:

Is **not linked to a single developer** or development.

Establishes new habitats **in advance**, thereby 'banking' the biodiversity units so they are available for sale when needed by a developer.

How we typically create Habitat Banks

- Target low yielding land
- 33-year Farm Business Tenancy
- Landowner retains ownership and management
- Landowner is paid an annual rent and management payments with opportunity to take a lump sum
- Guaranteed secure payments forward funded for 33 years
- Landowner removed from liability
- Creation and professional costs covered by Environment Bank
- Structured expert support through lifetime of agreement
- Legally secured through S106 or Conservation Covenant



Managing the Habitat Bank – the HMP



- Management is set out in the Habitat Management Plan (HMP)
- Annually report actions taken before receiving payment
- Management tailored to the site and farm system
- So long as management actions are performed, the payments are made
- Environment Bank hold liability for the habitats achieving their proposed condition

Hastingleigh Habitat Bank

Local planning authority (LPA): Ashford
National Character Area (NCA): North Downs
Legal agreement: Conservation Covenant (TBC)

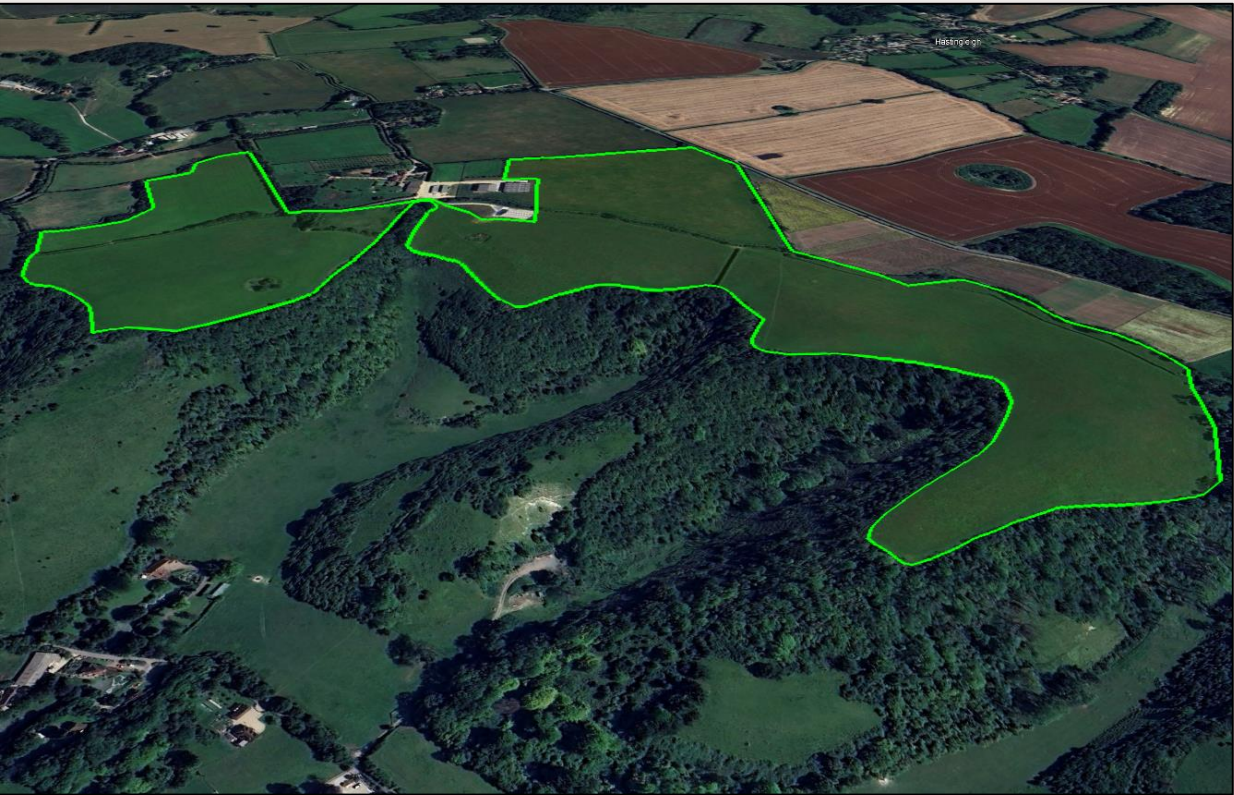
Hastingleigh Habitat Bank sits across 70 acres (28.7 hectares) of land in the Kent Downs National Landscape, a few miles north of Ashford.

We are transforming the existing sheep-grazed pasture fields into a mosaic of lowland meadows, lowland calcareous grassland, mixed scrub, and species rich hedgerows with trees.

For the landowner, this is an opportunity to fund their ambitions to manage the farm with a focus on environmental restoration, whilst creating a new income stream.

Biodiversity Units

Very high distinctiveness habitats	High distinctiveness habitats	Medium distinctiveness habitats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lowland meadows	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lowland calcareous grassland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mixed scrub
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Species rich hedgerows with trees	





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Designing the site: surrounding priority habitats

Deciduous and Ancient Woodland

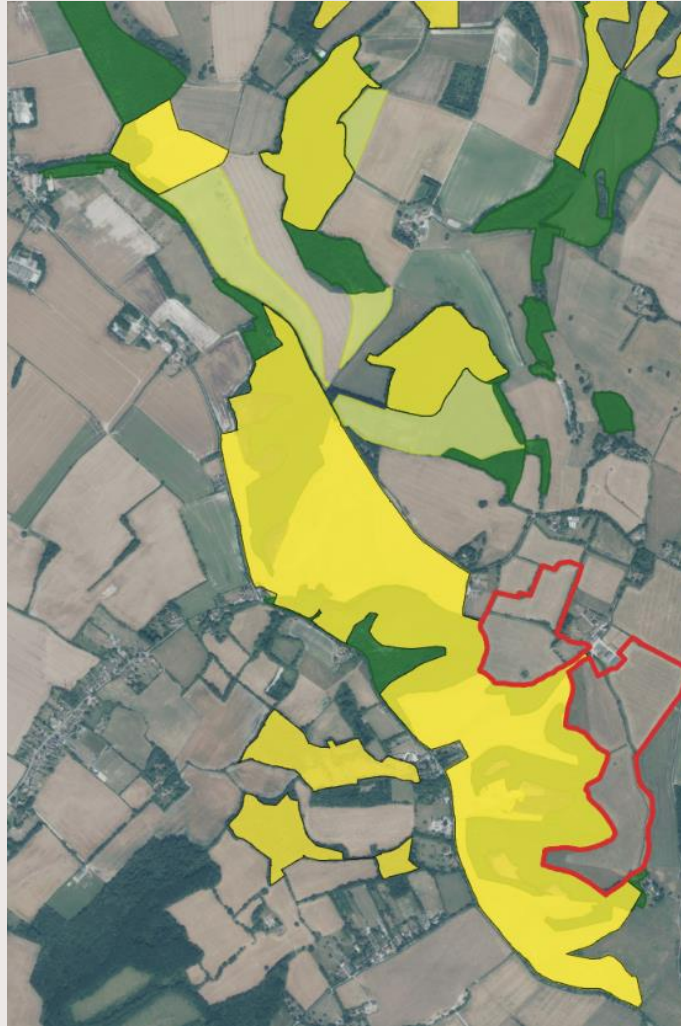


Designing the site: designations

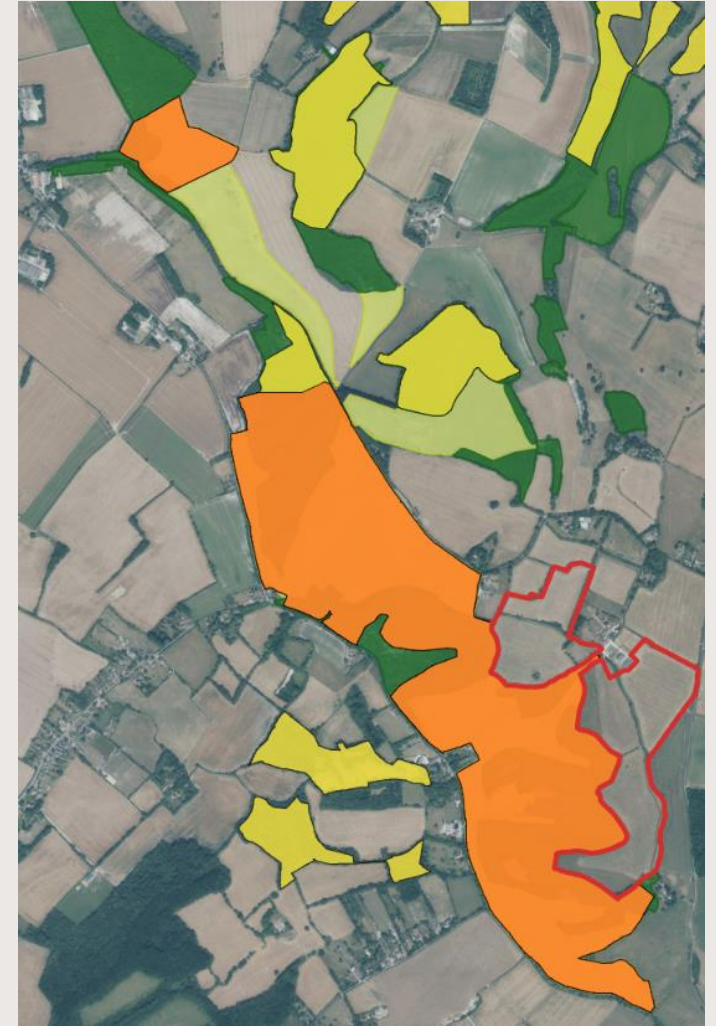
Priority Habitats



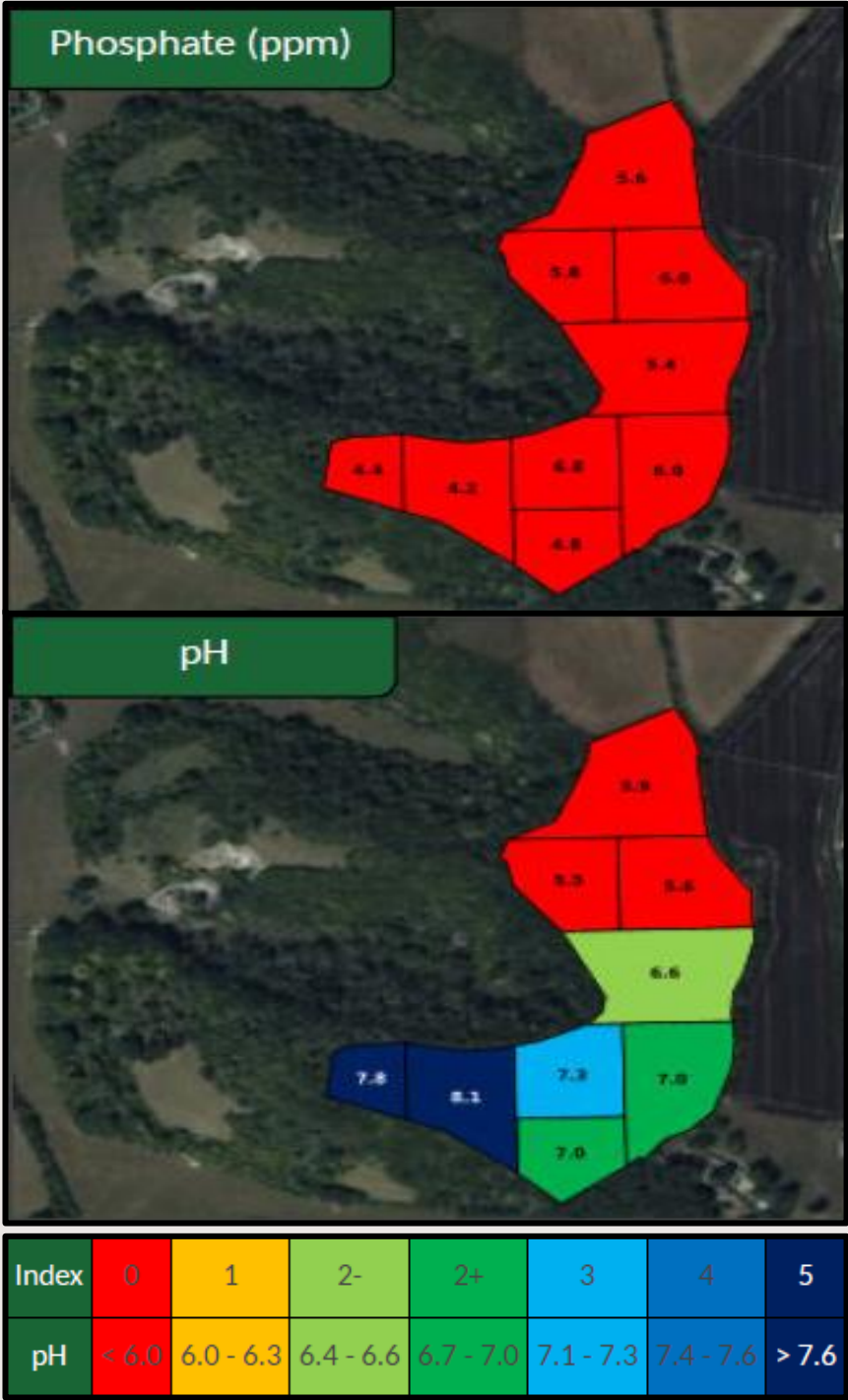
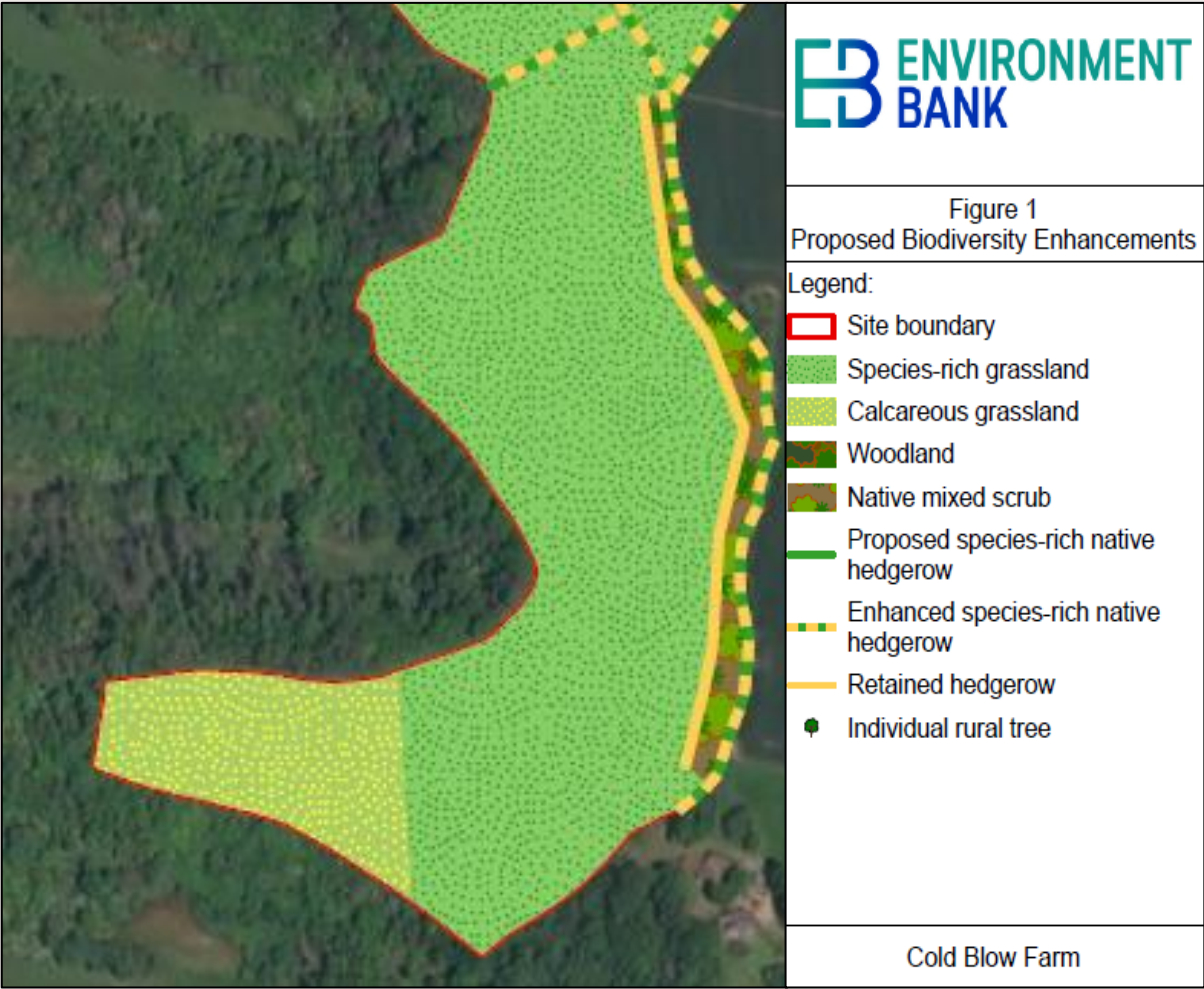
SSSI



National Nature Reserve



Designing the site: soils example



Designing the site: other considerations



Species: e.g. black veined moth



Landowner/tenant - livestock, equipment, plans, and preferences



Landscape character



Hydrology (especially for wetland habitats)



Historic environment (heritage assets and historic habitats)



Public access



Climate change



Utilities

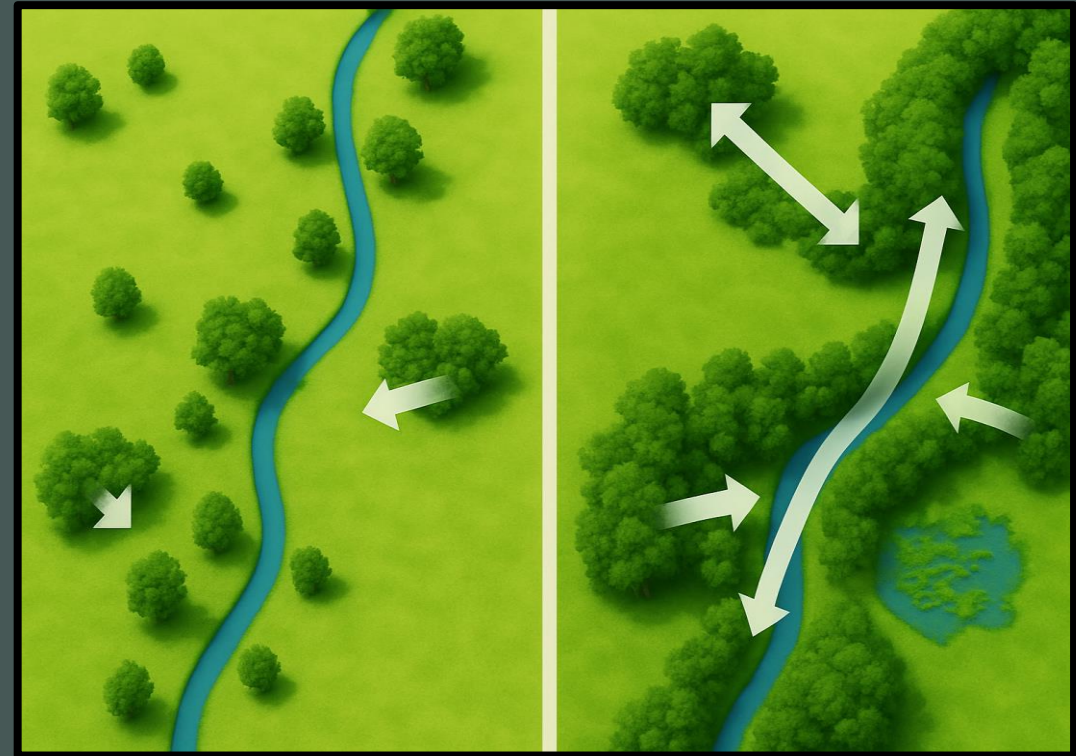
LNRS x BNG

Strategic Significance



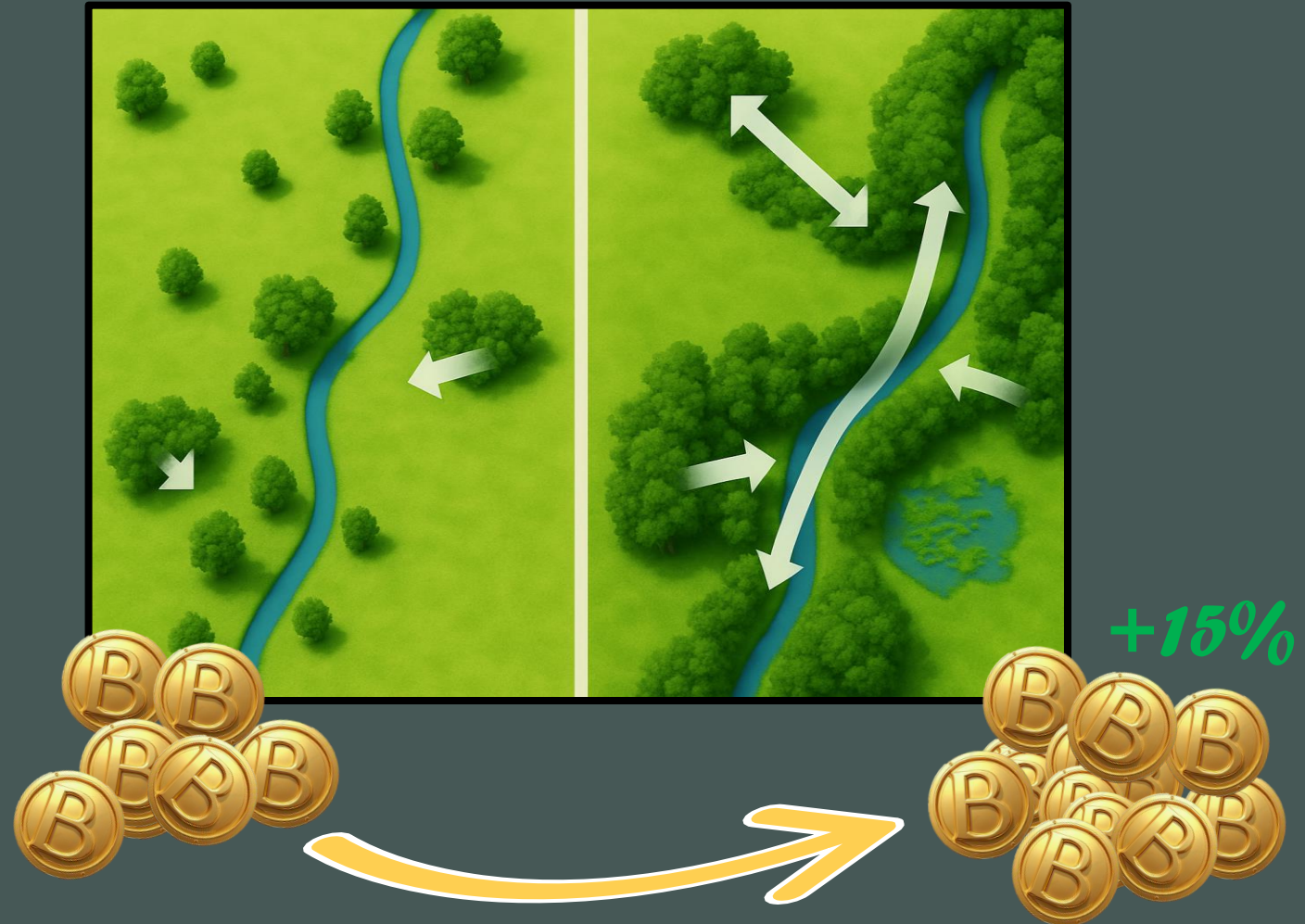
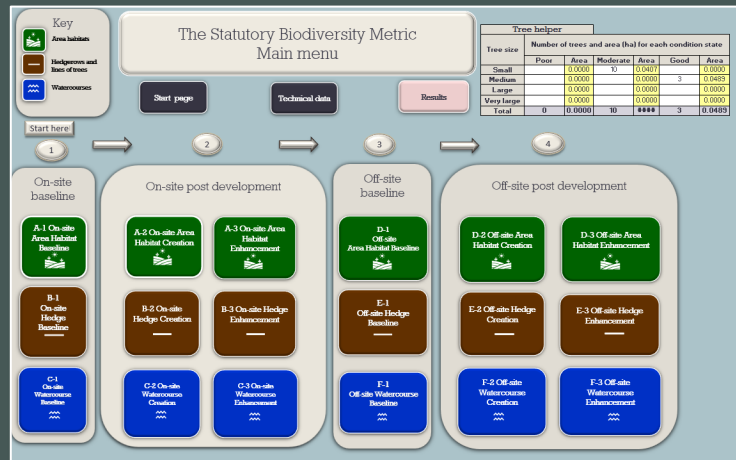
Strategic Significance

- Not all land is equal in ecological terms.
- New habitats that enhance connectivity are more valuable than isolated habitats
- This is reflected in the BNG metric through the strategic significance multiplier



Strategic Significance

The BNG Metric incentivises delivery within these strategic locations by providing a bonus uplift of 15% to projects these targeted locations

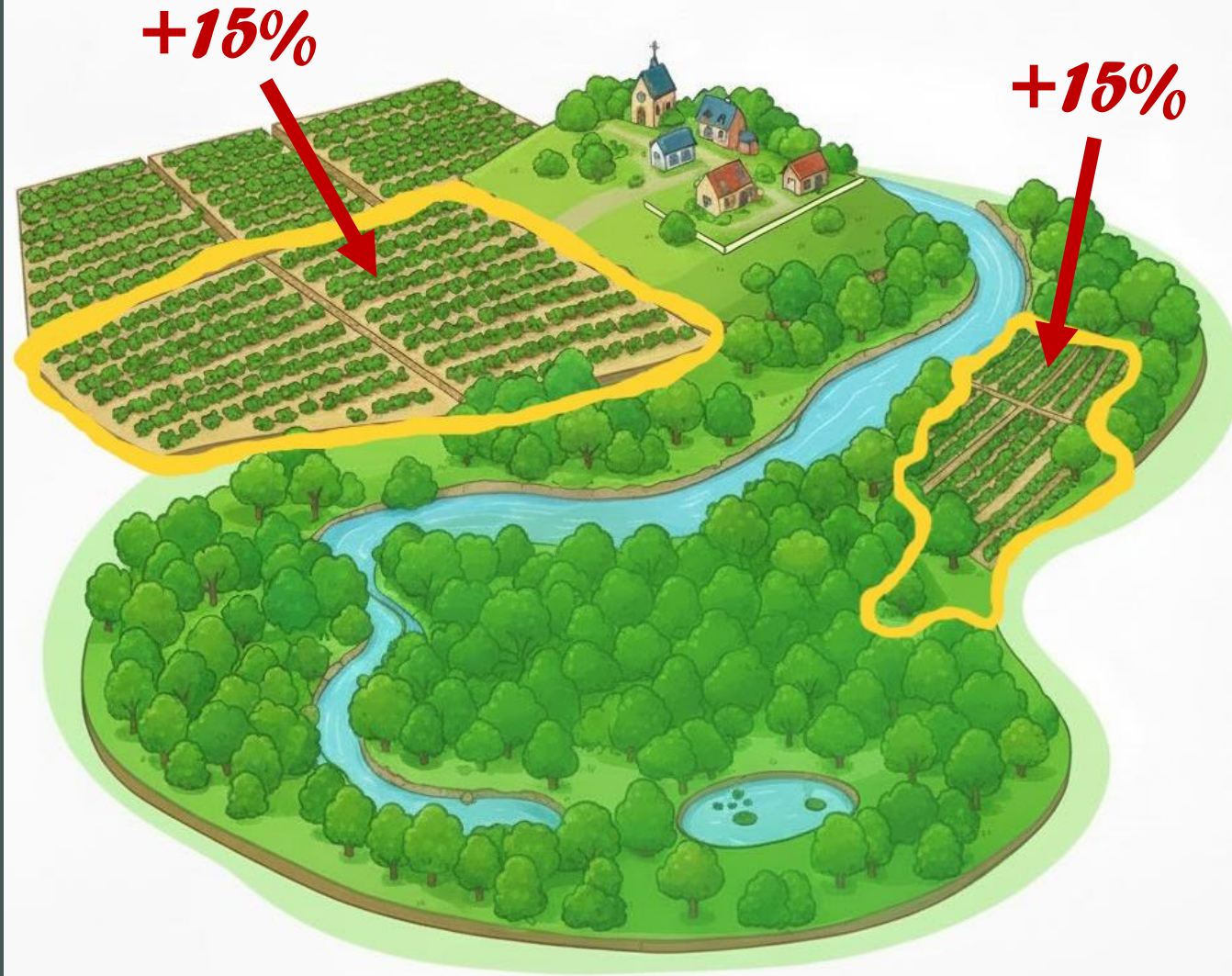


Strategic Significance

Strategic Significance also applies to baseline habitats pre-development...

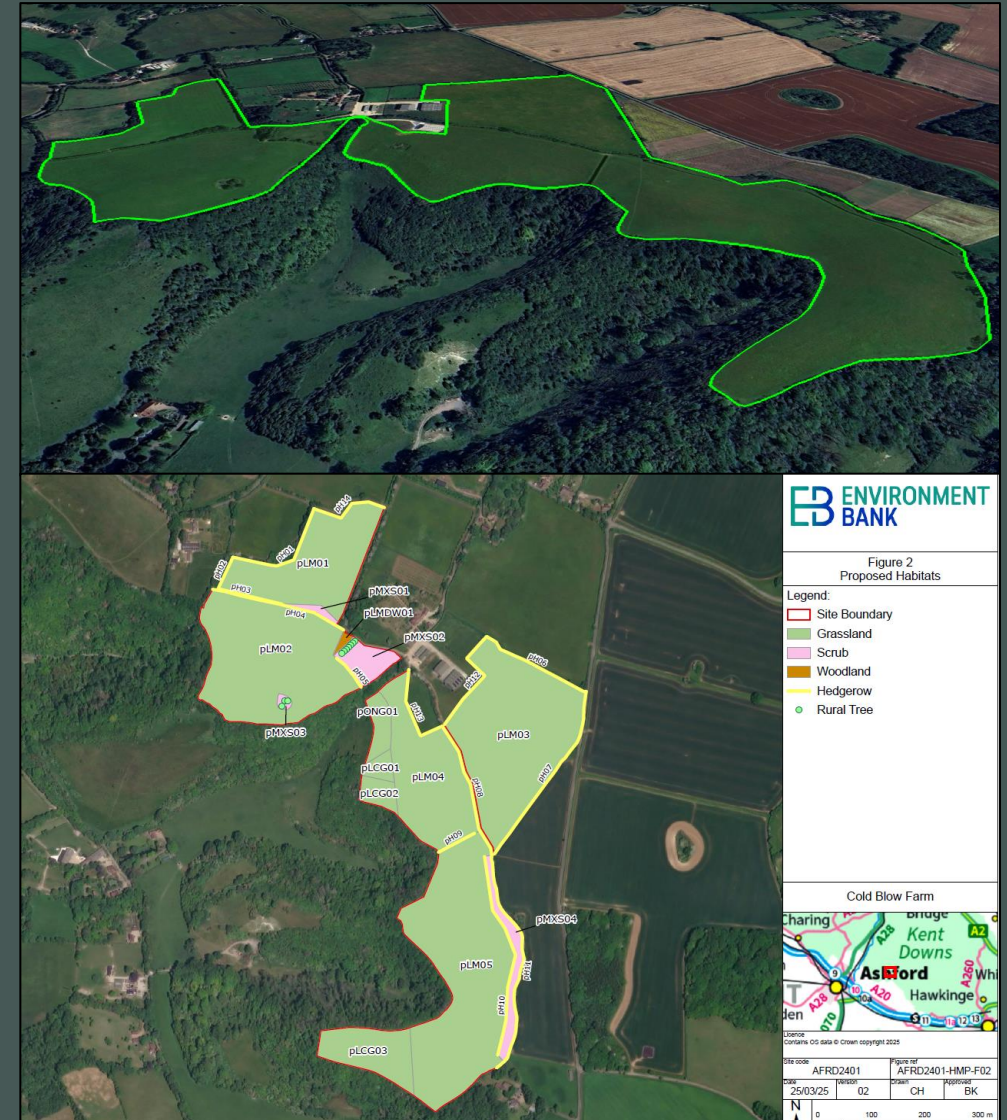
The system therefore discourages development on strategically significant sites.

If development does go ahead on strategically important sites, more units must be purchased.



Strategic Significance: Hasingleigh Habitat Bank

1. We have been working on bringing this site forwards since spring 2024
2. This was before the Draft LNRS was published
3. However... the site was within East Kent Woods & Downs Biodiversity Opportunity Area and adjacent to SSSI, NNR and Priority Habitats
4. This gave us a strong indication of strategic value
5. The site was mapped into the Draft LNRS as an 'ACIB' adjacent to the 'APIB'
6. The ACIB is associated with a number of measures which we have used to inform our site design



Strategic Significance: LNRS measures (*based on *draft LNRS*)

Principles	Measures
Connectivity	<p>CON1.1: Improve functional connectivity corridors between designated and protected sites</p> <p>CON1.2: safeguard areas strategically important in reducing fragmentation and bottlenecks for species movement</p> <p>CON4.2: Implement broad buffer zones and connecting strips between significant habitat areas.</p>
Grassland	<p>GL1.2: Increase high quality connected chalk grassland by bringing appropriate sites, adjacent to core/good condition sites, into conservation management</p> <p>GL1.3: Increase functional links between chalk grassland and other habitats</p> <p>GL3.2: Increase the extent of high quality, connected lowland meadow by creating new lowland meadow sites, in close proximity to core/good condition sites.</p>
Woodland, trees and hedgerows	<p>WTH5.2: Establishment of wide buffer zones around ancient woodland that are linked to hedgerows, to extend habitat connectivity.</p> <p>WTH8.4: Strategic siting of new and extended hedgerows to aid habitat connectivity and support species forage, shelter and movement; restore links to copses and woodland.</p>

Takeaways and reflections on the LNRS



1. Local Nature Recovery Strategies are integral to BNG delivery for both developers and off-site BNG suppliers
2. Off site BNG project locations and habitat types will be driven by the LNRS, but also ecological expertise and market factors (e.g. demand)
3. This LNRS will provide certainty to those dealing with BNG about what is considered strategically significant



Thank you – questions?

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