



## Letter on concerns regarding the removal of BNG requirements for small sites

Rt Hon Emma Reynolds MP & Rt Hon Steve Reed MP,  
Secretary of State for Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs &  
Secretary of State for Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government,  
Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street,  
London, SW1P 4DF

15<sup>th</sup> December 2025

### Re. Why we are in support of the BNG requirements for small sites

Dear Secretaries of State,

We write as a coalition of businesses and experts from across the construction and built environment value chain, alongside conservation experts, led by the Green Construction Board and the UK Green Building Council (UKGBC). Together, we represent a broad cross-section of developers, contractors, consultants, researchers, product manufacturers, financiers, planners, and place-makers who are committed to delivering high-quality, nature-positive and regenerative built environments.

We have heard that the Government is considering removing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements for small sites and introducing wider exemptions, that is, all sites under 1 ha or 0.5 ha will be exempt. Such changes risk severe negative implications for private investment in nature, the burgeoning nature markets, businesses striving and succeeding in the creation of sustainable, healthy and resilient places and most of all the people that live in these places.

Strong nature policy is compatible with growth, as evidenced by the [Environmental Audit Committee](#). There is strong and rapidly growing industry support for investing in nature, our Local Planning Authorities have invested heavily in recruitment and staff training to assess and deliver BNG, including as a pillar of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) with an increasing pipeline of LPA and community delivered urban Biodiversity Units becoming available. These local green spaces are essential to prevent flooding, overheating, improving air quality, and to provide outdoor space for people as well as nature. Nature also increases asset value. Research from the [Urban Land Institute](#) shows that properties with biodiversity features can command price premiums of between 5% and 15%, reflective of the growing market value of nature-connected spaces. Data from the RSPB shows [two-thirds of the public think developers should look after the natural environment](#) in new developments, and want important habitats given even stronger protection. Furthermore, 43% of British people are more likely to vote for a party that prioritises nature conservation, compared with only 10% who say they are more likely to vote for one prioritising housebuilding. Small amounts of greenspace deliver a huge number of services, with pocket parks ranging from 0.02 to 0.4ha, 1ha-0.5ha is not an amount of greenspace we can afford to remove with no market drivers to retain or replace.

Small sites form the backbone of our housing construction pipeline, BNG legislation ensures that these developments do not leave nature, or existing and new residents, in a worse



position than prior to development. Removing BNG requirements threatens to undermine nature recovery at scale, including progress towards our legal Environment Act targets, and commitments in the Environmental Improvement Plan. It risks weakening confidence in the emerging nature investment market at precisely the moment when it is beginning to accelerate and businesses are on board. This will also have profound consequences for placemaking, public health, social value, and long-term community wellbeing, potentially embedding a negative legacy in the built environment for decades to come.

Fully functioning BNG is a central pillar of the GCB's [Biodiversity Roadmap](#), published by the CLC in 2024, and underpins our collective nature-positive ambitions. Without a reliable and comprehensive BNG policy, one that includes sites above 0.1 ha, these shared sector ambitions, and the Roadmap itself, will be significantly undermined.

Across the sector, we are witnessing rapid uptake of nature-related standards and disclosure frameworks. The Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) has seen a 57% increase in adoption since its formal launch in January 2024, mirrored by rising client and investor expectations. Investors seeking nature-positive portfolios are committing to demonstrable enhancements, and globally there is strong demand, often outstripping supply, for high-quality nature restoration and nature-based carbon reduction projects. A well-functioning BNG market could generate [£250m in economic activity a year and support over 2450 full time jobs](#) - exempting small sites would destroy this by reducing demand for nature credits and sharply [cutting private investment](#).

To unlock these opportunities and maximise benefits for the UK economy, climate resilience and environmental goals, industry urgently needs policy certainty that rewards firms prepared to invest and supports those already doing the right thing. With such a short implementation time there are certainly elements for improvement that we support, for example around clarity on BNG and around brownfield development priorities and the development of local and community led projects for generating Biodiversity Units to deliver BNG. But improvements are possible and indeed are already under development with broad sector input, and there are developing tools and solutions to expedite and simplify the process. As [modelled by eftec](#), a 0.1 ha threshold offers a reasonable and proportionate way forwards, exempting only the 50,000+ of the smallest developments each year, while also continuing to support the integrity and function of the policy. Blanket exemptions risk disproportionate harm, lost investment, and a weakening of the UK's international leadership in nature markets.

We therefore urge the Government to maintain a robust BNG framework, including for small sites, to protect confidence, sustain investment, and ensure a positive legacy for communities, nature, and the built environment. We would be keen to meet to discuss proposals and facilitate engagement with our industry networks on the issue. We know that biodiversity is good for business and would like the opportunity to convey this to you.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Martina Girvan Chair of the Green Construction Board's Biodiversity and Environmental Net Gain (BENG) Group



David Pinder, Chair of the Green Construction Board

Kate Jennings CEO Association for Consultancy and Engineering and Environmental Industries Commission (ACE Group)

Jo Wheeler, Co-Head of Policy and Places, UK Green Building Council

Sir Partha Dasgupta, Emeritus Professor at Cambridge University, author of *The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review*

Rachel Solomon Williams, Executive Director, Aldersgate Group

Eoghan O'Lionaird, Chief Executive Officer, Wates Group

Laura Broderick, Programme Director, Good Homes Alliance

Amanda Keetley, Executive Director, Devon Environment Foundation

Robert Oates, CEO, Arbtech

Sue Riddlestone OBE, CEO & co-founder, Bioregional

Simon Clennell-Jones, MD, Celnor Group

Sally Hayns, CEO, Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management

Martin King, MD, Urban Green

Jack Potter, Director, Wild Capital

Ben Perry, Partner, Wild Capital

Oliver Lewis CBE, CEO Joe's Blooms

Andrew Hicks, CEO, BNGx

Rachel Lenane, CEO, Gloucestershire Nature and Climate Fund

Ben Taylor, Managing Director, Iford Biodiversity Project

Guy Thompson, Managing Director, EnTrade Ltd

Professor David Hill CBE, DL, President and Founder of Foundation For Nature  
Previously Deputy Chair of Natural England

Jon Davies, Director, RSK Wilding

Alexa Culver, Legal Counsel, RSK Wilding

Paola Reason, Director, RSK Biocensus



Prof. Richard Delahay, Director, RSK Biocensus

Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS, Chair of the *Making Space for Nature* report

Mark Clayton, CEO, Triodos Bank UK

Henry Rossiter, Bill Rossiter & Tamsin Rossiter, Directors, Belmont Estate  
Eric Heath, Director of Natural Capital and Ecology, Belmont Estate  
Wil Nixon - Business Development Representative, Belmont Estate

Dr Tom Tew, CEO, NatureSpace

Ben Goldsmith, CEO, Menhaden Capital

Rich Speak, Co-Founder and Managing Director, Finance Earth

William Butler, CEO GaiaSicura, Chairman of the Insurance Institute of London Nature and Sustainability Committee

Dr Rich Stockdale, CEO, Oxygen Conservation

Glenn Anderson, Partner, Wendling Beck

Alex Begg, Director, Swallowtail

Chris John, MD, Envance

Benjamin Kite, Group Strategy Director, Ecological Planning & Research Ltd

Martin Kelly, Chair, Trees and Design Action Group Trust

Dr Stephanie Hime, MD, Little Blue Research

Chris Moss, Principal Consultant, Greengage Environmental

Ed Asseily, CEO, Zulu Ecosystems

Ruby Sleigh & Alex Cox, Coordinators, ACAN Ecology

Chris Wallace, Chair, For Bristol Tree Forum & Trees of Bristol.  
Alison White, Co-Chair, For Canopy Coalition.

Rich Grenyer, Associate Professor SOGE, and  
Paget-Clarke Fellow in Physical Geography, Jesus College, University of Oxford

Alice Stuart, postdoctoral researcher in reimaging nature finance, Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery, University of Oxford



Stephen Thomas, Centre Manager Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery<sup>1</sup>

Professor Dame E.J. Milner-Gulland, University of Oxford

Dr Sophus zu Ermgassen, Nature finance lead, Nature-positive hub and Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery, University of Oxford

Natalie Duffus, Researcher, Department of Biology, University of Oxford

Kim Connor Streich, CCO, Greenshank Environmental

Richard Hodson, Director, Bioscape Developments Limited

Adam Ralph and Sam Marshall, Co-founders, Field Works Biodiversity Land Management Ltd.

Ben Heavan Taylor, CEO, Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment

Katie Critchlow, CEO Re-Genus, NED, Earth Blox

Billy Piper, Secretary, Institute of Royal Engineers sustainability Forum and PhD Researcher, University of Lincoln.

Simon Towers, Co-Chairman, Green Earth Developments (Group) Limited

Tom Nelson, Co-Founder, Nature Impact

Brigette Reid, CEO and Cofounder, Frontierra

Jenni Reid, Director, Burton Reid Associates

Elliott Ford, MD, New Leaf Habitats

Peter Massini, Director, Future Nature Consulting Ltd

Richard Jeavons-Fellows, Director, Woodgate Farms (Midlands) Ltd

Dominic Robinson, CEO, Soil Association Certification

Michael Orde, Chair, Soil Association Land Trust

Ed Cooper, Founder & Director, BioCap Ltd.

Dave Valler, Project Manager, BioCap Ltd.

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<sup>1</sup> The Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery is interested in promoting a wide variety of views and opinions on nature recovery from researchers and practitioners. The views, opinions and positions expressed within, do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery, or its researchers.



James Kelly, Project Manager, Connected Habitat Limited

Alastair Chisholm, Director of Policy, The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management

Dr Stephanie Wray, Nature Positive

Dr Michael Burgass, Co-Founder & Director, Biodiversify

Hannah Wilcox Brooke, Head of Nature-based Solutions, National Landscape Association

Natalia Dorfman, CEO, Kita Insurance

Johanna Green, Consultancy Manager, Wilder Ecology

Robert West, Strategic Ecologist, CIEEM England Policy Working Group.

Rafi Cohen, Co-CEO, Verna Earth Solutions

Matthew Brown, Co-CEO, Verna Earth Solutions

Helen Nyul, Director of Ecology, Verna Earth Solutions

Dr Ian Johnson, Director, Blackstone Ecology Ltd

Faye Durkin, Head of Nature, Greengage Environmental Ltd and Co-Chair of ISEP Biodiversity and Natural Steering Group

Christopher Kerr, Head of ESG, Davitt Jones Bould

Alistair Emery, Founder Director, Kingwell

John Durnell, MD, Arcadian Consulting

Angus Walker, BNG Specialist Lawyer

Natasha Collings-Costello. Managing Director. Cornwall Environmental Consultants.

Greg Nightingale. Director. Luscinia Ecology Ltd

Mungo Nash. BNG Services Lead. Luscinia Ecology Ltd

Peter Thompson. Founder. Nature Based Farming

Ella Dangerfield, Senior BNG Ecologist, Burton Reid Associates

Archie Struthers, CEO, Nattergal

Evan Bowden-Jones, Co-Founder, Rebuilding Nature



Peter Egan, Chair of Institution of Royal Engineers Sustainability Forum

Amanda Williams, Head of Environmental Sustainability, Chartered Institute of Building

Nick Proctor, CEO and Founder, Amber Energy Solutions Ltd

Dr Leslie Cousins. Principal Ecologist and Director, Hushwing Ltd.

Nora Aridi, Director of Green Alma Project Ltd and Landscape institute steering group of the CIC Climate Change Committee for the Adaptation and Resilience workstream

Eliot Lyne, Director Norfolk Wildlife Services

Dr Jon Huckle, Director, Huckle Ecology Ltd

Sir Charles Burrell. Bt, Knepp Estate

Robin Nicholson CBE, Convenor of the Edge

Ed Harden, Partner, NatureReturn

Erica Kemp, Managing Director, Envance

Finley Wisdom, BNG & Habitat Ecologist at Trustgreen

Oliver Bolton, CEO, Earthly Limited

Jill Wyllie, Director, Wyllie Ecology

Carolin Göhler, President, Landscape Institute

Peter Rogers, MD and Diana Rogers, Sustainability Director, Sustainable Acoustics Ltd

Helen Booth, Director, MHE Consulting Ltd

Sophie Brooks & Phil Clarke, Directors, Philosophy Consulting Ltd

Craig Llewellyn Associate Ecologist, Biodiversity Policy Specialist, Atkins Realis

Adam Donnan, CEO, Institution of Environmental Sciences

Richard Green, Managing Director, Richard Green Ecology Ltd

Dominic Woodfield, Managing Director, Bioscan (UK) Ltd

Chris Caiulo, Partner, Coltham



Alex Hickman, Director, Kingston Estates

Richard Dean, Innova Homes Ltd

Neil Seager, Managing Director, Haslams

Dimitri Theocharis, CEO Ecologi

Ian Hambleton CEO, Biodiversity Units UK

Emma Schofield, Founder, The Nature Circle

Vincent Ganley, Managing Director, Adonis Blue

Henry Parkinson, Project Lead, Langley Abbey Environment Project

Dr Keith Baker FRSA, Research Fellow, Glasgow Caledonian University, & Member of the Board of Directors, Common Weal

John Christophers, Director, zero carbon house

Philip Brainin, CEO, Biofarm

Ian Boyd, Director, The Common Space

Liz Read, Director of Operations, Rebel Nature Works Limited

Gloria Lo, Founder and Principal, OiSA Designs Chartered Architect, Immediate Past Chair and Director, Scottish Ecological Design Association (SEDA),

Andy Jukes, Director, Conops Entomology Ltd

Sally McNaught, Executive Director, Highlands & Islands Environment Foundation

Dr. Chloë Strevens, Head of Impact, Conservation Collective

Ben Gardner – CEO, Civity and Ecology by Design

John Little, Director, Green Roof Shelters Ltd & Grass Roof Company

Cllr Giles Archibald, Cabinet Member for Climate, Biodiversity and Environmental Services, Westmorland and Furness Council

Cllr Vicky Hughes, Cabinet Member for Planning and Active Well-Being, Westmorland and Furness Council



Biodiversity  
and Environmental  
Net Gain Group



Glen Macfarlane, Founding Director, Macfarlane + Associates

Sophie Lake, Director, Footprint Ecology

Richard Green, Managing Director, Richard Green Ecology Ltd.

Chris Fry, Managing Director, Accelar Limited

Chris Cooper, Co-founder, Natural Asset partners Ltd

Paddy Harlow, Co-founder, Natural Asset partners Ltd

Tara Page, Chief Executive, Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists  
Robert Gardner CEO Rebalance Earth

Martin Quach, VP Regenerative Markets, Great Yellow

Helen Roberts FTPI Assoc RICS, Director of Client Services, Fexco Property Services

Ron Frost, CEO, Institute of Specialist Surveyors and Engineers

**For more information, please contact:**

**Philip Box** - on behalf of the GCB Biodiversity and Environmental Net Gain Group  
**Senior Policy Officer, Mobile: 07413109721 E:** [philip@wcl.org.uk](mailto:philip@wcl.org.uk)

**David Steen – On behalf of UKGBC**  
**Senior Policy Advisor, [David.Steen@ukgbc.org](mailto:David.Steen@ukgbc.org)**



Biodiversity and  
Environmental  
Net Gain Group

