

SDNPA'S ROLE IN RELATION TO BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN SCHEMES

SDNPA – Planning Directorate

The SDNPA, in its role as planning authority, has entered into a number of agreements under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1980 with landowners whose property lies within the boundary of the South Downs National Park. These agreements secure the land in question for the delivery of BNG credits.

In each of these agreements, the SDNPA agrees with the relevant landowner the delivery of a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) for each site.

The Planning Directorate Team at the SDNPA will monitor and ensure, in exercise of the SDNPA's statutory planning functions, the delivery of the HMMP over a period of 30 years pursuant to the terms of the section 106 agreement.

These planning and monitoring activities are carried out by the SDNPA's Planning Directorate Team in pursuit of the SDNPA's statutory functions.

Sale of BNG Credits

Developers in the market can choose to access any landowner's / provider's BNG scheme to secure the BNG credits that they require to satisfy planning conditions and mitigate the impact of their proposed development.

All sites offering BNG credits for sale to developers must be registered with Natural England.

The SDNPA's Planning Directorate fields general enquiries to the SDNPA regarding the availability of BNG schemes.

The Planning Directorate Team will not direct a developer to purchase credits from any particular scheme/landowner but the Planning Directorate will identify to potential purchasers any suitable available schemes, as advertised on the SDNPA's website and where it is otherwise aware of suitable available schemes.

Search Engine's such as [BNG Finder](#) and [Future Homes Hub](#) are linked on the website together with a dedicated page named, ReNature Sites, which features BNG Providers in the region who have requested their scheme be featured. This is a function SDNPA can offer to all BNG Providers free of charge. Please see the link at [ReNature Sites - South Downs National Park Authority](#)

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SDNPA – Consultancy Services Department within the Countryside Policy Management (CPM) Directorate

Many landowners choose to work with third party specialists / consultants who offer expert knowledge, guidance and assistance in the delivery of a landowner's BNG scheme and sale of BNG credits.

The SDNPA's Consultancy Services Department within the CPM Directorate has concluded a number of partnership arrangements of this kind with landowners, offering its expertise in the delivery of their BNG schemes.

Expert advice may be given in terms of design input to the HMMP and the development of the HMMP over time where more land is added to an existing mitigation site, in terms of the marketing of BNG credits to potential purchasers and in terms of the process associated with the sale of BNG credits.

In return for the expertise and support services that the SDNPA offers landowners under these partnering arrangements, the SDNPA will earn a commission from the sale of BNG credits in relation to the specific BNG scheme with which the SDNPA is partnered.

That commission is calculated to cover the cost of the services that the SDNPA delivers in respect of the relevant BNG scheme.

Advertisement of BNG Schemes on SDNPA website

The SDNPA offers all landowners within the boundary of the South Downs National Park, the option, free of charge, to advertise their BNG scheme on its website. Please see link at [ReNature Sites - South Downs National Park Authority](#). The SDNPA's Planning Directorate directs all developer enquiries regarding available schemes to this page of the website as well as providing links to national BNG search engines [Buy ReNature Credits - South Downs National Park Authority](#). A prospective purchaser can access the contact details relating to each BNG scheme from information provided on the SDNPA's website.

If a prospective purchaser decides to make contact with a BNG scheme with which the SDNPA has partnered, it may choose to engage with the relevant landowner or with the SDNPA's Consultancy Services Department within the CPM Directorate on behalf of the landowner.

The SDNPA's Consultancy Services Department within the CPM Directorate will, in accordance with the terms of the relevant partnership agreement, assist the prospective purchaser with its enquiry in relation not the relevant BNG scheme.

Conflict of Interest – Division of Responsibility

There is a clear division of responsibilities as between the SDNPA's Planning Directorate:

- Approval of HMMP
- Monitoring of HMMP
- Execution of section 106 agreement
- Provision of information to all potential buyers in relation to all BNG schemes of which the SDNPA is aware

and its Consultancy Services Department within the CPM Directorate:

- Guidance and advice to specific landowners who have chosen to partner with the SDNPA in the delivery of their BNG schemes

This clear division of tasks ensures that there is no conflict of interest in the performance of these activities by each team.

All initial enquiries from prospective purchasers of BNG credits are directed to the SDNPA's Planning Directorate who then identify available BNG schemes that are appropriate to their requirements. The Planning Directorate does not advise purchasers on their choice of BNG scheme.

Where a prospective purchaser contacts a BNG scheme directly, via contact information provided on the SDNPA's website, then it may be engaging directly with the SDNPA's Consultancy Services Department. That team will be able to provide further information to the potential purchaser regarding the BNG scheme in question.

The above arrangements are in development to ensure that there is clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities within the SDNPA in respect of its activities in what is a fast-changing legislative environment.