



City of  
Doncaster  
Council

# Planning Policy Guidance

## Assigning Strategic Significance for applications subject to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain

March 2024



# Assigning strategic significance

## Introduction

Strategic significance is the local significance of a habitat based on its location and habitat type. Once published, the South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be the document that is used to assign strategic significance in biodiversity net gain calculations. The [Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide](#) states that where an LNRS has not yet been published, a relevant planning authority should specify alternative documents for assigning strategic significance as an interim measure. This guidance note sets out what documents should be used.

## Interim documents for use assigning strategic significance

The City of Doncaster Council has identified a series of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas. These can be seen in the [Local Plan](#) and [policies map](#). The purpose of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas is to direct compensation or enhancement measures towards the creation or restoration of habitats that are particularly important for that part of the ecological network. The relevant habitats in each Biodiversity Opportunity Area are indicated in Table 1. This is similar to the information shown in Table 14 in the Local Plan but uses habitats listed in the UK Habitats Classification that are relevant to Doncaster rather than UK BAP Priority Habitats. Creation or enhancement of a habitat shown as important in that biodiversity opportunity area should be assigned as “*Formally identified in a Local Strategy*”.

In addition, for proposals within 200m of a local wildlife site (LWS), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Special Area of Conservation (SAC) then strategic significance should also be considered in relation to the qualifying features for designation of that site. This would apply whether the designated site is within or outside of a Biodiversity Opportunity Area. So, for example, if a LWS cites woodland as one of the reasons for designation, then other areas of woodland within 200m of the LWS should be assigned as “*Formally identified in a Local Strategy*” for the purpose of assessing net gain. Similarly, if Neutral Grassland is a reason for designation of a LWS then an area of Other Neutral grassland within 200m of that site would be considered strategically significant, even if it was not of the same quality as that within the LWS. Local wildlife site citations can be obtained from [Doncaster Local Records Centre](#) and the reasons for designation of Local Wildlife Sites can be viewed on City of Doncaster Council’s [Biodiversity Map](#).

For rivers and streams if an enhancement can be considered to be helping towards the delivery of river restoration actions and objectives identified within the relevant River Basin Management Plan, Catchment Plan or Catchment Planning System then it should be assigned as “*Formally identified in a Local Strategy*”. Links to the relevant documents to consult in assigning strategic significance of Rivers and Streams are shown below:

[Humber River Basin Management Plan data](#)

[Don and Rother Operational Catchment data](#)

[Don and Rother Catchment Story map](#)

[Idle and Torne Operational catchment data](#)

