

**Bracknell Forest Council
Record of Decision**

Work Programme Reference	
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1. **TITLE:** Application to become a Responsible Body For the purposes of administering Biodiversity net gain

2. **SERVICE AREA:** Place, Planning & Regeneration

3. **PURPOSE OF DECISION**

Approval from DEFRA is required for Bracknell Forest Council to become a Responsible Body. This will allow the Council to create a conservation covenant with a landowner. The main purposes of conservation covenants are:

- Conservation or restoration of the natural environment and resources (or the setting of the land)
- Conservation of places of archaeological, architectural, artistic, cultural, or historic interest (or the setting of the land)

4 **IS KEY DECISION** Yes

5. **DECISION MADE BY:** Executive Member for Planning and Transport

6. **DECISION:**

That the Executive Director of Place, Planning and Regeneration be delegated to apply to the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) for the Council to become a Responsible Body.

7. **REASON FOR DECISION**

BNG becomes mandatory for large developments as from January 2024 and for smaller developments from April 2024. RB status will allow Bracknell Forest to agree conservation covenants with landowners who wish to sell biodiversity units to developers. This is beneficial for developers as it may obviate the need for them to purchase expensive statutory credits from the Government. This will also make it easier for landowners in the Borough to secure their land for long term conservation purposes that is for the public good. Conservation covenants may also be used for heritage conservation.

8. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

To not apply for the Council to become a RB. This will mean that the Council will not be able to help third party landowners bring forward land for long term conservation purposes and sell biodiversity off setting units to developers. If there are no (or few) other RBs in the local area this will mean that developers have fewer options for the purchase of offsite biodiversity units and may not be able to meet the minimum 10% mandatory BNG requirement. In this case, the Council will not be able to grant planning permission unless the developers can provide all their biodiversity units on the development site or are willing to purchase statutory

credits from the Government which are very expensive and are unlikely to benefit local biodiversity.

9. **PRINCIPAL GROUPS CONSULTED:** Executive Member Planning and Transport

10. **DOCUMENT CONSIDERED:**

11. **DECLARED CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** None

Date Decision Made	Date decision will be implemented
01 November 2023	08 November 2023