



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Officer Delegated Decision


04 March 2026

Emma Whittaker, Assistant Director of
Planning & Growth

Acceptance of the Biodiversity Net Gain Grant 2025/26 (Grant No. 31/7838)

Contact

Phil Jordan, Development Management and Enforcement Manager

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| Decision made by: | Emma Whittaker, Assistant Director of Planning and Growth |
| Decision: | 1) To formally accept the allocation of £27,142 Biodiversity Net Gain Grant Funding from DEFRA 2) To approve the setting up of a budget to enable the Biodiversity Net Gain Grant to be allocated and spent. |
| Public or Exempt: | Public |
| Reasons for exemption: | N/A |
| Conflicts of interest: | No |
| Policy compliant: | Yes |
| Details of delegation: | Assistant Directors are authorised by virtue of the Council's Financial Regulations to accept any external funding and make the associated budget virements in line with the authorised limits set out in the regulations. |

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance

- 1.1 The Council has been awarded a grant of £27,142 to be spent on the preparation and assessment of BNG in 2025/2026. The General Fund Revenue budget will be amended to reflect this grant award.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The terms of the grant have been reviewed, and the funding is to be used towards expenditure incurred by the Council in delivering biodiversity net gain. The spending of the grant money will be monitored accordingly by the finance team and Assistant Director of Planning & Growth to ensure compliance.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. The Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has made funding available to Local Authorities to be spent on expenditure incurred, or to be incurred by them in delivering biodiversity net gain (BNG). A grant of £27,142 has been awarded to South Kesteven District Council (SKDC).
- 2.2 The Environment Act 2021 includes provisions that make the achievement of 10% BNG mandatory for most developments under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). BNG is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a measurably better state than before the development took place.
- 2.3 The Council is developing policies in the emerging Local Plan regarding BNG however the requirement to provide BNG is mandatory regardless of any strategies or policies that the Council has separately developed. Developers will be required to provide a minimum of 10% BNG calculated using a Biodiversity Metric and through the approval of a biodiversity gain plan. BNG will need to be secured through the planning application process for at least 30 years.

- 2.4 In order to support Council's in preparing for this significant change, DEFRA has made funding available to Councils. The funding allocated to SKDC this financial year (£27,142) is required to be used "*towards expenditure lawfully incurred or to be incurred by them in delivering biodiversity net gain*".
- 2.5 DEFRA has confirmed that "*the 2025/26 grant is non-ringfenced, which means there is no requirement to formally accept the grant or submit evidence of spend returns, which were a requirement for previous years' grants*".
- 2.6 It has been confirmed that the funding can be used in the financial year (2025/26) and that there is also nothing to prevent it being carried forwards, subject to the Council following its own internal financial processes.

3. Available Options Considered

- 3.1 **Do nothing** – The Council could decide not to accept the grant funding; however, it will still incur costs in preparing and dealing with BNG.

4. Preferred Option

- 4.1 To accept the grant funding to support the Planning Service in its preparation and assessment of BNG in 2025/26.

5. Reasons for the Decision(s)

- 5.1 The Council will incur costs for the work involved regardless of whether it chooses to accept the grant funding or not

6. Appendices

- 7.1 S31 Grant Determination No. 31/7838 for Biodiversity Net Gain Grant 2025/26.
- 7.2 Biodiversity Net Gain grant 2025/26: Grant no. 31/7838 (Frequently Asked Questions)

Signed by: **Emma Whittaker**

Dated: **4 March 2026**