

NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 16

To consider the following notice of motions submitted under Procedure Rule 16:

1. The following motion has been submitted by Councillor Alastair Hellyer, and will be seconded by Councillor Steve McNamara:

At a recent meeting of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel it was noted that provisions of the Environment Act 2021 for mandatory minimum Biodiversity Net Gain requirements will soon be brought into force for development under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and that these requirements will stand at a net biodiversity gain of 10%.

It was also noted that if the Council wishes to mandate increases beyond this minimum or to create a proximity requirement for biodiversity sites this would need to be facilitated by the provision of biodiversity projects. Welwyn Hatfield's Biodiversity Action Plan was last updated in 2004 ahead of the 2005 District Plan and is therefore not designed to integrate with this recent legislation.

Provision of such projects is required because it is not always possible to achieve the minimum biodiversity gain within a particular development site – so off-site enhancement projects are a needed alternative to on-site measures. Without such provision by the Council these projects can be located far outside the Borough as it would not be possible to create an enforceable proximity requirement. Creating a biodiversity net gain project register would allow this council to provide and facilitate such projects locally for the benefit of residents of Welwyn Hatfield.

Therefore, in the context of a new Local Plan, which supersedes the old District Plan, and with the need to increase biodiversity in response to loss of valuable greenbelt land, **this council moves to:**

- 1. As a statutory planning authority, create a new Biodiversity Net Gain Project Register with the joint aims of:**
 - a. Providing biodiversity projects within the Borough so that a proximity requirement can be introduced for off-site BNG.**
 - b. Facilitating a higher net biodiversity gain than the statutory 10% (subject to revision by CPPP) for new developments from the implementation of the Local Plan Review.**
- 2. As a landowner, put forward potential biodiversity projects that will allow the Council to provide Biodiversity Units.**

To these ends, this council will:

- Put out a call for biodiversity projects from January to March.
- Nominate potential projects from the Council's own property.
- Carry out an assessment of nominated projects (from WHBC's own land and from private landowners) from the start of the **next municipal year**.
 - Assessment of a site carried out by Hertfordshire County Council as part of their BNG Site Matching scheme should be regarded as sufficient for this purpose.
- Revise policies implemented by the 2004 Biodiversity Action Plan to bring them up to date, with such updates proceeding through Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel

To allow for scrutiny of the new BNG Project Register, the responsible committee for the Register as a whole and related policies concerning development will be the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel. Individual projects brought forward by WHBC as a landowner will also sit with this committee until the Cabinet Climate Change Panel has been established to replace the Climate Change Member Group.