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# Should good practice for Biodiversity Net Gain incorporate people's wellbeing?

## Consultation Responses

Biodiversity Net Gain and People's Wellbeing / October 2021

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## Summary

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) could transform how we finance, design, build and operate development, with the UK's Good Practice Principles providing an approach that supports developers to generate long-term, measurable, and meaningful net benefits for biodiversity<sup>1</sup>. But while we are making progress towards this goal, focussed on the conservation of biodiversity for its own sake, it is important to remain mindful of the connection between biodiversity and people's wellbeing.

The UK's BNG Good Practice Principles involve sharing the benefits fairly among stakeholders and achieving an overall gain in the services that ecosystems provide<sup>2</sup>. However, the principles do not explicitly state that BNG should avoid detrimental impacts on people, in other words they lack the "do no harm" principle adopted internationally for sustainable development<sup>3</sup>. Neither do they explicitly link BNG to wellbeing or consider the social impacts of BNG in a holistic way that fully understands and addresses how people's wellbeing is affected by BNG within the wider context of sustainable development.

With funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, CIEEM, in collaboration with Balfour Beatty, the University of Oxford, and Wild Business Ltd, undertook a scoping study on whether, and, if so, how, wellbeing should be incorporated more directly into the UK's BNG Good Practice Principles. The aim of incorporating wellbeing into BNG good practice is for development projects to achieve BNG in ways that "do no harm" to people's wellbeing and, where possible, enhance wellbeing.

Our scoping study involved a series of consultations on the drivers for incorporating wellbeing into BNG good practice, the challenges of doing so and the possible solutions to overcoming these challenges. This report describes the responses to these consultations, with the aim to document what people told us, as faithfully as possible.

### What are the drivers for incorporating people's wellbeing into BNG good practice?

*Securing the long-term delivery of BNG and contributing towards true sustainable development* were the most frequently mentioned drivers for incorporating wellbeing into BNG good practice. Many respondents felt that understanding how BNG affects people's wellbeing, to then address any negative impacts and maximise the benefits, is necessary for development to successfully achieve BNG. Others described how community engagement is essential to secure local buy-in for long-term delivery of BNG. Whereas some said that it is simply the "right thing to do" for development and its BNG interventions to be truly sustainable.

### What are the challenges to incorporating people's wellbeing into BNG good practice?

*Lessening the BNG ambition* was voiced by many as a significant challenge to incorporating wellbeing within BNG good practice. Respondents felt that consideration of people's wellbeing would result in compromises being made to the design and implementation of BNG. Recreational use of areas for BNG interventions was commonly mentioned, with concerns that recreation would be too great a pressure for BNG to be successful.

*Timing* was frequently mentioned as a challenge, namely deciding when wellbeing should be incorporated into BNG good practice. Some respondents described that introducing wellbeing now would "muddy the waters" and disrupt efforts to mainstream BNG into practice across the UK, or, for England, distract from the implementation required for the forthcoming mandatory BNG requirement. Other respondents recognised that timing was a challenge, given the emerging practice of BNG and the variation in BNG practice across the UK. However, they believed that there are significant opportunities now to embed wellbeing into BNG practice because of the current political momentum for a Green Recovery from Covid19 restrictions, alongside the agendas on public health and "levelling up" to address long-standing social and economic inequalities.

*Limited resources, expertise and funding* were commonly cited as challenges, with many concerned about the lack of resources within local authorities and that small-scale developers would be "burdened" with requirements to undertake wellbeing assessments on top of the new legal requirement to achieve BNG. Other challenges included the

<sup>1</sup> CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2016) Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Principles for Development. UK

<sup>2</sup> [Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development. | CIEEM](#)

<sup>3</sup> The "do no harm" principle of sustainable development is to avoid or mitigate impacts that create or exacerbate poverty, or that undermine the resilience of people or communities. In recent years, international sustainable development has adopted a "do good" agenda of actively working to improve human livelihoods and wellbeing.

practicalities of assessing wellbeing given its inherent subjectivity, the logistics of collecting and storing sensitive data, and whether wellbeing assessments would be open to abuse from people wanting to object to a development. Finally, the question of “whose job is it?” was raised repeatedly with regards to the undertaking of wellbeing assessments, as Ecological consultants designing and implementing BNG are not social experts.

### **What are possible solutions to overcome the challenges?**

Some respondents did not believe that wellbeing should be incorporated into BNG good practice. They felt that the challenges were too great or that wellbeing considerations should be addressed by other policies and BNG policies should only regard biodiversity.

Other respondents offered solutions that might overcome the challenges to incorporating wellbeing into BNG good practice. These included:

*Setting BNG as an absolute requirement of the development.* It was thought that this could help safeguard against compromises made to the BNG design in order to address wellbeing considerations.

*Clarifying roles and responsibilities,* especially the undertaking of wellbeing assessments by social experts and how this could fit within their existing socio-economic impact assessments of developments, which closely linked to:

*Developing wellbeing assessments* by building on existing socio-economic impact assessments of development projects, such as Health Impact Assessments. Also drawing on expertise and experience from Wales with regards to the Wellbeing of Future Generation Act.

*Developing skills and competencies* in wellbeing assessments, which many respondents viewed as a positive upskilling opportunity.

*Building capacity* for additional expertise on social impact assessments, especially within local authorities.

*Enabling collaboration* between social and biodiversity experts throughout a project lifecycle, and throughout a supply chain from client to contractor.

### **In summary: should BNG good practice incorporate people's wellbeing?**

From our consultations, there was widespread recognition that development projects should achieve BNG in ways that “do no harm” to people and, where possible, enhance wellbeing. However, there were differing views on how this should be achieved. Some respondents supported the direct inclusion of people's wellbeing into BNG good practice, whereas others did not, stating that BNG policies should focus solely on biodiversity and the wellbeing agenda should be accounted for by other policies.

While these views emerged from the consultations, so too did questions that require further research and consultation in order to fully explore whether and, if so how, wellbeing should be incorporated into BNG good practice. We categorised the questions into the following themes and discussion points, which form part of our recommendations in the report “BNG and Wellbeing: Core Messages and Recommendations”:

<p><b>Biodiversity</b></p> <p><i>How will incorporating wellbeing into BNG good practice affect biodiversity outcomes?</i></p> <p><i>Are there ways forward to deliver for people and biodiversity?</i></p>	<p><b>People &amp; Society</b></p> <p><i>What effects will the process and outcomes of incorporating wellbeing into BNG have on people and communities?</i></p> <p><i>How will this affect society more generally?</i></p>
<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p><i>Where does wellbeing fit within current policy and practice?</i></p> <p><i>When should wellbeing be incorporated?</i> <i>Whose job will it be?</i></p>	<p><b>Assessing Wellbeing</b></p> <p><i>How should we assess wellbeing?</i></p> <p><i>What should be the guiding principles?</i></p> <p><i>What questions and challenges need to be addressed as part of the approach?</i></p>
<p><b>Collaboration &amp; Communication</b></p> <p><i>How do we change attitudes and approaches to make this workable in industry?</i></p> <p><i>What are the key messages we should be sending to each other and to the public?</i></p>	<p><b>Resources &amp; Capabilities</b></p> <p><i>Are the resources, time, money, and expertise available to deliver for wellbeing?</i></p> <p><i>How can we build capacity?</i></p>

## 1. Introduction

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) could transform how we finance, design, build and operate development, with the UK's Good Practice Principles providing an approach that supports developers to generate long-term, measurable, and meaningful net benefits for biodiversity<sup>4</sup>. But while we are making progress towards this goal, focussed on the conservation of biodiversity both for its own sake and for the benefit of society, it is important to remain mindful of the connection between biodiversity and the wellbeing of individual people.

BNG can benefit people directly, for example when communities enjoy high quality natural surroundings either by BNG being achieved within the development footprint or when a biodiversity offset increases people's access to, or views of, nature. Indirectly, BNG has a wider societal benefit of enhancing the natural environment for everyone, and people can benefit from simply knowing there has been a net gain of biodiversity from a development. But poorly designed BNG can be detrimental to people's wellbeing, for example by restricting access to nature within a development site, without adequate alternative provision.

In 2018, principles were published to give guidance on how to assess the social impacts of No Net Loss (NNL) and BNG in depth and ensure that people are not left worse off by BNG interventions (Bull *et al*, 2018<sup>5</sup>). These set an outcome for NNL/BNG projects to achieve, in which:

***"People perceive the components of their wellbeing affected by biodiversity losses and gains to be at least as good as a result of the development project and associated biodiversity NNL/BNG activities, than if the development had not been implemented."***

Wellbeing is defined as a positive physical, social, and mental state, and these international 'People Principles' for BNG focus on wellbeing related to biodiversity. Their application involves measuring change to people's wellbeing that is caused by losses and gains in biodiversity from a development and its BNG activities, and then making sure that this change is positive through an inclusive approach to planning BNG activities to support the wellbeing of affected people.

<sup>4</sup> CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2016) Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Principles for Development. UK

<sup>5</sup> [ensuring\\_no\\_net\\_loss\\_-\\_bull\\_et\\_al\\_2018.pdf \(iucn.org\)](#)

The UK's BNG Good Practice Principles involve sharing the benefits fairly among stakeholders and achieving an overall gain in the services that ecosystems provide<sup>6</sup>. However, the principles do not explicitly state that BNG should avoid detrimental impacts on people, in other words they lack the "do no harm" principle adopted internationally. Neither do they explicitly link BNG to wellbeing or consider the social impacts of BNG in a holistic way that fully understands and addresses how people's wellbeing is affected by BNG within the wider context of sustainable development.

## 1.1. Scoping Study

With funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, CIEEM, in collaboration with Balfour Beatty, the University of Oxford, and Wild Business Ltd, undertook a scoping study to determine whether, and, if so, how, wellbeing should be incorporated more directly into UK industry's BNG Good Practice Principles.

The scoping study involved desk-based reviews and consultations that included webinars, an on-line questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussions. The study commenced during Autumn 2020 and was completed in Spring 2021. The project team was supported by a Technical Advisory Panel, with expertise from industry, academia, and government, who provided advice and feedback throughout. The team and Technical Advisory Panel members are listed in Appendix A.

The study findings are documented in the following reports:

<b>Defining and assessing human wellbeing: what the science says</b>	A literature review of how wellbeing is defined assessed within the academic literature.
<b>How do governments define wellbeing?</b>	A literature review of how wellbeing is defined by international and UK governments and key organisations.
<b>Accounting for wellbeing within planning applications</b>	A desk-based review of whether planning authorities in England require consideration of a development's impacts on people's wellbeing as part of a planning application.
<b>Biodiversity Net Gain and Wellbeing: consultation responses</b>	A report on responses to this study's consultations on whether, and, if so, how, wellbeing should be incorporated more directly into UK industry's BNG Good Practice Principles.
<b>Biodiversity Net Gain and Wellbeing: core messages and recommendations</b>	A summary of the core messages from all of the evidence gathered by this scoping study, together with the recommendations.

## 1.2. This Report

This report provides the results from a series of consultations conducted as part of this scoping study. Consultations involved a range of methods to obtain views around the drivers and challenges of incorporating wellbeing into BNG good practice, as well as solutions and recommendations for how any challenges might be overcome. Specifically, this report:

- Describes the methods used in the consultations,
- Provides an overview of the common themes that emerged, and
- Describes the specific, detailed results obtained at each stage.

<sup>6</sup> Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development. | CIEEM

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Methods Overview

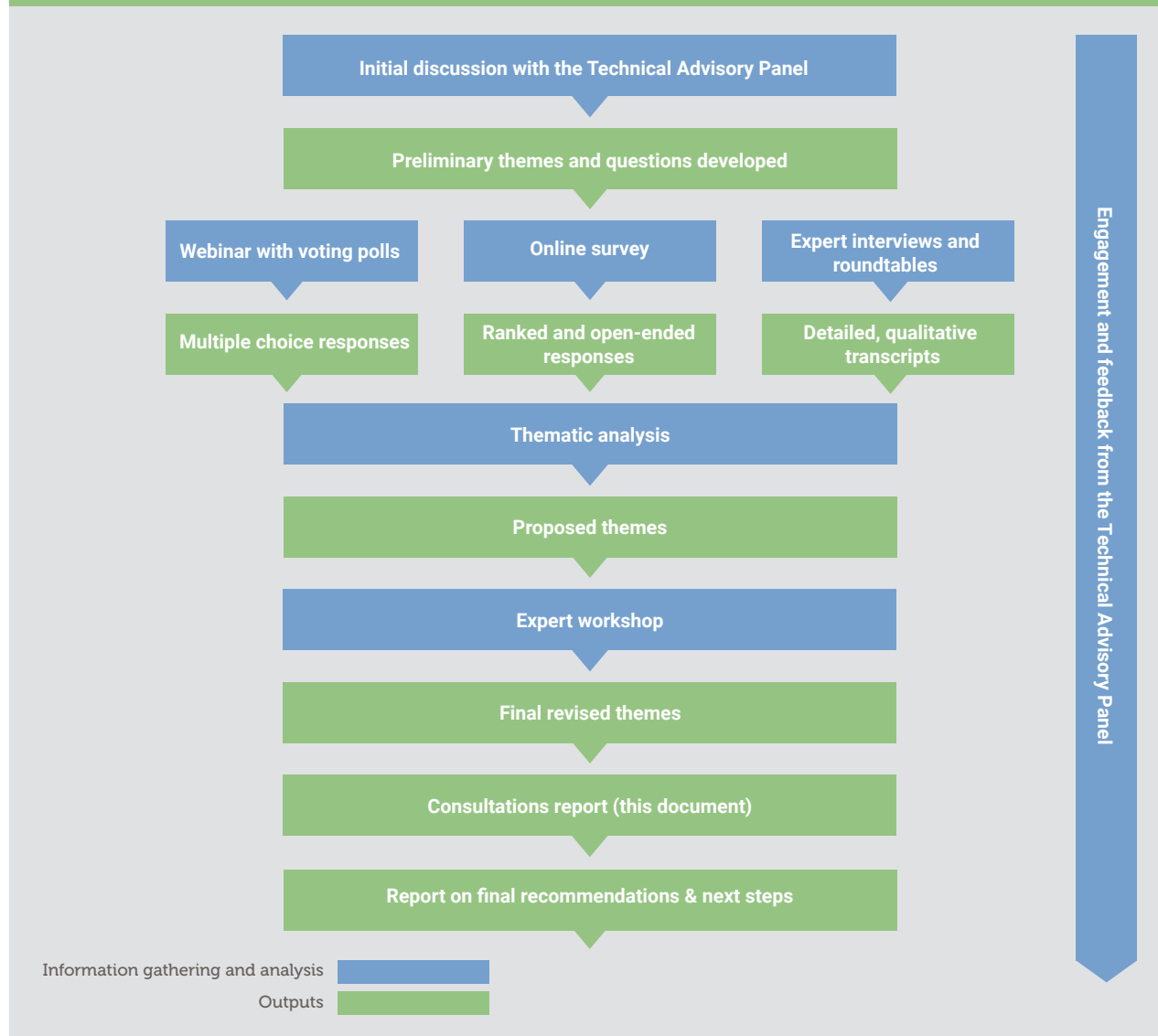
All consultations were conducted over a three-month period between November 2020 and January 2021.

The aim was to obtain as broad a range of perspectives as possible over a short timeframe, relating to three core questions, which lead to recommendations for next steps:

1. What are the drivers for incorporating wellbeing into BNG good practice?
2. What would be the risks and challenges of doing so?
3. What are the potential solutions to overcome those challenges, including relevant tools and support?

A mix of survey methods was used to capture a broad range of perspectives in response to these questions, including webinar voting polls, an online survey, and a series of in-depth expert interviews, roundtables, and workshops. The various steps taken are visualised in Figure 1 and described in more detail below. The core project team was supported by a Technical Advisory Panel of five members, with expertise from within industry, academia, and government, who provided advice and feedback throughout the various stages of this project. See Appendix A of this report for all project team and Technical Advisory Panel members, as well as a list of acknowledged participants.

**Figure 1: Summary of steps taken during the consultation, including approaches to gathering and analysing data, as well as key outputs at each stage**



## 2.2. Webinar Voting Polls

An open [online webinar](#)<sup>7</sup> was held in November 2020, hosted by CIEEM. The webinar covered the context and rationale for the scoping study, before asking attendees to vote on two polls that addressed the drivers and challenges of incorporating wellbeing into BNG good practice. Attendees were asked to choose their single most preferred answer from a range of options, shown in tables 1A and 1B, with the additional options to choose 'other' or 'not sure'. These options were chosen based on initial group discussions with the Technical Advisory Panel.

**Table 1A – Options provided for the webinar poll question: 'What are the reasons why wellbeing should be incorporated into industry good practice for BNG?'**

Reason why	Description
Increased likelihood of BNG success	Projects that reflect people's interests in nature are most likely to deliver successful BNG outcomes.
Better decision-making	Wellbeing data will improve decision-making by investors, planners and developers.
Demonstrate benefits	Incorporation of wellbeing considerations enables developers to demonstrate wellbeing benefits from BNG.
Social licence to operate	Risks of protests and objections are reduced.
True sustainable development	Wellbeing is now the cornerstone of sustainable development; this should also apply to BNG.

**Table 1B – Options provided for the webinar poll question: 'What are the main challenges of incorporating wellbeing into industry good practice for BNG?'**

Challenge	Description
Lessens the BNG ambition	Integrating wellbeing into BNG will lessen ambitions to improve biodiversity through development, with the risk that BNG is compromised.
Already covered elsewhere	Social impacts of a development including BNG are already covered elsewhere by other policies and regulations.
Extra costs and time	Undertaking wellbeing assessments for BNG adds extra costs that are an onerous burden especially for small-scale developments.
Too difficult to do	Given the subjective nature of wellbeing, it is difficult to assess well and the validity of the assessments can be challenged.
Lack of resources and capabilities	Wellbeing assessments require specialist skills and collaboration between biodiversity and social experts. This is not always practical, especially on smaller developments.

<sup>7</sup> The webinar can be viewed at: <https://cieem.net/resource/cieem-webinar-achieving-biodiversity-net-gain-in-ways-that-enhance-peoples-wellbeing/>



Webinar polls were followed by an open question and answer session, and attendees were asked to complete and share the online survey described in section 2.3. This gave attendees further opportunities to raise any points that may not have been captured by those listed in tables 1A and B.

## 2.3. Online Survey

An online survey was carried out over November and December 2020, with the aim of gathering views from a broader range of industry professionals and stakeholders throughout the UK. The survey was hosted on the CIEEM website via the Survey Monkey platform.

For contextual information, respondents were asked to provide their type of profession, main topic area of work, their number of years of professional experience, and their main country or countries of work.

Respondents were then asked to rank the drivers and challenges described in tables 1A and 1B in order of importance to their work, with an option of choosing N/A if the option did not apply to them. They were asked to provide an explanation for their first choice, as well as suggest additional drivers or challenges not covered by the options listed in tables 1A and 1B. Respondents were then asked to suggest solutions to each of the proposed challenges, as well as for ways to achieve 'win-wins' for people and biodiversity.

Finally, survey respondents were asked about the types of practical support required to integrate wellbeing into BNG, as well as the range of existing wellbeing assessments and tools already being used. Respondents were again asked to rank forms of practical support they would welcome in order of importance (including N/A if the type of support did not apply to them). The options included were:

- Industry standards for surveys and impact assessments on linking wellbeing and biodiversity
- Training
- Practical guidance and tools
- Templates for surveys, reports, etc
- Support to collaborate with social science / biodiversity specialists
- Other (asked to specify)

Respondents were asked to provide a reason for their first choice of practical support and provide any examples of resources or projects that were relevant to the study. An option for further comment was also provided at the end of the survey.

Responses to the nine open-ended questions were analysed using a qualitative approach, grouping answers into common themes. For questions where respondents were asked to rank a set of options, an average rank was taken for each of the options provided.

## 2.4. Expert interviews & roundtables

The final part of the consultation involved conducting a set of interviews with experts in the fields of planning, development, and BNG/ecology. Initial interviewees were targeted by the project team, following which a snowball sampling approach was used to obtain other participants for interview. Efforts were made to ensure representation across the devolved nations, with two roundtable sessions organised with representatives from Ireland and Wales and interviews with representatives from Scotland, as well as across different professions and areas of expertise.

Interviews were semi-structured. Interviewees were provided with a full introduction to the study, and to the international 'People Principles' of BNG. Key points made in this introduction were firstly that the international principles include assessing the impacts of BNG on people's wellbeing, so that BNG can be designed and implemented in ways that safeguard people's wellbeing as a minimum and, where possible enhance people's wellbeing. Secondly, that the People Principles are about achieving the desired net gain outcomes for biodiversity, but in ways that do not negatively affect people's wellbeing and seize opportunities to enhance wellbeing.

This was followed by a set of pre-determined questions, as well as any additional questions that were relevant to the conversation or interviewee. The pre-determined questions were:

- What would be the reasons or drivers to incorporate wellbeing into good practice for BNG, including the business case where relevant?
- What would be the risks or challenges of doing so?
- What are the potential solutions to overcome these challenges and are there any recommendations from experience?

Interviews were transcribed and recorded for reference, with the interviewee's permission. Transcripts were then analysed and coded for themes using NVivo software, taking key points from each interviewee and arranging these into sub-themes and overarching main themes. These themes were then presented at a final group workshop with the interviewees to obtain feedback on categorisation, which was incorporated into the final thematic analysis.

## 2.5. Limitations

This scoping study was limited by a short timeframe, with as many responses gathered during the available period as possible. The interviewee selection process was initially restricted to those directly contactable by the project team, with additional contacts obtained through a snowball sampling approach. While this included a broad range of professions from across the UK, certain groups were underrepresented (e.g., only one representative working in Scotland was interviewed). We aimed to get a more representative set of viewpoints via the online survey, which gathered a wider range of responses, although it was still skewed towards certain groups (see section 3.3.1.). It is also important to note that individuals were able to participate in more than one phase of the consultation, and that any overlap in participants between stages has not been explicitly accounted for as part of this analysis. This could result in the views of these individuals being overrepresented in our results. However, we believe that only a small number of individuals engaged in more than one phase of consultation, and that this is unlikely to have affected the overarching themes that arose throughout this study. By the completion of the interview and roundtables phase, a saturation point had been reached; that is, very few additional insights were being added to the overall thematic analysis for every additional consultee. On this basis, we are confident that we have captured the major issues around this topic.

# 3. Results

## 3.1. Results Overview

A brief overview of the main findings from the consultations is provided here, followed by a more detailed description of the results specific to each consultation stage.

In total, these consultations reached:

- 174 delegates at the online webinar,
- 114 survey respondents, and
- 44 expert interviewees

Participants raised a broad range of points relating to the drivers and challenges of incorporating wellbeing as part of BNG good practice – with similar points being raised across all forms of engagement. Many of these overlapped with the challenges and drivers initially identified by the Technical Advisory Panel (those listed in tables 1A and 1B), but several key additional points were also highlighted. A summary of these main responses is provided in Table 2.

In terms of **drivers** for incorporating wellbeing, opportunities around enhancing the long-term delivery of BNG and contributing to true sustainable development received the strongest support – both points received the most votes in surveys and polls, as well as being frequently mentioned in open-ended responses. Additional drivers included the benefits provided for people, communities and society more generally (e.g., improving people's health and delivering more equitable outcomes), addressing known gaps in current industry practice, as well as taking advantage of current momentum and political agendas (e.g., the 'Green Recovery' / 'Build Back Better').

*"Ownership of local biodiversity can be fundamental to its long-term maintenance."*

*"How do you say what you do is sustainable if you don't include wellbeing as part of it?"*

In terms of the **challenges**, the lack of resources, expertise, and funding were consistently voted as the main concerns in poll and survey responses – with these issues also being raised throughout open-ended discussions. While many saw this as an opportunity to enhance biodiversity outcomes from BNG, participants also pointed to the strong risks this could pose – with major concerns around people's wellbeing being prioritised at the expense of diluting biodiversity outcomes. Other key challenges included the potential difficulties of conducting a wellbeing assessment, and whether this would be too soon and too complex to be considered as part of BNG.

*"I don't have an issue with people winning but I do if that is at the cost of biodiversity."*

*"We haven't got the people internally to do the work – we need more competence for this."*

Among the key **solutions** to these challenges was the need to avoid trade-offs and be clear on minimum standards for biodiversity, as well as maximising interdisciplinary collaboration and using innovative and evidence-based design that delivers for people and nature.

*"Collaboration and cross-disciplinary working - that's where we really want to go if we want to achieve the benefits"*

**Table 2: A summary of drivers, challenges, and solutions for incorporating wellbeing as part of BNG good practice.**

Incorporating wellbeing as part of BNG good practice...		
"What are the drivers?"	"What would be the challenges?"	"What are the solutions to those challenges?"
<b>Enhancing the BNG ambition:</b> Incorporating wellbeing will connect people with nature, deliver long-term benefits for biodiversity, and raise the status of BNG by demonstrating its benefits.	<b>Risks for biodiversity:</b> This would overcomplicate BNG and could result in unwanted trade-offs, where people may be prioritised over biodiversity.	<b>Designing</b> spaces that deliver for people and nature.  <b>Setting minimum standards</b> to avoid trade-offs.  <b>More research and communication</b> on the interaction between biodiversity and people in the UK
<b>Better processes and outcomes for a sustainable society:</b> this will encourage more equitable and transparent BNG, benefitting communities and enabling a social license to operate for developers.	<b>It is difficult to achieve good quality participatory processes.</b>  Increasing transparency risks increasing controversy.  BNG will deliver benefits for people by default.	<b>Connecting</b> with social expertise.  <b>Training</b> in participatory approaches.  <b>More consultation</b> with both developers and the public.
Delivering for wellbeing is already a policy requirement, <b>this would address a gap in practice.</b>  Current political agendas mean that <b>now is the best time to do this.</b>	<b>This would be covered elsewhere</b> by other policies and practices.  Adding wellbeing now would overcomplicate the system when there is a <b>lack of capacity</b> to deliver basic BNG.  <b>It is not clear where this should sit or whose job it would be.</b>	A wellbeing framework would need to <b>align with existing policies and practices.</b>  <b>Human and financial capacity</b> are needed to ensure both BNG and wellbeing can be accounted for.
<b>There are tools and frameworks already available</b> to assess wellbeing.	<b>Wellbeing could be complex and difficult to define and measure</b> – e.g., Choosing indicators; managing data; conducting representative surveys; measuring and attributing change in wellbeing; achieving long-term monitoring.	<b>A wellbeing assessment would need to be:</b> Adaptable to different contexts, pragmatic, robust, holistic, embedded, credible, proportionate.
<b>This would provide an opportunity for collaborative working</b> and drive progressive change in industry.	Industry professionals often work in silos.  <b>Would need to overcome traditional attitudes</b> in industry and the 'nature/people' dichotomy.	<b>More interdisciplinary collaboration</b> both within and between organisations is needed.  Communicating the benefits of BNG and wellbeing to <b>'win hearts and minds.'</b>  Be supportive
Delivering for wellbeing <b>could unlock novel sources of funding</b> for BNG as well as new investment opportunities.  It would also <b>make better use of existing resources and expertise within industry.</b>	There are <b>limited resources</b> to achieve this and lack of a tangible business case.  There is a general <b>lack of social expertise</b> in the UK, especially among ecologists who are not trained to deliver for wellbeing.	<b>Capacity building:</b> Developing and consolidating standardised tools, templates, training, guidance, case studies.  <b>More funding</b>

Many of the key points shown in Table 2 appear to be opposing or contradictory, although most were not mutually exclusive and varied depending on context or experience among participants. As such, a key outcome from these consultations was a range of questions and discussion points that would need to be addressed in future work on incorporating wellbeing into BNG good practice. These were categorised into six core themes, which included: Biodiversity, People & Society, Governance, Assessing Wellbeing, Collaboration & Communication, and Resources & Capabilities. A summary of these, along with the main discussion points raised under each theme, is provided in Figure 2.

**Figure 2 – An overview of the six overarching themes that emerged across all consultations, and the key discussion points under each of those themes.**

<p><b>Biodiversity</b></p> <p><i>How will incorporating wellbeing into BNG good practice affect biodiversity outcomes?</i></p> <p><i>Are there ways forward to deliver for people and biodiversity?</i></p>	<p><b>People &amp; Society</b></p> <p><i>What effects will the process and outcomes of incorporating wellbeing into BNG have on people and communities?</i></p> <p><i>How will this affect society more generally?</i></p>
<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p><i>Where does wellbeing fit within current policy and practice?</i></p> <p><i>When should wellbeing be incorporated? Whose job will it be?</i></p>	<p><b>Assessing Wellbeing</b></p> <p><i>How should we assess wellbeing?</i></p> <p><i>What should be the guiding principles?</i></p> <p><i>What questions and challenges need to be addressed as part of the approach?</i></p>
<p><b>Collaboration &amp; Communication</b></p> <p><i>How do we change attitudes and approaches to make this workable in industry?</i></p> <p><i>What are the key messages we should be sending to each other and to the public?</i></p>	<p><b>Resources &amp; Capabilities</b></p> <p><i>Are the resources, time, money, and expertise available to deliver for wellbeing?</i></p> <p><i>How can we build capacity?</i></p>

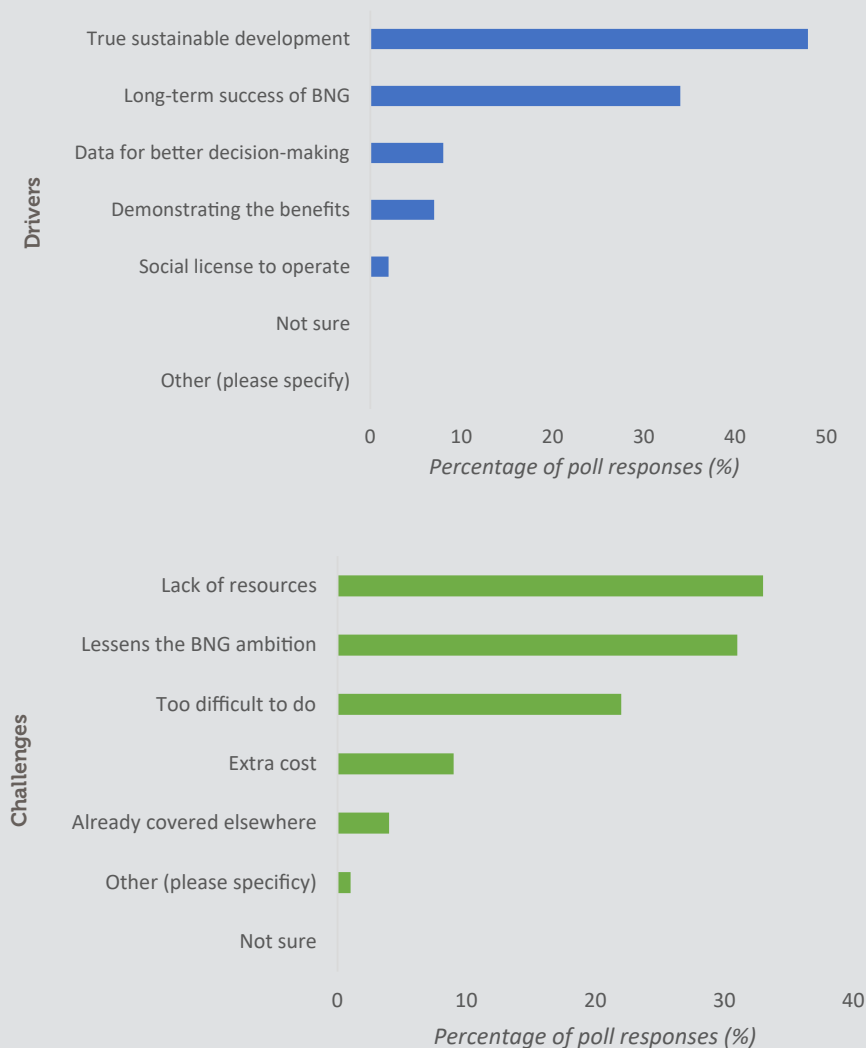
### 3.2. Detailed results: Webinar Voting Poll

The results of the webinar voting polls are displayed in Figure 3.

In terms of the 'reasons why' wellbeing should be incorporated into BNG good practice, 'true sustainable development' was the most frequently chosen answer, obtaining just under half (48%) of the votes. 'Long term success of BNG' was also a frequently chosen answer, obtaining 34% of the votes. The remaining answers received 2-8% of the votes each, with 'social license to operate' receiving the fewest votes (2%).

In terms of the challenges of incorporating wellbeing into BNG good practice, the two most frequently chosen answers were 'lack of resources' (33% of the vote) and 'lessens the BNG ambition' (31%). 'Too difficult to do' was also a frequently chosen answer, receiving 22% of the votes. 'Already covered elsewhere' was the least chosen answer, receiving 4% of the votes.

**Figure 3 – Percentage of webinar poll responses for the first choice of reason why (A) and challenges (B) for incorporating wellbeing into BNG good practice.**



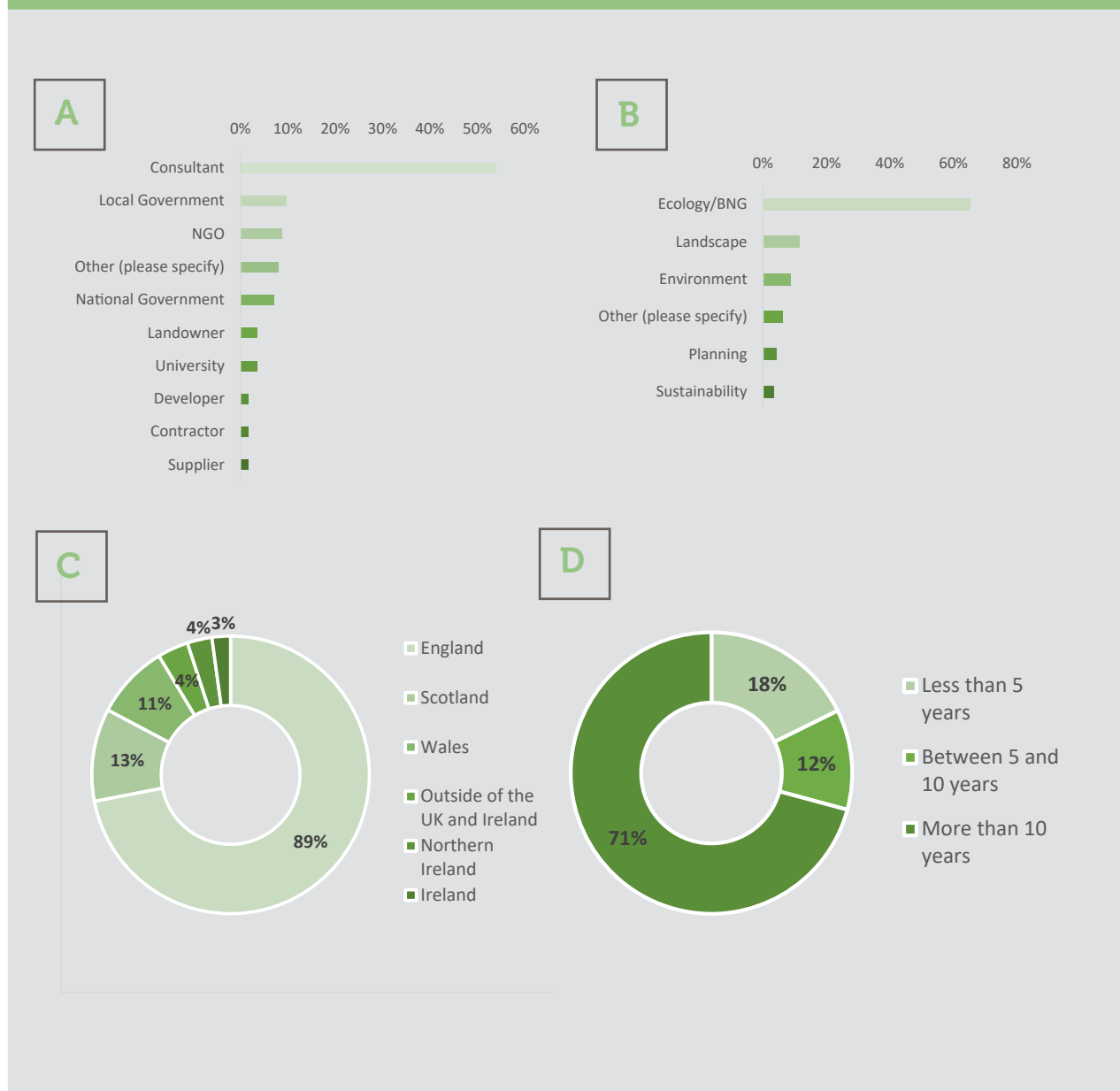
### 3.3. Detailed results: Online Survey

#### 3.3.1. Respondent Overview

The online survey obtained a total of 114 responses, a large proportion of whom were consultants (54%), specialised in BNG/Ecology (65%), had more than 10 years of professional experience (71%), and worked primarily in England (89%). A summary of respondent statistics is shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4 – Online survey respondent statistics. (A) Type of profession, (B) field of work, (C) country or countries of work (respondents could select more than one), and (D) years of professional experience.**



Of those who selected the option of 'other' for their type of profession (Figure 4A), 3 respondents stated they were ecologists (either trainee, retired, or freelance). Other professions included retired NGO professional, nature writer, health service, landlord, and interested citizen.

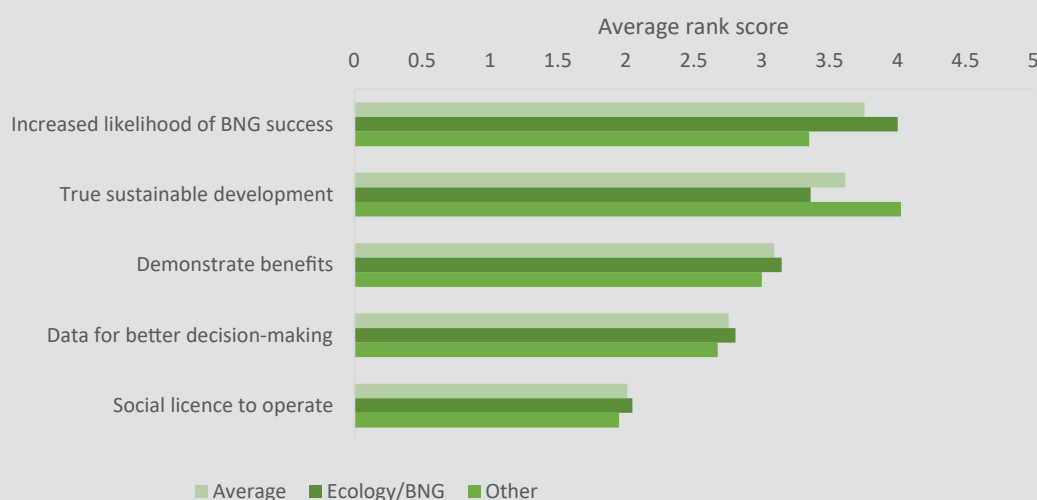
Of those who selected the option of 'other' for their field of work (Figure 4B), 2 respondents worked in health and well-being, with other fields of work including social value, green infrastructure, environmental economics, interpretation, and engaging people with nature.

### 3.3.2. Drivers

When asked to rank the proposed 'reasons why' in order of importance (Figure 5), the highest-ranking answer on average was 'increased likelihood of BNG success' (average score of 3.8 out of 5), followed closely by 'true sustainable development' (average score: 3.6). The lowest ranking answer was 'social license to operate' (average score: 2.0). These results are therefore similar to the results of the webinar polls described in section 3.2. above.

**Figure 5 – Ranking scores for different drivers to incorporate wellbeing into BNG.** A higher average rank score indicates greater importance, with 5 being the highest possible score. Reasons are presented from top to bottom in order of overall average importance for all respondents ('Average'). Specific values are also shown for respondents who work in the fields of BNG or ecology ('Ecology/BNG') compared to respondents who work outside the fields of BNG or ecology ('Other').

Please rank these reasons to incorporate wellbeing into BNG in order of importance for your work.



Respondents were then asked to provide an explanation for choosing their highest-ranking 'reason why'. A summary of the key points made for each of the reasons is provided in Table 3.

**Table 3 – A summary of the main explanations provided in response to the question- "Please describe the reasons for your first choice of reason why", giving the number of respondents who chose the reason as their first choice, the main explanations given, and the percentage of respondents within the category that gave each explanation. Note that responses were open-ended, so individual participants were able to provide more than one reason.**

Reason why	Number of respondents	Key explanations for respondents' first choice of 'reason why'	% Respondents
<b>Increased likelihood of BNG success</b>	41	There will be long-term success of BNG if there is local public understanding, buy-in and ownership (education being a key mediator)	54
		Enhancing biodiversity is the priority of BNG, which makes this option the most important	37
<b>True sustainable development</b>	42	Wellbeing is integral to true sustainable development	31
		A sustainable approach is necessary for long term conservation outcomes	24
		Sustainable development is the ultimate goal	21
		Sustainability encompasses all of the other reasons	14
<b>Demonstrate benefits</b>	14	The longevity of BNG depends on its value being demonstrated to all parts of society	50
		Allows decisions to be based on measurable outcomes rather than assumptions	14
<b>Data for better decision-making</b>	7	Data underpins everything, need the best quality data (1 person referred to LPAs specifically needing good data)	57
		Good data will enable better integration with landscape design (e.g., the landscape performance metric)	14
<b>Social licence to operate</b>	5	More buy-in from people results in better outcomes for nature	40

Finally, respondents were asked to suggest any additional 'reasons why' that were not covered by the reasons listed in Figure 5 and Table 3 above, with a total of 53 respondents (47%) providing at least one suggestion. Most notably, a large proportion of respondents' answers (58%) referred to the benefits that incorporating wellbeing would bring for people and communities (Figure 6). Several of these referred to improving people's mental and physical health (9 respondents) or the reduction of pressure on public health services (6 respondents). Another key reason was that it would increase people's access to (6 respondents) and ownership of (5 respondents) natural greenspace – which was seen as a benefit in its own right. Additional community-based reasons included addressing community needs and inequities, increasing community cohesion/reducing loneliness, and delivering social value or socio-economic benefits to local communities.

**Figure 6 – Word cloud depicting responses to the question “Please describe any additional reasons why wellbeing should be incorporated into BNG good practice”.**



Other responses included that there was a moral imperative or that industry has a responsibility to account for people's wellbeing (5 responses), that it would open up new sources of funding (2 responses), help to deliver green infrastructure (2 responses), or help to meet existing policy requirements (1 response).

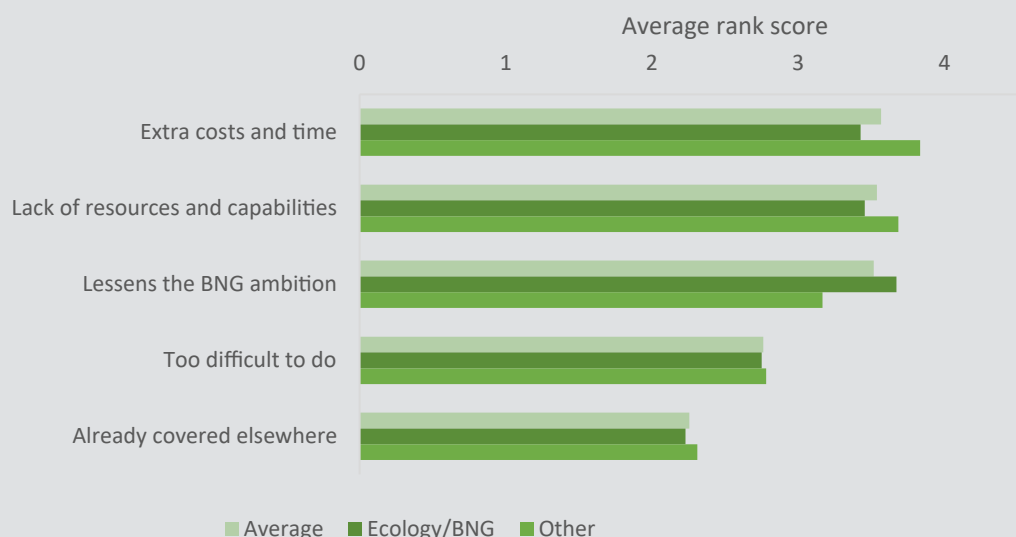
*"I'd just like to add a moral obligation for everyone to contribute to improved wellbeing where they can, given the prevalence of mental ill health and other long-term health conditions."*

The remainder of the reasons given were variations of those provided as part of the question (those listed in Figure 5 and described in Table 1A), with 7 responses indicating that it would increase the long-term success of BNG, a further 7 responses indicating that it would help in demonstrating the benefits to a range of stakeholders, and 3 responses referring to true sustainable development.

### 3.3.3. Challenges

When asked to rank the proposed challenges in order of importance, the overall highest-ranking answer was 'Extra costs and time' (average score: 3.6), very closely followed by 'Lack of resources or capabilities' and 'Lessens the BNG ambition' (both with an average score of 3.5). The lowest ranking answer was 'Already covered elsewhere' (average score: 2.3) (Figure 7). As with the 'reasons why', these results are fairly consistent with the results of the webinar polls – with the exception of 'Extra costs' which received only 9% of the vote in the webinar poll (Figure 3).

**Figure 7 – Average ranking for different challenges of incorporating wellbeing into BNG. A higher average rank score indicates greater importance, with 5 being the maximum. Reasons are presented from top to bottom in order of overall average importance for all respondents ('Average'). Specific values are also shown for respondents who work in the fields of BNG or ecology ('Ecology/BNG') compared to respondents who work outside the fields of BNG or ecology ('Other').**



Respondents were then asked to provide an explanation for their first choice of challenge. A summary of the key points made for each of the challenges is provided in Table 4.

**Table 4 - A summary of the main explanations provided in response to the question- "Please describe the reasons for your first choice of challenge", giving the number of respondents who chose the reason as their first choice, the main explanations given, and the percentage of respondents within the category that gave each explanation. Note that responses were open-ended, so individual participants were able to provide more than one reason.**

Challenge	Number of respondents	Key explanations for respondents' first choice of challenge	% Respondents
Lack of resources and capabilities	34	Ecologists lack expertise in social science and landscape design	27
		Resources and capabilities are necessary to deliver a robust approach to assessing wellbeing	15
		LPAs and SNCOs lack resources to do this	12
		There is a general lack of social expertise in the UK	6
		People work in silos too much, there is a need for greater collaboration	6
		Developers are profit-driven, extra costs likely to be inhibitive	9
		There is a lack of evidence on the link between biodiversity and wellbeing	6
Lessens the BNG ambition	33	Biodiversity is the priority of BNG, wellbeing is important but secondary	39
		Delivering for people and delivering for biodiversity are not always the same thing, this will dilute biodiversity outcomes	24
		Wellbeing might be prioritised over biodiversity	18
Extra costs and time	28	Developers are driven by profit, a more tangible business case is needed	39
		Ecology/biodiversity has always been resource-limited, this will add another burden	11
		Extra time or costs for wellbeing could result in a poor reputation for BNG	11
Already covered elsewhere	5	Wellbeing comes under Natural Capital / Environmental Net Gain	20
		This should be happening as part of good development, landscape design, and green infrastructure	20
		This already comes under an EIA	20
Too difficult to do	11	Wellbeing is complex and poorly defined, making it difficult to measure	27
		Subjective aspects of wellbeing make it difficult to measure robustly	18
		Difficult to obtain good quality data	18

Finally, respondents were asked to suggest any additional challenges to those listed in Figure 7 and Table 4. Fifty-nine respondents (52%) provided suggestions, one of the key additional challenges being that there is a lack of interest or understanding among key stakeholders (including policymakers and developers) with regard to the link between biodiversity and wellbeing (9 respondents, 15%), including that it would be hard to avoid developers simply paying 'lip service' to the issues and deliver meaningful outcomes. Related to these points, 4 respondents (7%) indicated that a tangible business case to assess wellbeing was missing.

*"Ensuring it is not treated as a tick box exercise but is actively embedded in decision-making and used to inform the development."*

*"If wellbeing includes 'inclusive' and 'equitable' development this will impact the bottom line."*

Other respondents referred to the challenges surrounding public engagement (6 respondents, 10%), with 4 of these respondents indicating that ensuring fair representation and capturing the diverse wellbeing needs of a community can be challenging. Additional points included that the current development process is not transparent enough to allow for good quality public engagement.

*"It is often difficult to secure local engagement that is representative of a diverse population."*

*"The varied nature of communities means that what counts as wellbeing for some will not be wellbeing for others."*

Additional points were that there is a lack of cross-disciplinary collaboration and communication among industry professionals (3 respondents) and that it would be difficult to ensure the longevity and maintenance of wellbeing outcomes (2 respondents).

However, the majority of respondents provided answers that expanded on the challenges already provided (i.e., that were not additional to those described in Table 1B). For instance, 17 (29%) respondents expanded on the challenge of assessing wellbeing being 'too difficult to do', with the main points being that it is complex to quantify and measure change in wellbeing (7 respondents), that wellbeing is too poorly defined or understood (5 respondents), and that wellbeing is too subjective to be measured alongside objective measures of BNG (2 respondents).



Sixteen respondents (27%) expanded on the challenge of ‘lessening the BNG ambition’. The main points included the risk of diluting the priorities for biodiversity (6 respondents) and overcomplicating BNG, which is not yet well-understood by many stakeholders (3 respondents). Another key point was that there are constraints to delivering biodiversity onsite or in an urban setting, meaning that limiting the delivery of biodiversity gains near to people could be counterproductive for both biodiversity and good quality design (5 respondents). A final key point was that there are differences between what people want from a greenspace and what is best for biodiversity, meaning it is not always possible to deliver for both (3 respondents).

Seven respondents (12%) indicated that wellbeing is ‘covered elsewhere’, specifically that wellbeing should be the natural result of good quality landscape design – which can be compromised to obtain BNG in some cases (4 respondents). Others mentioned that wellbeing should be captured more broadly at the local planning level (2 respondents) or that it will be captured under Natural Capital / Environmental Net Gain approaches (1 respondent). Finally, 5 respondents (8%) pointed to a lack of resources or capabilities, specifically that this is outside the remit of ecologists (2 respondents), that more evidence and examples are needed (2 responses), and that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in particular lack resources (1 respondent).

### 3.3.4. Solutions and achieving ‘win-wins’

Some respondents did not believe that wellbeing should be incorporated into BNG good practice. They felt that the challenges were too great or that wellbeing considerations should be addressed by other policies and BNG policies should only regard biodiversity.

For respondents who did offer solutions to the challenges described above, they were first asked to suggest general ways to overcome any of the five suggested challenges. By far the most frequently suggested answer, mentioned by 33 respondents (29%), was the need for more resources and expertise – with many respondents referring to the need for standardised tools, guidance, and training in this area. The second and third most suggested solutions were ‘more collaboration’ (14 respondents, 12%) and ‘embedding wellbeing throughout the planning process’ (12 respondents, 11%), respectively.

*“Good stakeholder communications, sharing resources, sharing data, training.”*

*“Make a standard method accessible and make the benefits obvious through case-studies.”*

Respondents were then asked to suggest specific ways to overcome the challenge they had ranked as the most important. A summary of the main responses relating to each of these challenges is provided in Table 5. While specific responses for each challenge do vary, the common themes of having standardised resources/guidance, greater amounts of collaboration, and a simple and practicable approach appear throughout.

**Table 5 – A summary of responses to the question ‘Please describe how your first choice of challenge could be overcome’. Note that responses were open-ended, so participants could provide more than one answer.**

Challenge	Main suggested approaches to overcome the challenge	Number of respondents
<b>Lessens the BNG ambition</b>	Being clear on minimum standards and prioritising biodiversity first	12
	Keeping wellbeing and biodiversity as separate but interlinked processes - e.g., by better interlinking good quality green infrastructure and BNG	5
	More collaboration between different specialists and organisations	4
<b>Extra costs and time</b>	Communication, engagement, education, awareness raising for all stakeholders	5
	Developing practicable and standardised training, tools, and guidance	3
	More monitoring, regulation, and enforcement	3
	Demonstrating the benefits of a wellbeing approach to industry professionals	3
	Keeping it simple, not ‘reinventing the wheel’	3
<b>Already covered elsewhere</b>	Use and align existing tools and expertise (particularly in Natural Capital/Ecosystem Services/Environmental Net Gain) to deliver for wellbeing	4
<b>Too difficult to do</b>	Developing practicable and standardised training, tools, and guidance	2
	Collaborate to gain access to existing data and expertise	2
	Have a positive / can-do attitude, be willing to allocate time to good quality engagement processes	2
<b>Lack of resources and capabilities</b>	Shared training, collaborative approaches to continuing professional development (CPD)	7
	More resources and funding, particularly for LPAs and SNCOs	6
	Developing practicable and standardised training, tools, and guidance	6
	More research and academic advice for a scientifically robust approach	5

Finally, respondents were asked to describe the measures they felt are necessary to achieve a 'win-win', whereby the desired BNG and wellbeing outcomes are achieved, and neither BNG nor wellbeing is compromised. The responses to this question are summarised in Figure 8.

**Figure 8 – A summary of responses suggesting ways to achieve a 'win-win' for biodiversity and wellbeing as part of BNG good practice. Responses have been categorised into the overarching consultation themes described in section 3.1.**

Please describe the measures you feel are necessary to achieve a "win-win", whereby the desired BNG and wellbeing outcomes are achieved and neither BNG, nor wellbeing is compromised"



### 3.3.5. Practical support

Guidance, training and tools to support the implementation of BNG have focused on the conservation values of biodiversity. This approach to address the social aspects of BNG includes integrating wellbeing data into the design and implementation of BNG. This requires collaboration between biodiversity and social experts, as well as support such as practical tools, training and guidance. The aim of this section of the survey was to understand what support might be required to integrate wellbeing into BNG, as well as the range of existing wellbeing assessments and tools already being used.

Firstly, respondents were asked to rank a series of specific types of practical support in order of importance to them. Overall, on average, the highest ranked answer was 'industry standards for surveys and impact assessments on linking wellbeing and biodiversity' (average score: 3.5), followed by 'practical guidance and tools', 'support to collaborate', and finally 'templates for surveys, reports, etc.' (Figure 9).

**Figure 9 - Average ranking for different types of practical support needed to incorporate wellbeing into BNG. A higher average rank score indicates greater importance, with 5 being the maximum. Reasons are presented from top to bottom in order of overall average importance for all respondents ('Average'). Specific values are also shown for respondents who work in the fields of BNG or ecology ('Ecology/BNG') compared to respondents who work outside the fields of BNG or ecology ('Other').**



Respondents were then asked to provide an explanation for their first choice of practical support, and a summary of the key points made in these explanations is provided in Table 6. While there are differences between types of support, common themes included consistency and credibility, robustness, and ensuring widespread uptake and practical delivery of wellbeing approaches.

**Table 6 – A summary of responses to the question 'Please describe the reasons for your highest-ranking choice of practical support', giving the number of respondents who chose the type of support as their first choice, the main reasons given, and the percentage of respondents within the category of support that gave each explanation.**

Type of practical support	Number of respondents	Key points made	% Respondents
Industry standards for surveys and impact assessments	34	Ensures inclusivity and a level playing field	15
		Ensures consistency, reduces subjectivity	15
		Ensures approach is robust and meaningful, prevents greenwash or tokenism	15
		This will raise expectations and encourage uptake of wellbeing, provides a benchmark	15
		Provides assurance and credibility, more easily enforceable	12
		Provides direction for other forms of practical support - standards are needed first	9
Practical guidance and tools	22	Necessary for effective and practical on-the-ground implementation, will allow for rapid uptake	46
		Ensures consistency, reduces subjectivity	27
		Ecologists need easy to follow support	14
		Can be informative for the public, helps to ensure transparency	9
Training	16	Training is needed to help people to understand BNG, it helps people to understand the bigger picture and optimise outcomes	38
		Ecologists lack training in this area, training required to develop novel expertise	25
		Wellbeing is a complex topic that requires skilled staff, ensures practitioners are reliable and consistent	25
Support to collaborate	23	This requires social and health expertise to be robust, ecologists need the support	39
		Will help to address knowledge gaps on how biodiversity and wellbeing interact	13
		Collaboration is the best way to practically deliver for biodiversity and people	13
		People currently work in silos; collaboration is a necessary pre-cursor to develop other forms of practical support	17
Templates for surveys, reports, etc.	9	Would encourage quick and widespread uptake	44
		Saves time	33
		Makes it simple and practical	33

Finally, respondents were asked to provide any additional suggestions for practical support that would be needed to integrate wellbeing within BNG. Many (11 respondents) referred to the need to develop knowledge and capacity within industry, with 5 of those respondents referring to the need for greater collaboration and use of existing expertise; 3 respondents suggesting more research and communication around wellbeing, its definitions, and how it links to biodiversity; 2 respondents referring specifically to training and support in participatory approaches; and 1 respondent suggesting that more case studies or examples would be helpful.

*“Require those with appropriate expertise to be included in high-level decision-making and assessments.”*

*“Deep understanding and clear definition of terminology and concepts”*

Three respondents also referred to specific data and tools, particularly tools to monetise wellbeing services. The remaining responses included references to clear minimum standards for biodiversity (2), greater regulation (2), clearer leadership (1), and more funding (1). Finally, 3 responses indicated that all suggested forms of support would be of equal importance.

*“I would actually put a lot of the above as equal importance - it is a package that is needed rather than one above another.”*

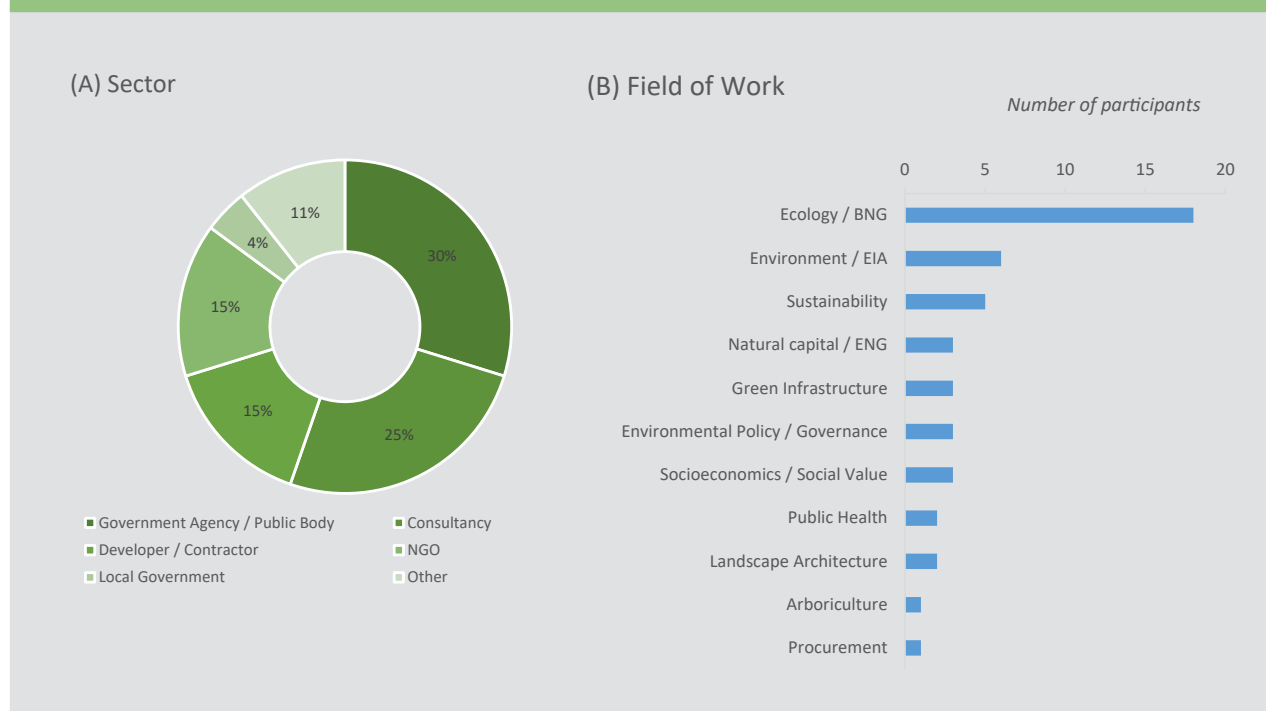
### 3.4. Detailed results: Expert Interviews Thematic Analysis

#### 3.4.1. Theme Analysis Overview

The final consultation phase involved conducting a set of in-depth interviews and roundtables with a range of experts and practitioners working across the UK. Interviews and roundtables were followed by a final workshop event, where interviewees were invited to further discuss the issues raised and provide feedback. A total of 44 individuals were interviewed during 26 separate sessions, with 11 individuals also attending the final workshop (including 3 additional individuals who had been unable to attend interviews).

Interviewees worked in a diverse range of sectors and fields of work, summarised in Figure 10, although with a bias towards ecologists in consultancies or government.

**Figure 10 – (A) Percentage breakdown of interviewees' sectors of work. 'Other' includes property investment, certification/approvals, biodiversity banking, energy, and a university. (B) Breakdown of interviewees' fields of work. BNG = Biodiversity Net Gain, EIA = Environmental Impact Assessment, ENG = Environmental Net Gain.**



An effort was made to interview representatives working in different parts of the UK, including those working in Wales (10), England (10), Ireland (4), Scotland (2), as well as UK-wide (21). Interviewees also worked in varying positions and levels of seniority, including consultants, advisors, project officers, project coordinators, technical specialists, department leads, and company directors.

The points made during discussions with interviewees have been categorised into six core themes, which also aim to capture the key points raised during the online survey and webinar. These themes are:

- Biodiversity
- People & Society
- Governance
- Assessing Wellbeing
- Collaboration & Communication
- Resources & Capabilities

Each of these core themes captures a set of related challenges, opportunities, and solutions regarding the incorporation of wellbeing as part of BNG good practice. A brief overview of the main discussion points under each theme is provided in Figure 11, which is then followed by a detailed description of the points raised by interviewees under each core theme and its related subthemes in turn, with example quotations from the interviews provided for reference. All of these core themes were mentioned at least once in each of the 26 interview/roundtable sessions.



**Figure 11 – An overview of the six overarching themes that emerged across all consultations, and the key discussion points under each of those themes.**

<p><b>Biodiversity</b></p> <p><i>How will incorporating wellbeing into BNG good practice affect biodiversity outcomes?</i></p> <p><i>Are there ways forward to deliver for people and biodiversity?</i></p>	<p><b>People &amp; Society</b></p> <p><i>How will the process and outcomes of incorporating wellbeing into BNG affect people and communities?</i></p> <p><i>How will this affect society more generally?</i></p>
<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p><i>Where does wellbeing fit within current policy and practice?</i></p> <p><i>When should wellbeing be incorporated?</i> <i>Whose job will it be?</i></p>	<p><b>Assessing Wellbeing</b></p> <p><i>How should we assess wellbeing?</i></p> <p><i>What should be the guiding principles?</i></p> <p><i>What questions and challenges need to be addressed as part of the approach?</i></p>
<p><b>Collaboration &amp; Communication</b></p> <p><i>How do we change attitudes and approaches to make this workable in industry?</i></p> <p><i>What are the key messages we should be sending to each other and to the public?</i></p>	<p><b>Resources &amp; Capabilities</b></p> <p><i>Are the resources, time, money, and expertise available to deliver for wellbeing?</i></p> <p><i>How can we build capacity?</i></p>

### 3.4.2. Theme 1: Biodiversity

#### Summary of interview responses:

- **How will incorporating wellbeing into BNG good practice affect biodiversity outcomes? What are the opportunities and risks?**
- **Are there ways forward to deliver for both people and biodiversity?**

A central discussion point that arose during interviews was how incorporating a wellbeing approach might impact, both positively and negatively, on biodiversity and the intended outcomes of BNG. Thirty interviewees (68%) indicated that incorporating a wellbeing approach would be beneficial for biodiversity and help to enhance the BNG ambition. Many interviewees noted that connecting people with nature and greenspace would result in people better understanding, respecting, and valuing biodiversity, resulting in its conservation in the long-term. In particular, community ownership was seen by many as an effective way to ensure the long-term persistence of biodiversity gains. A second key point was that assessing wellbeing benefits would help to raise the status of BNG and biodiversity in general in the UK – demonstrating the benefits, increasing cross-stakeholder support for BNG as a policy, and helping to mainstream biodiversity throughout society.

Table 7: Enhancing the BNG ambition

Key point	Example quotes
<b>Protecting biodiversity in the long-term:</b>  Connecting people with nature will result in long-term benefits for biodiversity.	<p>"It will only be protected if people care about it"</p> <p>"It will benefit nature in the long term – engaging people so that they value nature and vote for the person who will protect it."</p> <p>"Ownership of local biodiversity can be fundamental to its long-term maintenance"</p>
<b>Raising the status of biodiversity and BNG:</b>  This will help to increase support for BNG and mainstream biodiversity throughout society.	<p>"If we make it multifunctional it means that we can get more people to buy in to biodiversity as a lynchpin that delivers in so many different ways"</p> <p>"It will and always has had that intrinsic value and that hasn't been enough to protect it. So, we need to do something."</p> <p>"We need to value wellbeing because if we don't, we are underselling the value of the habitat creation that we have done."</p> <p>"I think we use the health agenda to leverage the biodiversity stuff."</p>

However, many interviewees (31, 70%) also noted that there would be several risks for biodiversity and that, done poorly, incorporation of wellbeing could compromise the BNG ambition. A first key point was that there are often trade-offs between people's perceptions of nature or use of greenspace and what is best for biodiversity, meaning it is not always practical or possible to deliver for both. Some indicated that the addition of wellbeing would overcomplicate BNG and potentially dilute biodiversity outcomes, particularly given that some capacity-building is still needed to ensure the basic requirements of BNG are achieved. A third point was that restricting biodiversity gains to ensure proximity to people would constrain what biodiversity could be delivered, with onsite biodiversity gains involving several challenges – such as delivering expensive and complex maintenance schemes in the long term, as well as conflicts over limited space. Finally, the combination of all of these challenges may result in developments that deliver poorly for both – or that prioritise wellbeing over biodiversity – culminating in perverse outcomes and discreditation of BNG.

Table 8: Risks for biodiversity

Key point	Example quotes
<b>Trade-offs and priorities:</b>  There is a difference between people's perceptions of nature and what is best for biodiversity, you can't always deliver for both.	"I don't have an issue with people winning but I do if that is at the cost of biodiversity."  "I think people's perception of nature can be different sometimes to what is good ecologically."
<b>Overcomplication:</b>  We do not yet know if BNG will deliver for biodiversity, wellbeing would overcomplicate things.	"BNG may not be the best policy for doing this. The purpose is to deliver for biodiversity. There may already be big flaws in the system and it may not do that already. There is a big risk that biodiversity outcomes would be undermined."  "It undoubtedly complicates a proposition that is already challenging to many decision makers."
<b>Constraints:</b>  There are constraints to delivering biodiversity onsite or near to people.	"If a focus on wellbeing was increased, there might be more focus on onsite gains, but we know that the onsite monitoring and enforcement scheme is looking shaky compared to offsite – it could exacerbate a loophole."
<b>Perverse outcomes:</b>  This may result in perverse outcomes for biodiversity.	"I am worried that biodiversity will pay the price which is not something it's in a position to do at this time of global biodiversity loss."  "Would there be a time where wellbeing would trump the biodiversity objectives? I would not want to see that."

Importantly, the risks and opportunities for biodiversity were not always seen as mutually exclusive, and many interviewees (20, 45%) suggested mechanisms and solutions that might contribute to overcoming challenges and achieve a 'win-win' for people and biodiversity. Several interviewees pointed to good quality landscape design and green infrastructure that provides accessible natural space for people while minimising adverse effects on biodiversity – including the use of natural features of the landscape to limit access to more sensitive habitats. Education was seen as an important part of this, ensuring the public are aware and respectful of biodiversity – for example, through good signage and public engagement. Some also suggested the need for clarity on minimum standards, whereby any addition to good practice would make clear that wellbeing and biodiversity are not tradeable.

Finally, many interviewees also pointed to the need for greater research and understanding around the explicit relationship between biodiversity (i.e., not simply green/blue space) and people's wellbeing to inform designs that deliver effectively for both. This included the need to explore human-biodiversity interactions within the UK specifically, and how this compares to other international examples. It was also recommended that clear distinctions are made between various overlapping terms that were often used interchangeably – for example, 'biodiversity', 'nature', 'green space', and 'natural environments'.

Table 9: Ways forward for people and biodiversity

Key point	Example quotes
<b>Smart Design:</b>  Designing spaces that deliver for people and nature	<p>"I think we need to understand and value the benefits we get from having a well-designed and high-quality green infrastructure - this is where the maximum gains for people's wellbeing will occur within a development. And this is also where most of the on-site BNG can be delivered. Getting the green infrastructure strategy right is therefore crucial and BNG and green infrastructure are therefore intrinsically linked."</p> <p>"I think the answer is Biophilic Design and being more creative. It's not about having separate spaces for people and biodiversity, as traditionally has been the case, it's about mixing it up and making it relevant in our day to day lives."</p> <p>"Education is key and clear signage saying that 'this area is for nature, don't trample on it' - encourage respect and control where people go."</p>
<b>Minimum standards:</b>  Being clear on minimum standards for biodiversity.	<p>"Requiring both high quality biodiversity first BNG in the right places and high quality multi-functional green infrastructure with natural greenspace as part of good urban and development design. The two should go together and be additional, not played off against each other."</p>
<b>Research:</b>  We need a greater understanding of how wellbeing and biodiversity interact.	<p>"We don't have a great understanding of what wellbeing is and how it relates to wildlife."</p> <p>"We don't have good evidence to say that walking through a wildflower meadow will be better for your wellbeing compared to walking through a playing field. That level of evidence is not quite there as far as I understand."</p> <p>"There is a difference between nature in its broad sense and how a population would perceive nature as opposed to biodiversity."</p>

### 3.4.3. Theme 2: People & society

#### Summary of interview responses:

- How will the process and outcomes of incorporating wellbeing into BNG affect people and communities?
- How will this affect society more generally?

This second core theme is centred around how considering wellbeing as part of the process and outcomes of BNG might affect people, communities, and society more generally. The inclusion of this as a core theme was further supported by the results of the online survey, in which respondents pointed to the benefits for people and communities as a key 'reason why' wellbeing should be incorporated as part of BNG (see section 3.3.2.).

Thirty-one interviewees (70%) referred to the various outcomes that would contribute to a more sustainable society. A wellbeing approach was seen as a way to deliver more equitable and inclusive BNG outcomes, in particular by ensuring that the conservation measures delivered by BNG do not exacerbate and preferably help to reduce current inequities in health and access to greenspace. Interviewees indicated that this in turn could contribute to initiatives such as Green Social Prescribing and help to reduce the pressure on various public services. Many interviewees also noted that where BNG can be delivered in such a way as to enable improved access to nature alongside positive outcomes for biodiversity, good design could offer the benefit of providing a community hub, increasing community cohesion, and helping to reduce levels of loneliness.

Finally, interviewees noted that true sustainable development should consider social and environmental aspects in tandem and, as such, that there is a general moral imperative or responsibility for those engaged in planning and development to avoid unsustainable outcomes from BNG. However, some also pointed out that focusing too heavily on wellbeing on a project-by-project basis as part of BNG may jeopardise a more holistic approach to sustainable development. Several pointed to the value of including wellbeing in planning for sustainable development, but that its role specifically in planning for BNG is less clear. Some interviewees also noted that a functioning BNG system would deliver wellbeing benefits by default – for example, through the delivery of ecosystem services or through the existence values of biodiversity (where people’s wellbeing is improved by the knowledge that biodiversity has been restored, even if it is not directly visible).

**Table 10: Outcomes for a sustainable society**

Key point	Example quotes
<b>Health:</b>  A wellbeing approach will improve various aspects of people’s health.	“Connecting people to nature improves mental and physical health, a happier and healthier population results in less pressure on public services - NHS, police, support charities...”
<b>Community:</b>  A wellbeing approach will have a broad variety of other community benefits.	“Sense of community - where developments actively create habitat or natural features as part of development, it also creates a talking point for neighbours who may have little else in common. It gives them pride in their surroundings and enables them to feel involved in protecting nature.”  “...especially if looking at loneliness! Do we really want developments where people don’t see other people’s faces?”
<b>Responsibility:</b>  Accounting for wellbeing is part of responsible development.	“It’s the right thing to do. Regardless of the policy requirement, whether that’s local or national, we believe that – along with the clients we work with – part of our core values is that it is the right thing to do.”  “‘There is a social - even a moral - imperative that we actually do something beyond running to the easiest outcome for biodiversity, and actually delivering this in a way that supports people.’”
<b>True sustainable development:</b>  Recognising the link between BNG and sustainable development.	“‘How do you say what you do is sustainable if you don’t include wellbeing as part of it?’”  “‘Yes, the risk for BNG is that it sits in that environmental box and doesn’t influence social and economic policy – and then we’re missing a trick. There are so many ways that BNG could contribute to those spaces...’”

Twenty-five interviewees (56%) also discussed people and communities in the context of the process of stakeholder engagement and the challenges and opportunities that come with this. Some pointed to this requiring a more effective participatory process, in which diverse communities could be given greater agency to influence design decisions and contribute local knowledge. Transparency was seen as a necessary part of this, with a wellbeing approach to BNG helping developers to make more justified decisions and develop good relations with stakeholders – smoothing the consenting process and obtaining social license to operate. However, many noted that delivering good quality community participation requires time and expertise, and that some developers may be hesitant to release sensitive information – particularly in the case of more controversial developments.



Table 11: Process of stakeholder engagement

Key point	Example quotes
<b>Public participation:</b>  There are both challenges and opportunities that come with community engagement.	<p>"Another driver would be that social aspects will help wider groups to engage with the planning process... it's currently older, richer, retired people. So, bringing in these principles might help to improve engagement with young and disadvantaged people."</p> <p>"Consulting with people is different from empowering them, often we're consulting but we've already made up our minds... You've got to let people push the project in the right way. Otherwise, you're not consulting - you're just telling."</p> <p>"The process of engaging people means that we end up over-promising things we can't actually do."</p>
<b>Transparency:</b>  A wellbeing approach would require greater transparency.	<p>"A tool to assess the wellbeing output... it would allow for transparency and justification of how money is being spent."</p> <p>"Transparency is a huge issue - how much information do you release... and this might open up the conversation about what developments are actually needed in the local area."</p>
<b>Social license to operate:</b>  A wellbeing approach will address controversy.	<p>"People are generally against development and sceptical of the BNG policy concept. So, anything that leads to on-the-ground delivery where they can see the benefits of the policy could help make them more supportive in the long term of the development in their area."</p> <p>"...either way there is a business case because failing to do so can lead to opposition or delay."</p>
<b>Reputational benefits:</b>  Leading in wellbeing will result in reputational benefits for developers.	<p>"One of the benefits of being involved in the wellbeing aspect is that you're seen to be trying and others are more likely to work with you..."</p> <p>"It's good ethically and its good for business. Being able to tell the story that your development is better for people and wildlife is a huge marketing and communications asset for a development."</p> <p>"Companies are moving to improve their ESG - both to retain employees but also we're finding the investment arena is moving more towards encouraging organisations that have stronger commitments to environmental and ethical standpoints..."</p>

### 3.4.4. Theme 3: Governance

#### Summary of interview responses:

- **Where does wellbeing fit within current policy and practice?**
- **When should wellbeing be incorporated?**
- **Whose job will it be?**

This theme encompasses the 'where, when, and who' of delivering for wellbeing in relation to current policy and practice within the UK. Twenty-four interviewees (55%) discussed current policy and legislation, with some pointing out that wellbeing is an existing requirement (e.g., under the National Planning Policy Framework, the Wellbeing of

Future Generations Act, or the Social Value Act), whereas other suggested that stronger legislation or a clearer steer on government policy would be needed.

Another key sub-theme was the existing heterogeneity in local and national policy throughout the UK. For example, some indicated that delivering for wellbeing is already a requirement of planning for some local authorities but not for others. Similarly, differences in the policy context between devolved nations were also highlighted – for example, wellbeing would have a strong drive in Wales due to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, but may receive less uptake in those nations where BNG is not yet due to be mandatory.

**Table 12: Policy & Legislation**

Key point	Example quotes
<b>Existing requirements:</b>  Existing legislative requirements for wellbeing in the UK.	<p>“My point is that health and wellbeing is one lens to look through that loads of different policies play into.”</p> <p>“There is a policy requirement through the Wellbeing of Future Generations [Wales] Act.”</p> <p>“If there was stronger part of NPPF [National Planning Policy Framework], that could help deliver the social side of BNG but via a different route rather than it being a part of the Net Gain process itself.”</p> <p>“I expect that strengthening the policy would help.”</p> <p>“[It’s] difficult to justify when this is not coming from the government advisors.”</p>
<b>Heterogeneity:</b>  Differences in policy throughout the UK.	<p>“There are councils that I have worked with that are much better. Some council are on board... they want to represent their communities and you don’t have to make that argument.”</p> <p>“It very much depends authority to authority.”</p> <p>“The Scottish government have said they won’t accept financial proxies as measurement in terms of social value for their procurement process.”</p> <p>“There is a policy requirement through Wellbeing of Future Generations [Wales] Act.”</p> <p>“In Ireland, there has been less interest among Irish people in wildlife but that is changing.”</p>

In terms of current industry practice, thirty-two interviewees (73%) also discussed whether a wellbeing approach would help to address a gap in current practices, or whether wellbeing is or should be covered elsewhere, rather than as part of a BNG assessment. It was highlighted by some that there are existing practices and tools for assessing wellbeing, but that these are compartmentalised, not well-embedded into development processes, and would need to be aligned with BNG - with several interviewees noting that it is unclear whose job it should be to assess wellbeing.

Others suggested that wellbeing would be captured under other processes (e.g., Natural Capital Assessments, Environmental Net Gain, Social Value, EIA, or HIA) and should not be incorporated as part of BNG and its associated metrics. Another key point was that the multifaceted nature of wellbeing means that it should be considered at a broader or more strategic level (e.g., as part of the policies,) rather than solely at the level of individual developments and their associated BNG.

Table 13: Industry practice

Key point	Example quotes
<b>Filling the gap:</b>  A wellbeing approach to BNG will address a gap in current industry practice.	<p>"Loads of people do it but no one owns it."</p> <p>"I know there are wellbeing measures out there, but they are few are far between and not embedded well enough I don't think."</p>
<b>Covered elsewhere:</b>  Wellbeing is, will, or should be covered elsewhere - not as part of a BNG assessment.	<p>"Does all this fit in the direction of travel from BNG towards Environmental Net Gain, which is the next thing on the agenda?"</p> <p>"Differentiating why bringing in local communities with BNG project instead of natural capital assessment and the wellbeing aspect of that... it would probably be a bit of a struggle to sell that."</p> <p>"It should be ELMS [Environmental Land Management Schemes] that delivers the health and wellbeing benefits."</p> <p>"If you look at social value it's very much a growing area and is maturing quite significantly."</p> <p>"The planning system is where wellbeing should sit, in local plans and planning decisions – thinking about local health and wellbeing sits alongside priorities like biodiversity."</p> <p>"Wellbeing is so much more than health or employment or access to green space. It's the interlinkages between all of those topics, which are what truly makes a person and a community's wellbeing."</p>

Thirty-three interviewees (75%) spoke about timing – specifically, whether now would be a good time to add wellbeing as part of BNG good practice. Many interviewees indicated that it might be too soon to add another complexity, particularly given that BNG is a relatively new policy in the UK and many stakeholders are still 'getting to grips' with the biodiversity aspects. Conversely, others highlighted that current political agendas (e.g., the 'Green Recovery' from COVID-19 or the 'Levelling Up' agenda) means that there is a clear momentum that needs to be taken advantage of, with this being the direction of travel for several companies already.

Table 14: Timing

Key point	Example quotes
<b>Not yet:</b>  This is too soon to consider wellbeing as part of BNG.	<b>"Sometimes we push too fast too soon."</b>  <b>"Timings - it might be wise to get basic BNG up and running before adding further consideration of social principles."</b>  <b>"Keep moving goal posts and people will stop trying to score the goals."</b>
<b>Now:</b>  Now is the best time to be thinking about wellbeing.	<b>"There's no better time to address this in industry than in 2020! - COVID, Build Back Better, the Green Recovery... there's more appetite for it."</b>  <b>"Now is as good a time as any. You can delay these things, but you lose momentum on it... implementing BNG is not going to happen overnight."</b>

### 3.4.5. Theme 4: Assessing wellbeing

#### Summary of interview responses:

- **How should we assess wellbeing?**
- **What should be the guiding principles?**
- **What questions and challenges need to be addressed as part of the approach?**

An agreed approach to assessing wellbeing would be needed in order to integrate wellbeing as part of BNG good practice. The challenges and approaches of assessing wellbeing were therefore a common theme throughout the interviews. Thirty interviewees (68%) discussed key principles that should guide a wellbeing assessment, including the need for an approach that is not overly prescriptive and adaptable to a variety of contexts, the need to balance a robust, science-based approach with simplicity/practicability for the user, as well as the need to be holistic while also remaining proportionate. A final point was the need for independence and credibility, which some highlighted may require the support of a relevant public body.

Table 15: Assessment principles

Key point	Example quotes
<b>Adaptability and flexibility:</b>  A wellbeing assessment would need to be adaptable for different contexts.	<p>"Standardising wellbeing across the UK parts... that's a difficult thing. There are so many layers of cultural and economic factors... the standard needs to be that you take the context as the overriding driver."</p> <p>"It comes back to how you measure, who, and in what context. There is no 'one' measure."</p>
<b>Pragmatic yet robust:</b>  A wellbeing assessment would need to be simple yet science-based.	<p>"Any way to keep it practical and easy to understand is going to be key to this otherwise people just won't do it."</p> <p>"So obviously there is complexity that sits under that but from the surface people understand it and know that there's science that sits behind it. So, having something like that - turning something soft into hard numbers can help people to understand it in a simple way."</p>
<b>Holistic and embedded:</b>  A wellbeing approach would need to be embedded throughout the planning process.	<p>"That's where we fall down in the UK is that we do EIA rather than what we should be doing which is ESIA and getting the social bit built in early on. So, your social aspects are incorporated across the feasibility stage, design stage, and you keep looking back across between the two so you don't end up forgetting about stakeholders"</p> <p>"It will only happen in [large infrastructure projects] if done early in the project and sponsored properly and then embedded in contracts."</p>
<b>Independence and credibility:</b>  A standardised wellbeing assessment would benefit from the backing of an independent public body..	<p>"If it comes from a government body that makes a significant difference. And something like a British standard on it that gives it gravitas. That would certainly make a big difference because gives peoples something to go to that has that gravitas and impartiality."</p> <p>"If Natural England came together with the NHS or Public Health England, the uptake would be massive."</p>
<b>Proportionality:</b>  The extent of an assessment should be proportionate to the significance of the impacts.	<p>"Proportionality of that assessment as well – as soon as you bring the community in, you can't please everyone! So how do you prioritise?"</p> <p>"Proportionality is important - promoting an approach that is practical and not onerous"</p>

A further thirty-one interviewees (70%) discussed the specific stages of a wellbeing assessment and the challenges that would need to be overcome as part of this – including practical issues such as choosing a wellbeing definition, deciding on the most appropriate wellbeing indicators, determining the scope of the assessment, obtaining representative samples when carrying out surveys, and dealing with large quantities of sensitive data. Several interviewees also highlighted that attributing change in people's wellbeing to a particular development would be challenging in the context of external influences on wellbeing, and that any assessment would need to be monitored and evaluated against long-term outcomes for wellbeing.

Table 16: Assessment approaches

Key point	Example quotes
<b>Defining wellbeing:</b>  Issues surrounding the underlying concept of wellbeing.	<p>"I think it is not a good idea to try to combine something as nebulous and hard to define as wellbeing into what is supposed to be a rigorous ecology-based exercise."</p> <p>"Wellbeing is too ill-defined and woolly to be incorporated"</p> <p>"Wellbeing is different for different people. Some people might want a skate park, others like an invasive non-native planted garden... There's a huge issue around how you measure wellbeing and please everyone..."</p>
<b>Choosing indicators:</b>  Wellbeing can be measured with both qualitative and quantitative indicators.	<p>"How would one balance the subjective nature of well-being with objective BNG, how would that work in calculations?"</p> <p>"I certainly don't think it could be qualitative in any way. It wouldn't be hard to pinpoint metrics, things to quantify - but I think in terms of creating that linkage between the two thematic areas it would have to be quantitative type matrix I would say."</p> <p>"we need to look at the softer/ qualitative side. In my books it's more important but it's hard to get your hands around and put into a scientific framework."</p>
<b>Carrying out surveys:</b>  There are challenges that come with surveying communities.	<p>"[When] we're doing something in the community, we quite often miss big groups within communities, or you listen to the person that shouts the loudest or the politician that wants the most votes."</p> <p>"You're not going to open up to the first person that comes in and asks how you feel about something - unless you feel very strongly and negatively about it."</p>
<b>Dealing with data:</b>  Issues surrounding obtaining and managing large and sensitive datasets.	<p>"A barrier is dealing with 5000 people's feedback..."</p> <p>"The issue is that the data is not publicly available."</p> <p>"...But then you're talking about 'people' data here, so you then get hit with GDPR in terms of what you keep. We've had lots of blockers around that, especially around those protected characteristics."</p>
<b>Determining the scope:</b>  Deciding what and who to include within an assessment.	<p>"How do you put a value on those habitats being there? People think about the habitats in a different way for those [who live there] compared to people who visit for holidays... then there will be people who never go there but get wellbeing benefits from knowing that it exists."</p> <p>"I think it's kind of 'whose wellbeing we're talking about?' People immediately affected, the wider catchment, or the developer themselves! It's about identifying who's the group is that we're affecting"</p>
<b>Measuring change:</b>  Measuring the change in people's wellbeing and attributing that to the development/BNG.	<p>"There are different factors that are causing the increase"</p> <p>"How do you measure that you've delivered those benefits? How do you continuously measure that? That could be relatively easy in a constrained area, but if you've got a long line that covers wide range of people... what data do you collect?"</p> <p>"I would find it hard to distinguish between one particular development and development in general."</p>
<b>Monitoring outcomes:</b>  Wellbeing outcomes of a development/BNG need to be monitored in the long-term.	<p>"I'm really supportive of innovative approaches but it's important that they're monitored and evaluated well... Better outcomes for people and the environment – what we're not currently doing well is monitoring whether that outcome is being delivered."</p>



### 3.4.6. Theme 5: Collaboration & Communication

#### Summary of interview responses:

- How do we change attitudes and approaches to make this workable in industry?
- What are the key messages we should be sending to each other and to the public?

Adopting a wellbeing framework may require a shift in certain approaches and attitudes within industry. As such, it is important to acknowledge where changes need to occur within industry and provide a supportive means to achieve those changes – with collaboration and communication being central to this. Twenty-four interviewees (55%) noted key approaches that would be needed to effectively deliver a multiple-outcome approach, including greater cross-disciplinary collaboration, both within and between organisations, as well as clearer oversight and leadership throughout the development process. Some interviewees also suggested a shift to more progressive attitudes was needed - in particular, shifting from a ‘siloed’ approach to one where people are considered as fundamentally connected to nature.

**Table 17: Approaches & attitudes in industry**

Key point	Example quotes
<b>Collaboration:</b> A more collaborative approach to working is needed.	“Collaboration and cross-disciplinary working - that’s where we really want to go if we want to achieve the benefits”  “Working in silos means those opportunities are missed.”
<b>Leadership and oversight:</b> This will require ambitious leadership and clear oversight.	“Leadership. You need that strong vision. We’ve signed up to 20% and we don’t know how we’re going to deliver it. That doesn’t happen very often... That was because our leadership was prepared to be brave.”
<b>Progressive thinking:</b> A change in traditional attitudes is needed.	“Keeping people and nature separate doesn’t work for conservation.”  “We have to democratise ecology.”  “We need to acknowledge humans are part of nature and separate from nature. That is fundamental - and will not be agreed by everyone.”

Effective communication will also be key to successfully embedding a wellbeing approach within industry, with nineteen interviewees (43%) highlighting the need to ‘win hearts and minds’ across all stakeholders. Several interviewees mentioned the need to demonstrate the measurable benefits of a wellbeing approach (e.g., to investors, regulators, or local authorities), with case studies and examples frequently suggested as helpful communication tools to justify extra efforts or resources. Others pointed to the need for positive messaging, particularly emphasising that this would not require ‘reinventing the wheel’ nor be an added problem. Finally, several interviewees suggested that industry has a role to play in communicating BNG and links to wellbeing to the public as well as other stakeholders, as this is a key enabler for successful projects.

Table 18: Winning hearts and minds

Key point	Example quotes
<b>Bringing everyone along:</b>  A supportive approach is needed for all stakeholders	<p>"It needs to be supportive rather than another problem."</p> <p>"The value of having those best practice [examples]... then you get a kind of snowball effect..."</p>
<b>Demonstrating the benefits:</b>  Embedding a wellbeing approach requires its benefits to be demonstrated to stakeholders.	<p>"It's helpful to have something that actually demonstrates that value... for others it's demonstrating to investors, for us it's the regulators."</p> <p>"There's a 'we know we've done something good there'... we know that it's good, but we aren't capturing that information."</p> <p>"The more ecosystem services you can value, the more money we'll get, the more business will come."</p>
<b>Education as an enabler:</b>  Educating the public is a pre-requisite to delivering for biodiversity and wellbeing.	<p>"It comes down to a huge amount of awareness raising and capacity building at grassroots level."</p> <p>"Educating the public is key! Wellbeing is subjective but with understanding people can gain wellbeing benefits from things they would originally have found stressful."</p>

### 3.4.7. Theme 6: Resources & Capabilities

#### Summary of interview responses:

- Are the resources, time, money, and expertise available to deliver for wellbeing?
- How can we build capacity?

Adequate resources and professional capabilities would be essential to make delivering for wellbeing practical and achievable. Twenty-eight interviewees (65%) made reference to resources (e.g., money, time, tools), a key point being that there are currently limited resources to achieve this - particularly among ecological consultants, local planning authorities, and other statutory organisations or public bodies (e.g., Statutory Nature Conservation Organisations (SNCOs), public health bodies etc). The further limitation placed on resources by the COVID-19 pandemic was also highlighted by some. Conversely, others indicated that the addition of wellbeing could help to unlock novel sources of funding and investment for BNG and ecology – particularly given current political and social agendas around health and wellbeing.

Related to this is the business case for developers, with additional costs being highlighted by many as a key concern, including the lack of level playing field for small-scale developers. Several interviewees highlighted that assessing wellbeing in a robust and meaningful way would require large amounts of time and money, often more than developers would be willing to pay for – particularly as many are still becoming accustomed to BNG. However, others indicated that including wellbeing would be a simple extension of good industry practice that would not require large amounts of money or effort.

Table 19: Resources, time, money

Key point	Example quotes
<b>Resource availability:</b>  There are currently limited resources to achieve this.	<p>"We don't want to overstretch a limited pot of money that needs to do what it needs to do."</p> <p>"Stakeholders and investors want to invest in people who do this this kind of thing."</p> <p>"It's partly a resourcing issue as well... [statutory organisations] tend to be a bit thinly stretched on the ground sometimes."</p>
<b>Costs for developers:</b>  Additional costs are a concern for developers.	<p>"It's how much you design, not how much you spend."</p> <p>"It's a very complex assessment to get a meaningful answer. Takes a lot more resources than people are willing to pay."</p> <p>"One of the main challenges is that it is easier to do on the big sites – you're there for longer time and there's more investment on those sites."</p> <p>"Where there's a will, the finance will take care of itself. So initially it will be gathering interest."</p>

Twenty-five interviewees (57%) discussed current capabilities among professionals. A common theme was that ecologists generally do not have the skills or expertise to deliver for wellbeing, with some suggesting that ecologists should be upskilled and others indicating that wellbeing should not fall under ecologists' remit. Another key point considered the current state of social expertise in the UK, with some highlighting that most UK-based firms do not hire or have access to social practitioners, particularly since Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) are not standard practice in the UK. Some interviewees did point to existing professionals within industry whose expertise it would be important to draw on – including those involved in landscape architecture, Green Infrastructure, and EIA coordination.

Finally, many interviewees indicated the need for significant capacity building throughout industry, with some suggesting the development of standardised resources as a key first step (e.g., tools for wellbeing assessments, guidance, templates, case studies etc.) as well as the consolidation and alignment of existing resources – particularly to support on-the-ground staff. Training was seen as essential, with shared/interdisciplinary training seen as a particularly helpful process in the context of assessing wellbeing.

Table 20: Skills, capabilities, expertise

Key point	Example quotes
<p><b>Skills and expertise:</b></p> <p>A wellbeing approach will require new forms of expertise.</p>	<p>"You've got to have the right people doing the work. It's a specialist thing. It's not something that an enlightened ecologist can do."</p> <p>"We haven't got the people internally to do the work – we need more competence for this."</p> <p>"Consultancies that don't do the international work won't have a group of social experts that they can call on, but maybe that's one of the challenges – it's a field that needs to grow in order to do the international and UK work."</p>
<p><b>Capacity building:</b></p> <p>Building capacity to deliver for wellbeing in the UK.</p>	<p>"Those resources would be needed. Training would also be needed."</p> <p>"Yes, training and guidance is important, but we also need tools and methodologies to assess these things holistically."</p> <p>"I feel that industry will pick it up quickly if its robust and accepted – rather like the biodiversity calculations. We didn't have to have legislation for industry to pick it up."</p>

## Appendix A: Project Team

### Project Lead

Julia Baker, Balfour Beatty

### Technical Advisory Panel

TAP Member	Organisation
Sally Hayns	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)
Kerry ten Kate	Independent Consultant
E.J. Milner-Gulland	University of Oxford
Joseph W. Bull	Wild Business Ltd; Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE)
Sarah Scott	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

### Research Team

TAP Member	Organisation	Leading on:
Hannah Williams	WSP	Requirements to consider development impacts on people's wellbeing within regional and local planning policies in England
Shuo Gao	University of Oxford	What the science says: defining and assessing wellbeing
Isobel Taylor	Wild Business Ltd	Consultation responses on whether and how BNG good practice should more directly incorporate wellbeing

### Consultations: participants

We are extremely grateful to the following individuals who kindly gave their time for our consultations.

Alex Pelton	Barratt Developments
Claire Beard	WSP
Clare Warburton	Natural England
David Hill	Environment Bank
Gemma Jerome	Building with Nature
Helen Nyul	Barratt Developments
Howard Waples	Temple Group
James Fisher	Natural England
James Raymond	Freedom Group
James Stewart	Public Health England
Jane Stout	Trinity College Dublin
Jean Hamilton	Fehily Timoney and Company
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Kelly Watson	Hatch Urban Solutions

Louise Clarke	Berkeley Group
Lynn Parker	Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment
Nicola Johansen	Redrow Homes
Nicola Martin	Balfour Beatty
Orlaith Delargy	Natural Capital Ireland
Rachael Riley	LM
Rebecca Pullinger	Woodland Trust
Richard Cobb	BRE Group
Richard Marsh	Leeds City Council
Sophie Stephens	Balfour Beatty
Vikki Patton	Ramboll
Yetunde Abdul	CLS Holdings

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