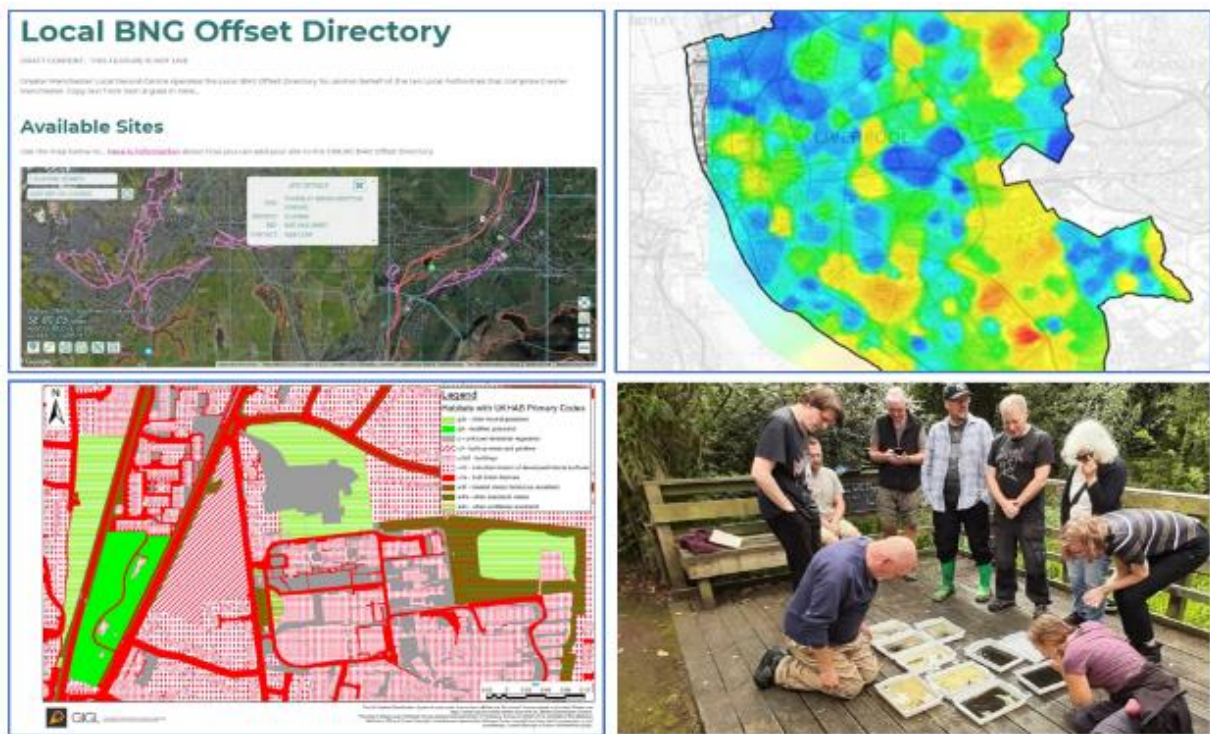


# Local Environmental Records Centres

*helping deliver*

## Biodiversity Net Gain



### ALERC

The Association of Local Environmental Records Centres (ALERC) provides a voice for Local Environmental Records Centres (LERCs) across the UK.

### ALERC

- Is a member of the BNG Assurance Partnership Group.
- Has been working with BNG stakeholders to develop Data Standards that will enable presenting, sharing and reporting information locally and nationally easier and faster.

### LERCs are already:

- Delivering specialised biodiversity data management and GIS services.
- Working with local authorities, statutory bodies, ecologists and consultants.
- Developing and adapting existing services to meet the requirements of Biodiversity Net Gain.

## Metric Calculations

As holders of the best quality data for their area, it is logical that LERCs also provide a service to calculate the biodiversity value of a given location’s baseline habitat data using the Defra metric, alongside any local variations that may be required by local and regional planning authorities.

## Creation and Maintenance of GIS Based Site Registers

- Potential offset sites
- Sites at risk and requiring enhancement
- Sites where offsetting has occurred.

Building on existing local wildlife site inventories, this service would comprise a GIS dataset that maps the sites, with links to a database of information about the site. Landowner details, potential projects, additionality, etc. The database will also hold ecological survey data and future BNG monitoring data.

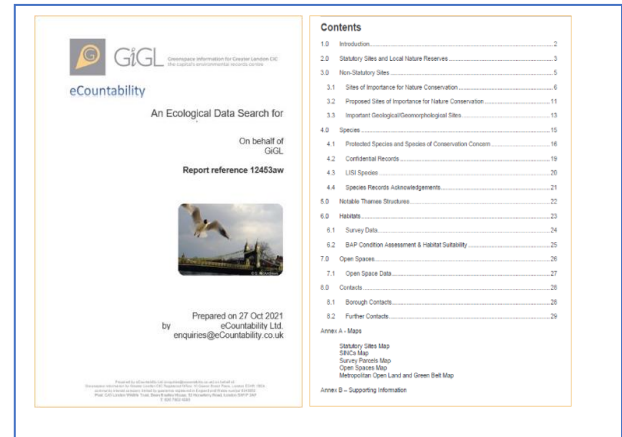


© Greater Manchester LRC: BNG Sites Register prototype (Feb 2023).

## BNG Reporting

LERC processes include independent verification of information and datasets that are then used to underpin reporting. Local reporting to national

standards would enable local statistics to feed into the national reporting system.



© GiGL: Ecological Data Search Report.

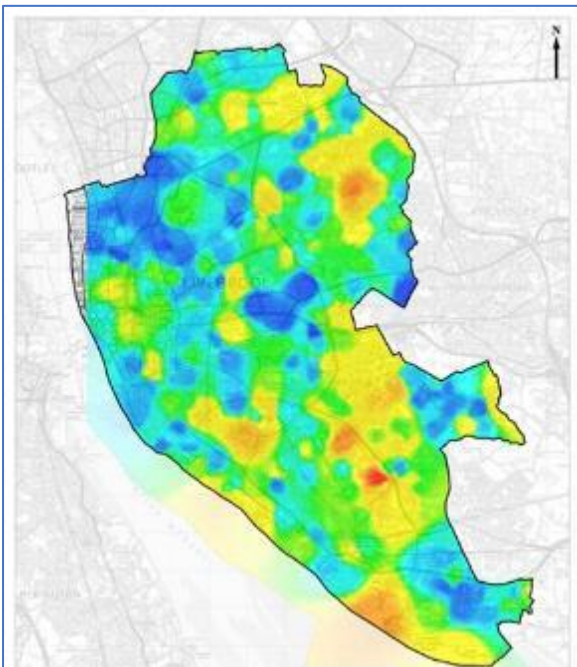
Reports could include:

- Annual biodiversity net gain statistics per developer
  - \* land manager / owner e.g. you have provided receptor sites for X ha of offsets in the past financial year.
  - \* county / region e.g. losses and gains of priority habitats per area that can be aggregated to country-level.
  - \* Lower Super Output Area to demonstrate impact of developments on local residents.
- LERC reports to statutory bodies on whether robust monitoring and evaluation measures and procedures are being adhered to thus minimising the risk of the project failing.
- All known information about a site and its surroundings including green infrastructure, habitats, species, as well as biodiversity net gain features such as habitat condition, suitability, potential and delivered offset information.

# LERC Services for BNG

## Context Setting

LERC data search reports provide everything the LERC knows about the site within the red line boundary, and a buffer of 1 or 2km (or more) to inform net gain project design and preconstruction. This includes, where available, green infrastructure, habitats (including condition and extent) and species (protected, priority, invasive, non-native, etc.), as well as designated sites and in future will include any known biodiversity offsetting opportunities or completions.



© Merseyside BioBank: Biodiversity hotspots in Liverpool. (Red = high biodiversity, Blue=low biodiversity).

*It is possible, at least to start with, that rigorous habitat / green space data aren't available for all counties, so LERCs could collaborate to generate a baseline using remote sensing data and aerial photographs that has biodiversity units already calculated.*

## Generation, Management and Improvement of County-Wide Green Infrastructure, Habitat, and Species

LERCs are well-placed to oversee and deliver all aspects of data generation, management and analysis in relation to biodiversity net gain in their area, from initial site assessments to establish the biodiversity baseline plus related unit calculations, to the ongoing surveys that inform site management and monitor a project's progress towards target.

## Ecological, Network and Opportunities Mapping

A modelled Geographical Information System (GIS) dataset that helps strategically plan net gain in the LERC's area and eliminate potential for bias towards particular land managers / owners.

*Where ecological network mapping hasn't been undertaken it's likely many LERCs will work with local stakeholders to collate and analyse existing data to create new resources such as habitat suitability mapping and biodiversity opportunity areas*



© GIGL: BNG Pilot project – habitat and land use data with UKHAB classification (Dec 22).



# Why Work with ALERC and its Members?

## Experienced Data Experts

Our members employ over 130 staff in England, with each team focusing on delivering biodiversity data services to well-established local networks of partners and clients to inform their activity and decisions at a county or regional level. Local Authority partners are already involving LERCs in discussions to provide services to deliver Local Nature Recovery Strategies as well as embed BNG into local services.

## Accreditation

ALERC's accreditation system, (funded and approved by Natural England), requires members to demonstrate impartiality in their policies and services, which is vital to the success of biodiversity net gain delivery and monitoring. LERC members work to national data standards and collaborate across boundaries to deliver multi-regional and country-wide services to partners.

## Charitable Social Enterprises

Regardless of their legal status all LERCs work on a not-for-profit basis. Any profit generated is reinvested into improving existing services and developing new ones. In addition, LERCs actively engage with local volunteers and members of the public, getting them involved in identifying and recording nature in their area, from providing species identification training to organising Bioblitzes.

## Independent and Responsive

Each LERC is an independent organisation covering a defined geographical area.

Each has developed its operations in response to their local situation, making LERCs different from one and other, whilst retaining a shared mission. Thus, creating a diverse network of organisations and individuals with environmental, ecological, IT and data management expertise. When shared across the network allows them to respond quickly to changing local and national data challenges that impact on their work.



© ERICNE: Pond ecology training for local citizens.

## Find Your Nearest LERC



[Click to link to ALERC website](#)

## Contact ALERC

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