

23rd September 2026

Mr Toby Perkins MP
Chair, Environmental Audit Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



Natural England,
Foss House, Kings Pool
1-2 Peasholme Green,
York,
YO1 7PX

Dear Mr Perkins

Thank you for inviting Tony and I to give evidence to your Committee on 2 September. We were delighted to have the opportunity to reflect on Natural England's achievements, the challenges ahead and to discuss how healthy and resilient ecosystems provide essential services on which our economy, health and security depend. We were particularly pleased to make the case to the Committee for nature to be considered essential national infrastructure, creating resilience across society and to suggest some topics you might wish to consider in more depth. The team at NE, including my successor will be pleased to work with the Committee on future inquiries into these important topics.

I am writing with further information following a question from Barry Gardiner MP on Biodiversity Net Gain and the register boundary display issues. I welcome the opportunity to clarify this issue.

Natural England is responsible for operating and maintaining the Biodiversity Gain Site Register, as set out in the Biodiversity Gain Site Register Regulations 2024, where we are designated as the Register Operator. The Gain Site Register must publish "*information identifying the location and boundaries of the land*" comprising the gain site. This is provided as a map of each gain site in pdf format, known as the boundary document.

Natural England first became aware that the Gain Site Register was not displaying site boundary details to external users in March 2025. Since then, we have worked with our contractors, who maintain the net gain register, to find a solution.

This process has been ongoing whilst the contract for the running of the register digital operating system transferred from Cap Gemini to Accenture. Accenture assures Natural England that they understand the importance of this issue and are actively progressing it as a priority. The newest solution for resolving the problem is scheduled for deployment by the end of October 2026.

During this time the site boundary data remains available to Natural England allowing us to continue to perform the requisite site registration due diligence required of us as the Register Operator. Once fixed, Natural England will begin uploading the backlog of site boundary documents immediately. I can reassure the Committee that none of the boundary data is lost, it is only the public display functionality that is affected.

I apologise for the loss of register user access to the site boundary data and understand the importance of displaying such data for independent verification of offsite net gain delivery.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marian Spain".

Marian Spain
Chief Executive
Natural England
www.naturalengland.org.uk