

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Exemption Statement

Black Moss Farm – Replacement Agricultural Building

Site Location: Forest of Bowland National Landscape, Ribble Valley, Lancashire

LPA: Ribble Valley Borough Council

1. Introduction

This statement supports the planning application for a replacement agricultural building at Black Moss Farm. It sets out the justification for an exemption from the statutory requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), as introduced under the Environment Act 2021 and supported by secondary legislation in force from 12 February 2024.

2. Description of Development

The development comprises the **replacement of a previously existing agricultural building** that had become structurally unsound and unsuitable for livestock welfare due to extensive steel corrosion and the presence of asbestos materials. The new building is situated on the same footprint, with a marginal increase in area, and is located entirely within the existing operational farm complex.

3. Grounds for Exemption

Under the **Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024**, the proposed development is considered exempt from the mandatory BNG requirement for the following reasons:

a) Exemption under Schedule 1 – Replacement Buildings

Paragraph 4 of Schedule 1 provides that development is exempt from the BNG requirement where:

- The development consists of or includes the **replacement of a building** or part of a building;
- The **new building does not result in any increase in the extent of the land covered by buildings** when compared to the existing structure;
- The **development does not involve change of use to a different planning use class**, and;
- The development does **not adversely affect any onsite priority habitat**.

The replacement building:

- Occupies the location of the previously demolished structure (which has been removed due to safety concerns);
- Is within the same use class (agriculture – no change of use);
- Is situated within the hardstanding/core farm area with no loss or degradation of any habitat;
- Does not encroach into undeveloped greenfield land or affect any priority or protected habitat.

b) No Material Habitat Impact

The site comprises an area of **existing hardstanding and operational farm infrastructure**, with no ecological interest or baseline biodiversity units recorded. As such, the development does **not result in any measurable habitat loss**, nor is there any requirement to deliver net gain.

4. Supporting Information

An internal review of site conditions confirms:

- The replacement building is situated on previously developed (brownfield) land;
 - No hedgerows, trees, ponds, or priority habitats are impacted;
 - No protected species constraints have been identified within or adjacent to the site;
 - No habitat creation, loss, or degradation occurs as a result of the development.
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5. Conclusion

The development at Black Moss Farm meets the statutory criteria for exemption from Biodiversity Net Gain under the 2024 regulations. It constitutes a like-for-like replacement building within an existing agricultural unit, with no change of use and no impact on biodiversity.

Accordingly, a Biodiversity Gain Plan is **not required**, and the development should be treated as **BNG-exempt** for the purposes of validation and determination of this planning application.