

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Statement

Site: Alderlands, James Road, Crowland, Lincolnshire PE6 0AA

Application: Retrospective use of existing hardstanding for vehicle storage (max. 50 cars)



1. Context and Legislative Framework

- Under the Environment Act 2021 and subsequent regulations (now in force through 2024–2025), most new development proposals are required to deliver a minimum **10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**.
- However, DEFRA guidance and Natural England standing advice make clear that proposals **limited to previously developed land, confined to existing hard surfacing, and with no vegetation removal or land take** are considered **de minimis** or out-of-scope for formal BNG obligations.

2. Baseline Conditions of the Application Site

- The **application red-line area** includes both:
 - The **historic hard pad** (approx. 8,064 m²) used for vehicle-related activities for several decades.
 - Wider land (fields and rough ground) that is outside the operational yard but within the ownership boundary.
- **Operational proposal area:** Vehicle storage is restricted solely to the existing hard pad. No vegetation, soil, or greenfield area is affected.
- **Condition at purchase:**
 - The historic hard pad was in part covered with worn tarmac and in part with compacted material, with evidence of past storage of buses and caravans.
 - Areas outside the pad had already been stripped, disturbed or partially cleared by the previous owner (to facilitate sale).
 - The current applicant has deliberately **left overgrown areas outside the pad untouched**, ensuring natural regeneration continues.
- **Recent stewardship by applicant:**
 - Resurfacing of the hard pad with permeable gravel, which has **improved surface water infiltration** compared with impermeable tarmac.
 - No new hardstanding, no vegetation removal, and no expansion beyond the pad.





3. Impacts of the Proposed Development

- **Direct impacts:** None. The proposal introduces **no new development, no habitat clearance, no vegetation removal, and no soil disturbance.**
- **Indirect impacts:** None identified. Vehicle storage is passive and low-intensity. No lighting columns, plant, or noisy activity is proposed that would displace local fauna.
- **Flood risk management benefits** (already noted in DAS): Permeable gravel reduces run-off and provides marginal ecological benefit by allowing invertebrate colonisation compared with sealed tarmac.

4. Relevance of BNG Requirement

- DEFRA metric guidance confirms that **BNG applies only where a measurable biodiversity baseline and change can be assessed.**
- As this proposal is **entirely within an existing impermeable/permeable hard surface**, there is **no baseline habitat unit to be lost.**
- Therefore, the proposal is **BNG neutral (no loss, no gain required).**

5. Voluntary Enhancement Opportunities (Optional)

While no statutory BNG requirement applies, the applicant is willing to consider proportionate voluntary measures if requested by the LPA, such as:

- Maintaining ditches and margins clear of waste to support aquatic and marginal flora.
- Installing small bird or bat boxes on retained structures.
- Maintaining the overgrown areas (outside the pad) in their natural state without clearance.

These minor steps demonstrate goodwill without triggering disproportionate obligations.

6. Conclusion

- The proposal is **not relevant for mandatory BNG** because:
 - No habitat clearance, soil disturbance, or expansion occurs.
 - The operational area is confined to a **historic hard pad** long established for vehicle storage.
 - The applicant has improved permeability (gravel replacing tarmac) and left peripheral overgrown areas undisturbed.
- On this basis, the Local Planning Authority is respectfully asked to confirm that **BNG reporting and metric submission are not required** for validation or determination of this application.