



Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Exemption & Environmental Stewardship Statement

To: South Holland District Council

Date: September 2026

Site: Norfolk House Farm

Total Site Area : 5.4 ha
development Area: 0.37 ha

Applicant: JEPCO

Subject: Statutory BNG Exemption Statement

1. Context and Site Characteristics

The proposed development represents a minor and contained increase to the existing operational infrastructure at Norfolk House Farm. The project sits within a total application site area of **5.4 hectares**; however, the physical works are strictly located within the established built complex. The development footprint is remote from existing trees, hedgerows, woodland, watercourses, and other established landscape features. The works will therefore be read entirely in the context of the existing agricultural buildings and are not expected to result in the loss of, or material effect on, the principal landscape and habitat features of the wider holding. This approach directly accords with South Holland Local Plan Policies 3 and 23 by responding to the site's established character and avoiding harm to valued landscape and biodiversity assets.

2. Statutory BNG Exemption Justification

The proposed development is **exempt from the statutory biodiversity gain condition under the De Minimis exemption**. While the total application boundary is 0.37 ha, the expansion is confined to existing low-value agricultural operational infrastructure.

The only soft landscaping affected by the proposal is a negligible area of standard roadside verge planting required to form the internal road connection. The works within this verge will be tightly confined to the minimum area necessary, **impacting significantly less than the statutory 25 square metre de minimis threshold**, and affecting zero linear metres of hedgerows or watercourses. No Priority Habitat is present or affected.

Where the connection to the existing internal road requires this temporary disturbance, the affected area will be protected, reinstated, and augmented with appropriate native planting promptly upon completion to ensure it does not create a lasting break in adjoining vegetation. Accordingly, a statutory biodiversity metric and a formal Biodiversity Gain Plan are **not legally required** for the validation or determination of this application.

3. JEPCO's Wider Environmental Stewardship

This proportionate legislative approach should be considered in the context of JEPCO's wider biodiversity and environmental stewardship across the holding. As outlined on JEPCO's stewardship webpage, the business has dedicated **127 acres** to two extensive environmental schemes intended to maintain and improve the regional ecosystem. These schemes incorporate reed-bed recreation, new woodland, pollen and nectar mixes, and buffer strips alongside watercourses, providing a connected range of wetland, woodland, pollinator, and riparian habitats.

These managed areas provide proven habitat for Red Listed birds including Cuckoo, Curlew, Mistle Thrush, Kingfisher, Yellowhammer, and Spotted Flycatcher, together with breeding raptors. JEPCO also maintains 35 owl boxes within its carefully managed woodland.

The stewardship programme extends deeply into water conservation; JEPCO captures and conserves water through rainfall harvesting, seepage systems, and advanced technologies such as hydroponic growing, thereby reducing the environmental footprint of its operations. The company's environmental work has been widely recognised through the Silver Lapwing Award, the AW Water Management Award, the Lincolnshire Environmental Award, and its status as a Waitrose Demonstration Farm for biodiversity.

Against this established background, the limited scale and contained location of the present development—together with the immediate reinstatement of any locally affected verge planting—will completely avoid material landscape harm. The proposal remains entirely consistent with JEPCO's continuing, award-winning commitment to biodiversity enhancement, water stewardship, and responsible land management.