

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Statement

1. Introduction

This Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Statement has been prepared in support of the planning application for the proposed development at Gore Cross Farm. The statement demonstrates how the proposals provide measurable gains in biodiversity in line with the principles of the UK Biodiversity Metric 3.1 and relevant planning policy.

2. Baseline Habitat Assessment

The development site currently comprises the footprint of pre-existing agricultural buildings (to be demolished) and associated concrete yards. These areas are classified under the UK Habitat Classification as Developed land; sealed surface, with negligible ecological value.

There is one very large DBH tree (T3) within the site, which is retained within the proposed layout. Two medium DBH trees (T1 & T2 on the site plans) were recently felled. These losses have been included within the small sites biodiversity metric.

3. Biodiversity Metric Assessment

A Small Sites Metric 3.1 assessment has been carried out. The loss of the two medium trees equates to a reduction in habitat units. To mitigate this loss and achieve measurable biodiversity gains, 25 small DBH trees are proposed across three designated BNG areas labelled as BNG1, BNG2 and BNG3 on the submitted site plan. The proposed planting results in a 15% net gain in habitat units on-site.

4. Proposed Tree Planting

The proposed trees will comprise a mix of native broadleaf species suitable for the local area, such as:

- *Acer campestre* (Field Maple) – 8 trees
- *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn) – 7 trees
- *Malus sylvestris* (Wild Apple) – 5 trees
- *Sorbus aucuparia* (Rowan) – 5 trees

Planting specifications:

- **Spacing:** Trees will be planted at approximately **2–3 metres apart**, allowing for small DBH growth and canopy development.
- **Size:** Standard or feathered whips (60–80 cm height) with small DBH.
- **Planting technique:** Tree pits will be backfilled with locally sourced topsoil and a slow-release fertiliser suitable for native trees.
- **Protection:** Each tree will be supported with a biodegradable stake and protected with a rigid spiral guard to prevent damage from grazing and mechanical disturbance. Mulch mats will be applied to reduce weed competition.

5. Maintenance and Management

A management plan will be implemented to ensure long-term success of the tree planting:

- **Year 1:** Regular watering, weeding, and inspection of tree guards and stakes. Replacement of failed trees as required.
- **Years 2–5:** Annual monitoring for tree establishment and pest/disease issues. Pruning as necessary to encourage healthy growth.
- **After Year 5:** Trees to be maintained according to standard arboricultural best practice, with monitoring every 3–5 years.

All works will follow BS 8545:2014 (Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape) and UK Forestry Standards where applicable.

6. Conclusion

The proposed development will deliver a measurable **15% Biodiversity Net Gain** through the retention of the existing large tree and the planting of 25 small native trees. Ongoing management will ensure the successful establishment of these trees, resulting in enhanced biodiversity on-site.