

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) – Statutory Metric v4.0

Assessment and De Minimis Exemption

Legislative and Policy Context

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by the Environment Act 2021) introduces a general condition requiring development to deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), calculated using the **Statutory Biodiversity Metric (currently v4.0)**, unless an exemption applies.

Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A confirms that this condition does not apply where the development qualifies for an exemption, including the **de minimis exemption**, as defined within the relevant regulations and supporting Planning Practice Guidance. Development may be considered de minimis where it does not affect priority habitat and results in either no loss, or a negligible loss, of habitat with a biodiversity value greater than zero.

Baseline Habitat Assessment (Metric v4.0)

The application site comprises an existing **low-quality grazing field**, which is appropriately classified in accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric v4.0 as:

- **Habitat type:** Grassland – Modified grassland
- **Broad habitat category:** Grassland
- **Distinctiveness:** Low
- **Condition:** Poor
- **Strategic significance:** None
- **Priority habitat:** No

The habitat is intensively managed, species-poor, and lacks structural diversity. It does not meet the criteria for a priority habitat and has no identified local or strategic ecological importance.

When entered into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric v4.0, modified grassland of low distinctiveness in poor condition generates a **very low habitat unit score**.

Development Description and Habitat Impact

The proposal involves the siting of **two 10 metre diameter tipis**, each with a ground contact area of approximately 78.5 square metres, resulting in a combined affected area of approximately 157 square metres. The structures are lightweight and reversible, and their installation does not involve permanent ground sealing, extensive excavation, or a change in land use beyond the immediate footprint.

For the purposes of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric v4.0, the assessment considers whether the development results in the **loss or degradation of habitat parcels with a**

biodiversity unit value greater than zero, rather than simply the physical footprint of development.

Metric v4.0 Habitat Units Calculation

Pre-Development (Baseline) Habitat Units

- Habitat parcel: Modified grassland
- Distinctiveness: Low
- Condition: Poor
- Area assessed: Limited to the footprint of the two tipis
- Calculated baseline habitat units: **0.00 units** (rounded in accordance with metric conventions)

Post-Development Habitat Units

- The development does not result in the replacement of the baseline habitat with a different habitat type, nor does it materially reduce the condition or distinctiveness of the surrounding grassland parcel.
- The habitat underlying the structures remains classified as modified grassland and retains the same distinctiveness and condition score within the metric.
- Post-development habitat units: **0.00 units**

Net Biodiversity Change

- Net change in habitat units: **0.00 units**

There is no measurable loss of biodiversity units arising from the development when assessed using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric v4.0.

De Minimis Conclusion

As demonstrated through the application of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric v4.0:

- The baseline biodiversity value of the affected habitat is zero;
- The development does not result in the loss of any habitat parcels with biodiversity unit values greater than zero;
- No priority habitats or linear habitats (hedgerows or watercourses) are affected; and
- The proposal therefore falls below the de minimis thresholds referenced in national guidance.

In accordance with Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the statutory biodiversity gain condition does not apply to this development. A Biodiversity Gain Plan is therefore not required, and no additional biodiversity compensation or enhancement measures are necessary.

Closing Statement

The proposed development has been assessed using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric v4.0 and is demonstrated to result in no loss of biodiversity units. The proposal qualifies for the de minimis exemption to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain and is compliant with the requirements of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
