

The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Exemption Statement

For:

The Applicant National Highways is engaged in pre-application advice for a planning application to Rochdale Borough Council to reestablish a temporary construction compound at M62 Junction 19 to support the construction works of the M60/M62/M66 Simister Island Interchange Scheme, which is already consented by a separate Development Consent Order.

The compound will operate for a temporary period of up to five years. At the end of this five year period all temporary buildings, hardstanding and other infrastructure will be removed and the land restored to its former agricultural use.

The J19 Temporary Compound will accommodate:

- Site offices and welfare facilities.
- Car parking for staff and visitors.
- A security hut and access control point.
- Materials storage areas (structures, lighting, traffic management, drainage materials etc). Note that there will be no storage of earthworks materials or aggregates at the J19 Temporary Compound.
- Secure compounds for traffic management equipment.
- Fuel storage and jet wash facilities.
- Material testing laboratory and stores buildings.

Planning Reference:

Full Planning Application for M62 J19 Temporary Compound

At:

Heywood Interchange, Lane End, Heywood, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, England, OL10 2LG, United Kingdom

OSGR- SD 86514 08804

W3W- desire.slang.faces

Completed By:

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The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

Date of Exemption Statement Completion:

17/10/2025

The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

1. Article 7 ('General requirements: applications for planning permission including outline planning permission') of Part 3 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, as amended by Regulation 5 of Part 4 of The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024 has introduced national validation prerequisites for planning applications relating to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).
2. Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021 introduced the concept of BNG into planning legislation, stating that "the biodiversity gain objective is met in relation to development for which planning permission is granted if the biodiversity value attributable to the development exceeds the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat by at least [10%]".
3. Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021 additionally mandates that biodiversity gain objectives will be achieved through the imposition of planning conditions, thus constituting a post-permission process.
4. However, certain types of development for which planning permission is required are exempt from biodiversity net gain requirements and planning conditions. These are outlined in The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024¹
5. The development proposals for this application meets the following exemption criterion from the Regulations (reference wording from the Regulations):

Regulation 4 of The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024, also known as the "de minimis exemption", states the following:

The biodiversity gain planning condition does not apply in relation to planning permission for development which: (Condition 1) does not impact an onsite priority habitat, and (Condition 2) impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has a biodiversity value greater than zero; and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat.

For the reasons set out below, the Applicant considers that the proposed development meets Conditions 1 and 2 of Regulation 4 of The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

6. State how this application meets the exemption criterion stated above
Refer next page

¹ The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2024/47/made/data.pdf>

The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

Application Site

The Application Site was previously used by National Highways as a site compound for the National Highways M62 J20-25 Safety Enhancements Scheme and although the office cabins were moved off site in February 2024, all the other infrastructure remained in situ. The majority of the Application Site therefore consists of urban land with both sealed and unsealed surfaces. Under the UK Habitat Classification, the site consists of a mix of habitats classified under, as detailed in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (2024), as follows:

- Urban - Developed land; sealed surface (“impermeable hardscape”)
- Urban - Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (“permeable hardscape”)
- Urban – Sparsely vegetated land
- Grassland – Modified grassland
- Grassland – Other neutral grassland (secondary classification as seasonally wet and sustainable drainage system)

The Application Site and associated habitats is shown in figure 1 in response to paragraph 7.

Condition 1

The Application Site does not contain any priority habitats listed under the Government’s list of priority habitats and species in England (‘Section 41 habitats and species’) for public bodies, landowners and funders to use for biodiversity conservation, a copy of which can be found at the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england>.

Therefore, condition 1 is met.

Condition 2

The part of the Application Site to be used for the temporary compound already comprises hardstanding surfaces (which is a mix of tarmac, gravel, and concrete). The rest of the Application Site comprises modified grassland which has self-established on the topsoil bunds created during the construction of the Safety Enhancement Scheme, and one drainage basin and ditch also constructed for the Safety Enhancement Scheme. The de minimis criteria is justified on the basis that none of the undeveloped habitats described above would be disturbed by the development. The reestablishment of the temporary compound use only requires above ground activity on previously developed land. Whilst maintenance works may be undertaken to maintain the onsite ditch and drainage basin, there would be no loss of these habitats, and the works are restricted to ensuring these features are in optimal condition to maximise functionality for management of surface water within the Application Site. The area of modified grassland which has self-seeded on top of the bunds, although within the Application Site, would only be used to enable the restoration of the site to agriculture and is not required for operational purposes. All these habitats are therefore discounted from the calculation. Overall, this means no loss of onsite habitats would occur as a result of this planning application.

These reasons confirm that the proposed development would impact less than 25 square metres (as the actual figure is zero) of onsite habitat that has a biodiversity value greater than zero, thereby meeting Condition 2.

Conclusion

The proposed development is exempt from biodiversity net gain requirements and planning conditions as it meets the criteria of condition 1 and condition 2 of Section 4 of The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

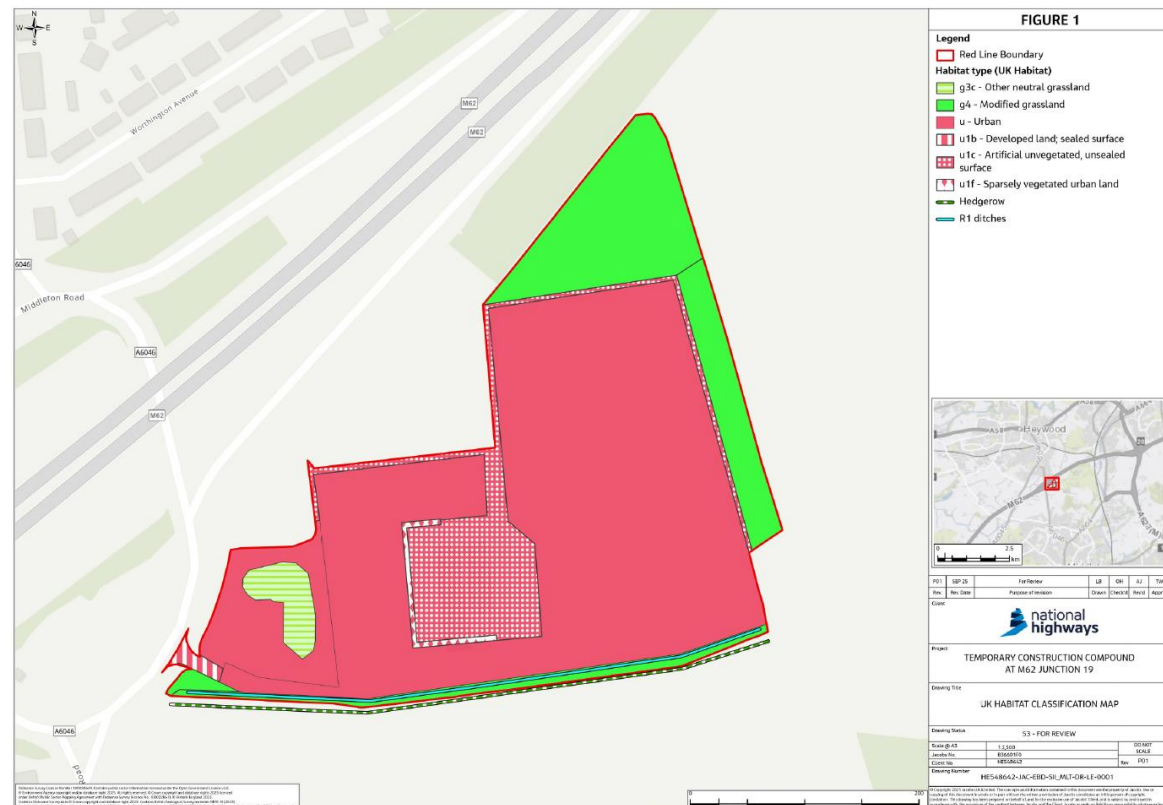
The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

7. Provide aerial imagery / photographs (or alternative sources), plans and captions to evidence your statement. For example, you may wish annotate images to show how the proposed development sits within the existing site/habitats, and how the proposals accord with the exemption claim. Add more photographs, plans or imagery of proposals if necessary.

The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

Figure 1 shows that the majority of the Application Site as urban land with both sealed and unsealed surfaces. There is some modified grassland which has self-seeded on top of the bunds within the northern part of the site and one drainage basin in the west (which was dry in August 2025). As set out in response to paragraph 6, these habitats will not be impacted by establishment or operational phases of works. This supports the exemption criteria listed demonstrating the largely urbanised area of land where the temporary compound would operate.

Figure 1: UK Habitat Classification map of the Application Site



Google aerial imagery of the Application Site does not reflect the current habitat types due to the relatively recent construction which related to the Safety Enhancements Scheme. Photographs and drone footage below show some of the current habitats on the Application Site. Photographs 5 and 6 show the drainage basin and ditch, and support the exemption criteria listed, as they demonstrate the relatively small area of the site that will be subject only to maintenance works during the establishment phase remaining unaffected by the operation phase, as they do not require any habitat removal and therefore is calculated as zero. The modified grassland which has self-seeded on the topsoil bunds, shown on photograph 4, is only relevant to the restoration of the land back to agricultural purposes and is therefore also calculated as zero habitat removal.

The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

Photograph 1: Photo taken from a drone showing full extent of the extent of the compound previously operated from the site (August 2023). With the exceptions of the removal of the office/welfare cabins, presence of cars and traffic management storage in the yard, all other infrastructure remains in place.



Photograph 2: Photo taken from Point A on Photograph 1, from the west side of the car park area looking east. Refer point A on Photograph 1 (July 2025).



The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

Photograph 3: Photo taken from Point B on Photograph 1 the northwest extent of the layout area/perimeter access road looking south-east (July 2025)



Photograph 4: Photo taken from Point C on Photograph 1 the topsoil bund on the eastern boundary looking south (Drone footage, August 2023)



The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

Photograph 5: The drainage basin/attenuation pond as of August 2025 with some perennial vegetation.



Photograph 6: The onsite ditch (pictured in August 2025) that was created under previous development for drainage. Maintenance works will not involve any habitat loss and will restore greater functionality to the feature.



The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

8. Whilst the development may be exempt from statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements, the application for planning permission will deliver measurable net gains for nature conservation which are proportional and locally appropriate, in the following ways:

As set out in Section 6 of this form, there would be no loss of habitat for this development.

The Applicant has considered opportunities for other net gains for nature conservation within the application site boundary during the temporary 5 year to be applied for. There are no trees within the red line boundary so bat and bird boxes could not be provided.

The land is intended to be restored back to its original agricultural use on the cessation of the temporary operations. This restoration would remove the urbanising impact of the land providing habitat benefit.

Because the land needs to be restored back to its original use, provision of other enhancements, such as hibernacula, would not be feasible as they would only be able to be secured on a temporary basis as they would need to be disturbed at the cessation of the temporary operations.

The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

THIS RESPONSE HAS FOLLOWED THE MODEL TEMPLATE AS DESCRIBED BELOW

Example response:

Section 5: The exemption criterion claimed:

Section 4 of The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024, also known as the “de minimis exemption”, states the following: The biodiversity gain planning condition does not apply in relation to planning permission for development which: (Condition 1) does not impact an onsite priority habitat, and (Condition 2) impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has a biodiversity value greater than zero; and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat.

The proposed development meets Conditions 1 and 2 of Section 4 of The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

Section 6: Statement

The site does not contain any priority habitats listed under the Government’s List of priority habitats and species in England (‘Section 41 habitats and species’) for public bodies, landowners and funders to use for biodiversity conservation, a copy of which can be found at the following website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england>

The proposed dwelling house will be constructed on land currently occupied by outbuildings and hardstanding surfaces, consisting of a mix of resin, stones, and concrete.

Consequently, the area to be developed can be described as consisting of a mix of habitats classified under the UK Habitat Classification, as detailed in Appendix 2 of The Small Sites Metric (Statutory Biodiversity Metric) User Guide (2024), as follows:

- Urban - Un-vegetated garden
- Urban - Developed land; sealed surface (“Impermeable Hardscape”)
- Urban - Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (“Permeable Hardscape”)

None of the habitat classifications within the red line boundary have a biodiversity value exceeding zero, as can be verified in the Government’s Small Sites Metric (Statutory Biodiversity Metric) User Guide and Calculation Tools (2024). Consequently, the proposed development would impact less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has a biodiversity value greater than zero, thereby meeting Condition 2 of Section 4 of The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

As a result, the proposed development is exempt from biodiversity net gain requirements and planning conditions under the de minimis rule of Section 4 of The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

Section 7: Evidence

Provide aerial images / photos and plans of the site, marked up to show existing and proposed development areas, and how that accords with the exemption criteria claimed above, together with photographs of the current site conditions, to provide the context.

Section 8: Measurable Net Gains for Nature Conservation

- A biodiverse green roof with features for invertebrates including log piles and a varied substrate
- Soft landscape schedule comprised of native plant species
- Provision of 2 bird boxes and 1 bat box
- Creation of a wildlife pond
- Hedgehog highways in gravel boards of boundary fence