

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN REPORT

Land Adjacent to Dawes Cottage
Demolition of Existing Barn and Erection of Replacement Dwelling

1. Introduction

This Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report accompanies a full planning application for demolition of an existing barn and erection of a replacement dwelling at land adjacent to Dawes Cottage.

The report has been prepared in accordance with:

- The Environment Act 2021;
- The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (England) Regulations 2024;
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 180;
- Gravesham Borough Council Core Strategy Policy CS12 (Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity).

The proposed development constitutes a **self-build dwelling** within the meaning of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The site is below 0.5 hectares and the dwelling will be occupied by the applicant.

As such, the development qualifies for the **statutory self-build exemption** from the mandatory biodiversity net gain requirement under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (England) Regulations 2024.

Notwithstanding this exemption, the applicant is committed to delivering proportionate on-site biodiversity enhancements consistent with national and local policy objectives.

2. Site Baseline Conditions

The application site comprises:

- An existing agricultural-style barn structure;
- Associated hardstanding and compacted ground;
- Managed amenity grassland within the established residential curtilage;
- Boundary vegetation including hedgerow and trees (all to be retained).

The site is not located within:

- A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- A Special Area of Conservation (SAC);
- A Special Protection Area (SPA);

- A Ramsar site;
- A Local Wildlife Site.

No irreplaceable habitat is present within the site.

Baseline habitat is predominantly of low ecological distinctiveness, consisting primarily of built footprint and managed grassland with limited structural diversity.

3. Development Impact

The proposal replaces an existing structure within an established developed parcel.

The development does not involve:

- Removal of mature trees;
- Removal of hedgerows;
- Loss of watercourses;
- Loss of high-value or priority habitats.

Impacts are limited to areas of low ecological value. Boundary vegetation and ecological corridors will be retained and protected during construction.

Given the modest scale and contained footprint, ecological impact is limited.

4. Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Position

As a qualifying self-build development, the proposal is exempt from the statutory requirement to demonstrate a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain.

A formal biodiversity metric submission is therefore not required at application stage.

Nevertheless, the scheme incorporates on-site habitat enhancement measures which will result in a measurable improvement in ecological value relative to the current baseline.

5. Biodiversity Enhancements

To deliver ecological improvement, the proposal incorporates:

5.1 Native Planting

- Native hedgerow planting to reinforce ecological connectivity;
- Supplementary native shrub planting;

- Native tree planting where space allows.

Species selection will reflect local character and support pollinators, birds and small mammals.

5.2 Wildflower Grassland

Portions of amenity grass will be replaced with species-rich wildflower planting to:

- Increase habitat diversity;
- Enhance nectar and pollen availability;
- Improve invertebrate value.

5.3 Integrated Ecological Features

- Integrated bird nesting boxes (e.g. swift bricks / sparrow terraces);
- Integrated bat roost features;
- Insect habitat features (e.g. bee bricks).

These will be installed in accordance with ecological best practice.

5.4 Sensitive Lighting Strategy

External lighting will:

- Be minimised;
- Be directed downward;
- Avoid light spill onto boundary vegetation;
- Utilise warm-spectrum fittings.

This protects bat foraging corridors and nocturnal species.

6. Long-Term Management

All biodiversity enhancements will be retained and managed as part of the residential curtilage and ongoing site maintenance.

Management will include:

- Reduced mowing regime for wildflower areas;
 - Replacement planting if required;
 - Maintenance of ecological features;
 - Avoidance of pesticide use wherever practicable.
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7. Policy Compliance

The proposal accords with:

- The statutory framework under the Environment Act 2021, noting the applicable self-build exemption;
- NPPF paragraph 180, requiring development to conserve and enhance biodiversity;
- Gravesham Core Strategy Policy CS12.

The scheme avoids ecological harm and delivers proportionate environmental enhancement.

8. Conclusion

The development replaces a low-value structure within a developed parcel and does not result in the loss of significant habitat.

Through native planting, habitat diversification and integrated ecological features, the proposal delivers measurable on-site biodiversity enhancement.

The development is therefore acceptable in biodiversity and ecological policy terms.