



Hurstpierpoint College

Phase 2 Development

Biodiversity Net Gain Statement

Project: Phase 2 Development, Hurstpierpoint College

Local Planning Authority: Mid Sussex District Council

Applicant: Building Solutions Consultants Ltd

Relevant Baseline Date: 30 May 2025

BNG Metric Used: Statutory Small Sites Metric (SSM)

1. Introduction

This statement sets out the biodiversity position for the proposed Phase 2 school development at Hurstpierpoint College. The project involves the construction of a new purpose-built education building with an approximate footprint of 600 m², together with additional hardstanding required for access, circulation, and service provision. The development site is already within the operational grounds of the College and contains no priority habitats. This statement summarises the baseline habitat condition, the predicted biodiversity change using the Small Sites Metric, and the strategy for achieving the required 10 percent Biodiversity Net Gain.

2. Baseline Habitat Conditions

The agreed baseline date is **30 May 2025**, reflecting the condition of the site following demolition of a former school building and associated hardstanding. The site comprised a mixture of developed surfaces and small areas of low-distinctiveness vegetated garden. No trees, hedgerows, watercourses, priority habitats, or semi-natural habitats were present within the red line area.

The baseline biodiversity value calculated using the Small Sites Metric is:

- **0.0524 area habitat units**
- **0 hedgerow units**
- **0 watercourse units**

3. Post-Development Habitat Conditions

The proposed development introduces a new building footprint, extended hardstanding, and rationalised circulation routes. Owing to the highly constrained nature of the site and the educational operational requirements, there is no practical opportunity to incorporate meaningful on-site habitat creation.

The post-development biodiversity value is:

- **0.0118 area habitat units**
- **0 hedgerow units**
- **0 watercourse units**

This results in a net change of:

- **-0.0406 area habitat units (-77.43 percent)**
- **0 hedgerow units**
- **0 watercourse units**

4. Mitigation Hierarchy and Avoidance Measures

The design has followed the mitigation hierarchy by:

- Avoiding impacts to any high-value habitats, noting that none were present.
 - Limiting the development footprint to the minimum required to meet functional needs.
 - Ensuring no loss of trees, hedgerows, watercourses or priority habitats.
 - Restricting works to previously developed land, preventing encroachment into adjoining woodland or semi-natural areas.
- Given the site's condition, further avoidance or on-site creation would not produce a meaningful biodiversity uplift.

5. Achieving Biodiversity Net Gain

As there is no realistic scope to achieve a 10 percent gain on site, the College will secure the required uplift via **off-site biodiversity units** purchased from a **Natural England-registered habitat bank**. Once planning permission is granted, the College will obtain an **Availability Certificate**, followed by a legally binding commitment via either a Section 106 Agreement or Conservation Covenant.

The current Small Sites Metric calculation identifies a requirement for:

- **0.0577 off-site biodiversity units**
These units will deliver a verifiable equivalent net gain in accordance with statutory trading rules.

6. Long-Term Management

Off-site habitat delivery will be secured with a **minimum 30-year management and monitoring commitment**, as required by the Environment Act 2021. The provider will be responsible for implementing the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) associated with the off-site units.

7. Conclusion

The development takes place entirely on previously developed and low-value land and avoids all priority habitats. A measurable biodiversity loss is predicted using the Small Sites Metric due to the required building footprint and associated hardstanding. In line with national policy, the College proposes to meet the statutory 10 percent biodiversity net gain requirement through the purchase of accredited off-site biodiversity units.

This approach is compliant with the Environment Act 2021, the Biodiversity Gain Regulations 2024, and Mid Sussex District Council's emerging BNG guidance. The strategy is transparent, deliverable, and appropriate given the operational constraints of the site.
