



INDEPENDENT RURAL CONSULTANTS

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**Biodiversity net gain (BNG) exemption report to
support full planning application for roofing over feed
yard at Higher Green Meadow, Buxworth.**

Version 1 Prepared June 2026

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1.0 Introduction

This BNG exemption report has been commissioned by Mr M Winterbotham in relation to a full planning application for the roofing over of a small cattle feed and loafing area.

The development site is located at Higher Green Meadow – an established agricultural holding of around 21ha permanent grassland. The farmland is managed for mixed livestock production (beef / sheep) through grazing and annual forage harvest (see Planning Statement for further details). The existing farm infrastructure consists of a range of agricultural buildings and concreted yards / uncovered areas. The proposed extension under this planning application will provide a roofed-over, covered area across the existing feed yard. This will reduce the spoilage of feed and reduce run-off from the uncovered yard thus reducing feed losses, improve feed quality and address potential water contamination pathways. Furthermore, the project is also predicted to reduce slurry production by capturing and diverting/storing clean rainwater and reducing the volume of rainwater mixing with slurry, reducing the risk of uncontrolled polluted surface runoff reaching clean drains and groundwater. This project has been supported by CSF (catchment sensitive farming advisors for the River Goyt) and funded under RPA capital grant.

2.0 Proposed Building and Location

The proposed development is for the roofing over of an existing concrete feed and loafing yard currently used by beef cattle. This will be achieved by the extending of the existing agricultural building by a single structural bay, creating additional covered pens and undercover feed areas protected from adverse weather and protection from rainfall to ensure feed efficiency and waste reduction. The eastern elevation of the extension will remain open to allow for unrestricted access for cattle and machinery to the feed yard and to allow natural ventilation.

The proposed roofing to be as follows:

Length: = 9.144m

Width: = 9.144m

Height to Eaves: = 3.3m

Height to Ridge: = 4.55m

The total floor area of the building is **84m²**.

The extension will appear as an extension of the existing building. A small section of the southern elevation, along with the northern elevation will be visible and will be clad using pre-cast concrete panels and traditional Yorkshire boarding. See figures 1 and 2 along with photograph 1 for the proposed location of the roofing.

The wider landscape consists of agriculture (pastoral fields and scattered farms) dissected by drystone walls, ditches hedgerows and roads along with areas of woodland. Given the scale and location of the proposals there will be negligible impact visually on the surrounding landscape as the development is contained entirely within the existing concreted yard.

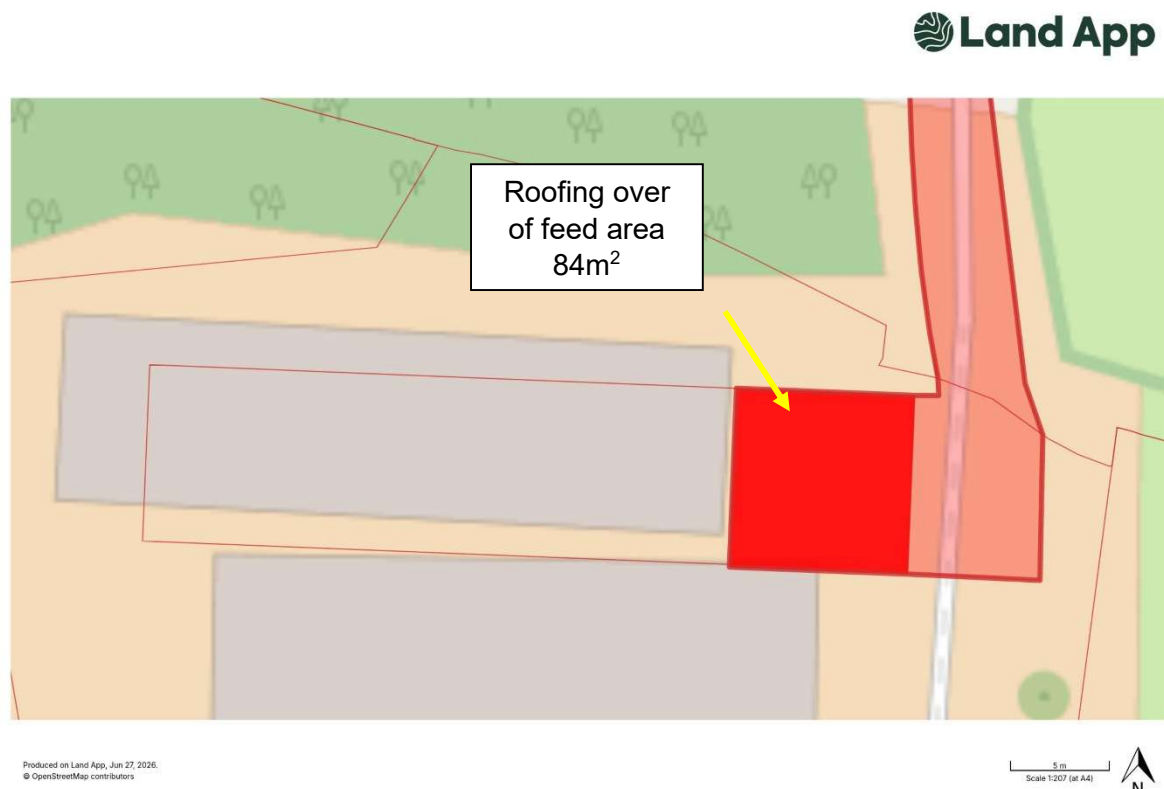
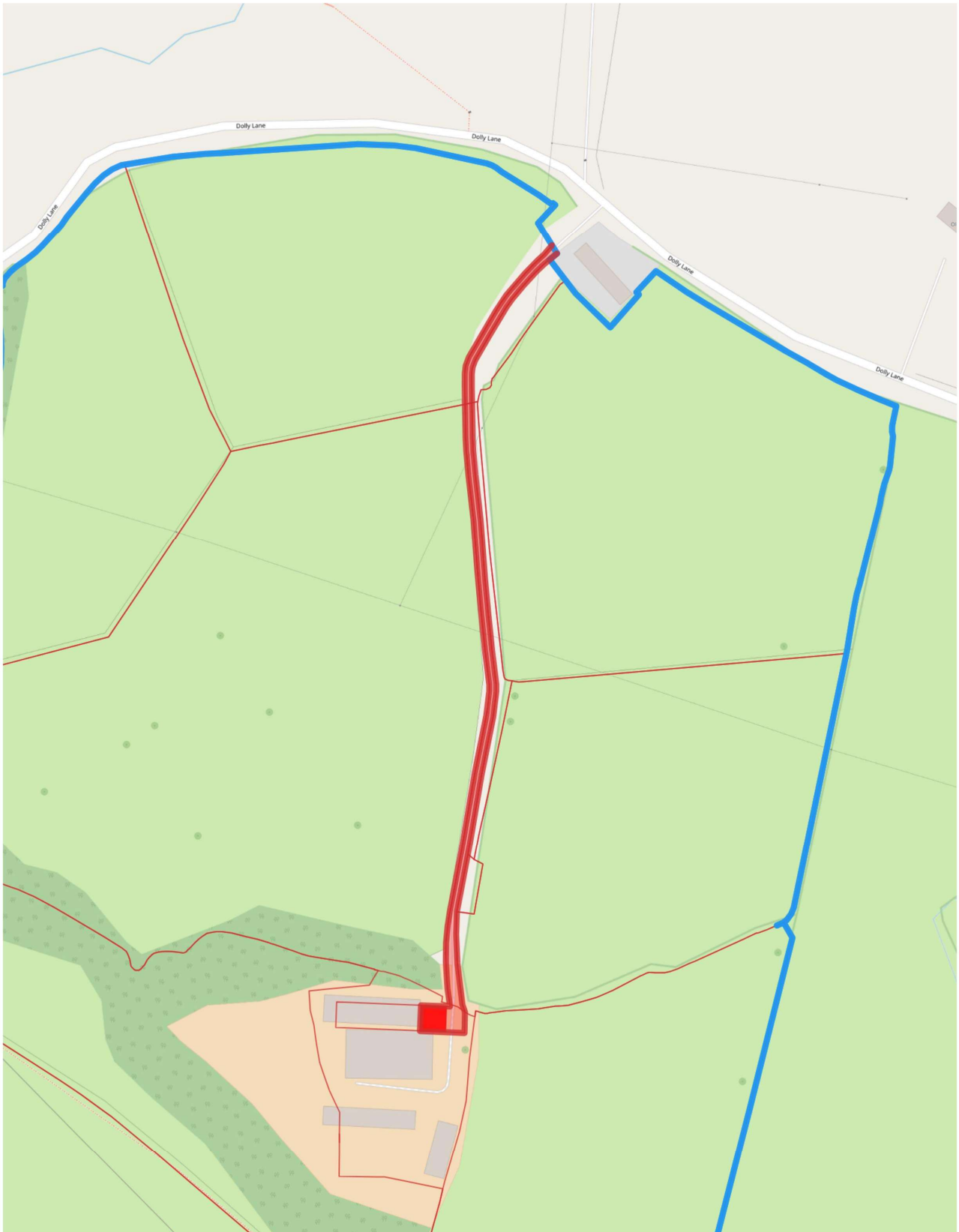


Figure 1 – proposed development at Higher Green Meadow.



Produced on Land App, Jun 28, 2026.
© OpenStreetMap contributors

50 m
Scale 1:1652 (at A4)



iFigure 2. Red edge development site including access route.



Photograph 1: Location of feed yard for the proposed roofing over.

3.0 Site visit

A walkover of the site (and area immediately surrounding) was performed by Alex Lewis (who has over 12 years' experience in ecological survey) to check for protected species and to determine if there was a baseline biodiversity value. There were no limitations to the site visit.

There was no vegetation or other habitat to provide foraging / shelter opportunities for protected species on the site, with the proposed site offering little ecological value. There were no protected species on site and there was no evidence of protected species using the site. Using the interactive map tool on MAGIC MAP- the nearest SSSI was identified over 2km away (Toddbrook Reservoir over 2km to the southwest of the proposed roofing over). Consultation of the Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Scientific Interest indicated that at the proposed development site there is unlikely to

be a harmful effect on any local SSSIs, SACs, SPAs, or Ramsar sites and therefore Natural England consultation is not necessary.

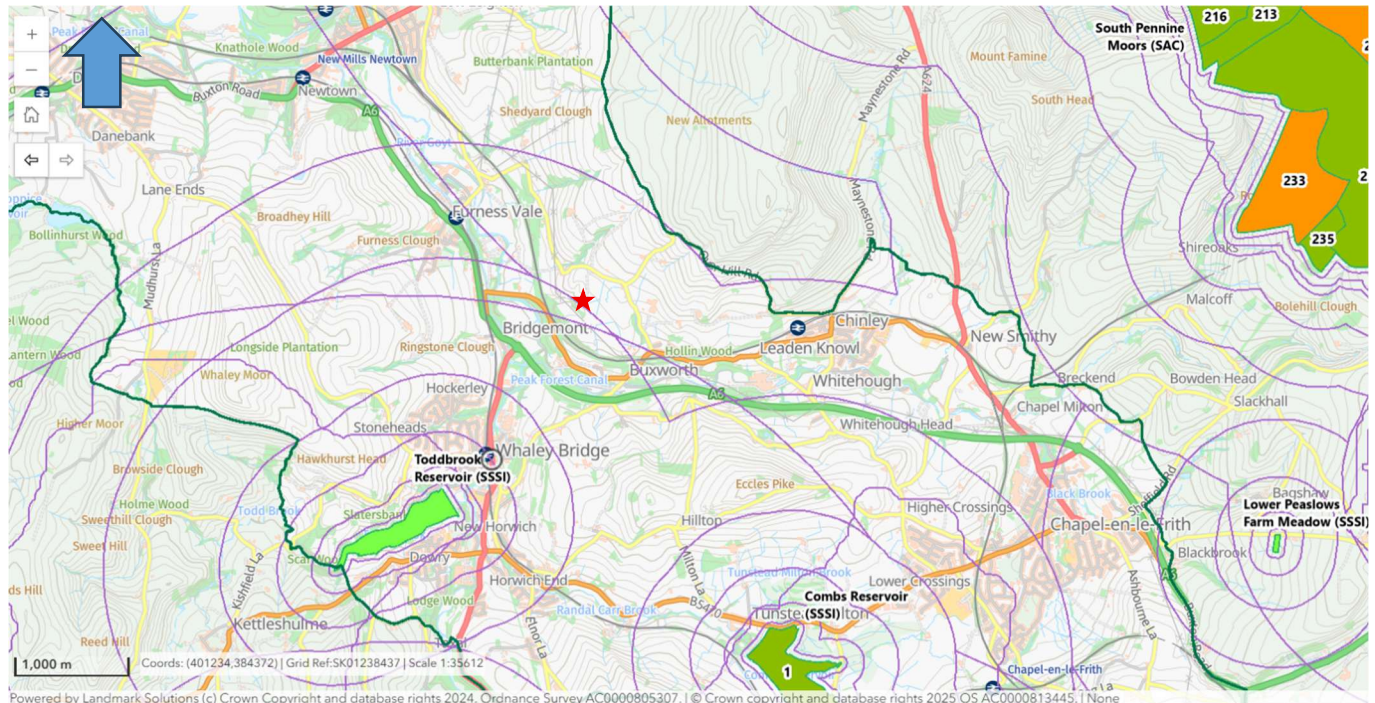


Figure 3. Proximity of proposed development (red star) to statutory protected sites.

4.0 BNG Exemption

As per [Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 \(as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021\)](#) developers must deliver a 10% gain on the baseline biodiversity of a site. The first step in being able to deliver this gain is to identify the baseline biodiversity value and to complete the BNG metric (see separate document - SSM biodiversity metric – Higher Green Meadow).

The SSM results are geared to generate a change in biodiversity value for the area habitats lost versus those created by the development. Results are set out to display a change in the area / length of the habitat, change in the units for each habitat type and a percentage change in units for each habitat module.

For the proposed development of a small, roofed area at Higher Green Meadow there is no percentage change in the biodiversity value. This is because there are no pre-existing baseline habitats of value on the site before the development- presented as a baseline biodiversity value of zero in the metric. The proposed roofing project entails installing a roof canopy to cover an existing operational concrete yard (pre-existing developed, sealed surface). The development is strictly limited to the erection of structural supports and roof covering.

A percentage change cannot be calculated from zero and therefore the development is **exempt from BNG measures**.

This proposal therefore qualifies for the *de minimis* BNG exemption under **Regulation 4 of The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024**. Under these statutory regulations, the mandatory 10% BNG condition under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 does not apply if the development:

1. Does not impact any on-site priority habitat.
2. Impacts less than 25 square metres of on-site habitat that has a biodiversity value greater than zero.
3. Impacts less than 5 metres in length of on-site linear habitat.

5.0 Summary

In summary:

- **No Habitat Loss:** The proposed footprint is located entirely on existing sealed, impermeable hardstanding (concrete). This baseline surface therefore holds a biodiversity value of zero.
- **No Vegetation or Soil Disturbance:** There are no soft landscaping works, soil stripping, vegetation removal, or excavation required for this project.
- **Area of Impact:** The development will not cause the degradation or loss of any vegetated on-site habitats, priority habitats, or linear features like hedgerows.

Consequently, the total impact on habitats is 0 m², placing it well beneath the mandatory 25 m² de minimis threshold.

- **RPA support** This small-scale project is being done with the support of catchment sensitive farming and the RPA. As discussed above and in the justification report – the proposal represents a positive environmental improvement that will enhance nutrient management, improve water quality protection, and support the long-term environmental sustainability of the farm business.
- The development will still be subject to **ecological enhancement** proposals – see Ecological Enhancement Report – which proposes to incorporate nesting opportunities into the new roofing structure.