

Date: 14 January 2026  
Our ref: 534764  
Your ref: EN10141



info@eastparkenergy.co.uk

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

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Dear Sir/ Madam,

**NSIP Reference Name / Code: EN010141**

## **Natural England's comments in respect of East Park Energy.**

**Examining Authority's submission deadline: 14<sup>th</sup> January 2026.**

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

For any further advice on this consultation please contact the case officer [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]@naturalengland.org.uk) and copy to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

NSIP Senior Officer  
West Anglia Area Team

## Natural England's Relevant Representations

PART I: Natural England's Advice on matters relevant to the Natural Environment.  
PART II: Natural England's detailed comments on the Development Consent Order.

### Part I: Summary and conclusions of Natural England's advice

#### Summary of Natural England's advice

Overall, Natural England are satisfied that the proposals have mostly addressed the environmental issues within our statutory remit. We advise the one area which requires further information, to enable the examining authority to make an informed decision, relates to Protected Species Licensing.

Additionally, we request further time to examine the draft soil management plan and data analysis impacts through out the site.

Natural England's advice in these relevant representations is based on information submitted by East Park Energy in support of its application for a Development Consent Order ('DCO') in relation to the development of a solar project (*'the project'*).

Part I of these representations summarises what Natural England considers the main issues<sup>1</sup> to be in relation to the DCO application, and indicate the principal submissions that it wishes to make at this point. Natural England will develop these points further as appropriate during the examination process. Natural England may have further or additional points to make, particularly if further information about the project becomes available.

Our comments are set out against the following sub-headings which represent our key areas of remit:

- Internationally designated sites
- Nationally designated sites
- Protected species
- Biodiversity net gain
- Nationally designated landscapes
- Soils and best and most versatile agricultural land
- Ancient woodland and ancient/veteran trees
- Connecting people with nature (National Trails, open access land and England Coast Path)
- Other valuable and sensitive habitats and species, landscapes and access routes

Our comments are flagged as red, amber or green:

- **RED** are those where there are fundamental concerns which it may not be possible to overcome in their current form.
- **AMBER** are those where further information is required to determine the effects of the project and allow the Examining Authority to properly undertake its task and or advise that further information is required on mitigation/compensation proposals in order to provide a sufficient degree of confidence as to their efficacy.
- **GREEN** are those which have been successfully resolved (subject always to the appropriate requirements being adequately secured).

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<sup>1</sup> PINS NSIP Advice Note 11 Annex C sets out Natural England's role in infrastructure planning.

Please note that in an effort to avoid unnecessary duplication of documentation, we have avoided commenting on each and every resolved environmental issue. If we have not commented on an issue identified within the ES as of negligible impact, it can be assumed we agree with the conclusion.

Natural England has been engaged by the applicant via our Discretionary Advice Service (DAS) for this project, with input only relating to SSSI's and soil survey methods. We have also provided comment at the statutory EIA Scoping and Section 42 consultation stages of the project. We welcome further engagement with the applicant if necessary.

Natural England have not been engaged with the applicant with regard to the production of a statement of common ground (SoCG).

Natural England have not received submission of any draft protected species licenses and as such have not been engaged regarding the production of a Letter of No Impediment for protected species licencing.

Topics marked red or amber should be considered significant issues which remain outstanding, and which Natural England advises should be addressed by East Park Energy and the Examining Authority as part of the examination process in order to ensure that the project can properly be consented. These are primarily issues on which further information would be required in order to allow the Examining Authority properly to undertake its task or where further work is required to determine the effects of the project.

Natural England will seek to continue discussions with East Park Energy to seek to resolve these concerns and agree outstanding matters in a Statement of Common Ground. Failing satisfactory agreement, Natural England advises that the matters set out may require consideration by the Examining Authority as part of the examination process.

The Examining Authority may wish to ensure that the matters set out in these relevant representations are addressed as part of the Examining Authority's first set of questions to ensure the provision of information early in the examination process.

## **2. The natural features potentially affected by this application**

### **Internationally designated sites - GREEN**

Natural England advise that we agree with the conclusion of Environmental Statement: APP-035. 5.7 Information to Inform a Habitat Regulations Assessment P01.

Natural England is satisfied that 'green' issues are unlikely to result in adverse effects on the integrity of internationally designated sites, subject to delivery of the project in line with the presented design and evidence.

Natural England would encourage the project to use a more precautionary buffer zone of at least 10m. Currently, it is set at 6m, as shown in chapter 7, 7.8.98. These buffer zones should ensure they are along prominent bat flight paths.

Natural England welcome discussion with the applicant surrounding potential bat mitigation.

### **Nationally designated sites – GREEN**

Environmental Statement Chapter 7 contains an assessment of impacts to ecology and biodiversity, including on Nationally designated sites. There are many nationally designated sites within close (<5km) proximity of the development proposal.

While Natural England agree with the conclusion of the assessment of impacts to SSSIs, we encourage the applicant to give the same weight of importance and thus management and mitigation to non-statutory designated sites, as they would statutory designated sites.

## **Protected species - AMBER**

It is understood that the applicant will be seeking our advice relating to potential Great Crested Newts.

Natural England has not received submission of for draft protected species licence applications review.

Natural England has produced [Protected species and development: advice for local planning authorities \(gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/614442/Protected-species-and-development-advice-for-local-planning-authorities.pdf) (standing advice) to help decision makers understand the impact of particular developments on protected species.

## **Other valuable and sensitive habitats and species, landscapes and access routes**

You should consider the impacts of the proposed development on any local wildlife or geodiversity site, in line with paragraphs 5.4.34 and 5.4.36 of the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-1).

Natural England does not hold locally specific information on local sites and recommends further information is obtained from appropriate bodies such as the local environmental records centre, wildlife trust, geoconservation groups or recording societies.

Those habitats and species which are of particular importance for nature conservation are included as 'priority habitats and species' in the England Biodiversity List published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

## **Biodiversity net gain**

We welcome the commitment to delivering BNG on this project and recognise that the BNG gain for both habitats and hedgerows are ambitious. While we recognise the shortfall in BNG for watercourse may be due to metric and or assessment, Natural England have no advice to make on this matter.

We recommend that the target increase in BNG of 10% across all biodiversity unit types is secured by a suitably worded requirement in the DCO.

## **Nationally designated landscapes – GREEN**

The proposed development is not located within, or within the setting of any nationally designated landscapes. As a result, Natural England has no specific comments to make on the landscape implications of the development. The examining authority should have regard for the landscape character of the area; we welcome reference to Natural England's National Character Areas and other Local Landscape Character Assessments within ES Chapter 5. We would also like to stress the importance of cumulative landscape impacts from the development.

## **Soils and best and most versatile agricultural land - AMBER**

It is welcomed that a more detailed ALC survey has been undertaken across the main Site. Chapter 13 (Land and Soils) states that soil profiles were taken at a density of one per 2 hectares across more of the site.

Where land is provisionally mapped as ALC Grade 4 or 5 and supported by evidence of a homogeneous soil type across the site (for example, a uniform clay soil), survey density may be reduced to one observation per 2 hectares in line with best practice. However, where land is provisionally mapped as ALC Grade 3, survey intensity should be sufficient to enable robust differentiation between Subgrade 3a (Best and Most Versatile land) and Subgrade 3b, typically requiring a minimum density of one observation per hectare or greater where variability is identified.

In all cases, survey intensity should be increased as necessary to accurately define BMV boundaries and to characterise the full range of soil types and limitations present. Where a detailed ALC survey is not proposed across the full site, it is expected that the consultant provides clear and well-evidenced justification demonstrating that the proposed survey coverage is adequate to support reliable land quality classification and subgrade determination in accordance with the Defra [Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites](#)

## **Ancient woodland and ancient/veteran trees - GREEN**

Natural England advise that impacts on ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees should be considered in line with paragraph 180 of the NPPF. Natural England and the Forestry Commission have also produced [standing advice](#) for planning authorities in relation to ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees.

## **Connecting people with nature (National Trails, open access land and England Coast Path)**

There are no National Trails, Open Access Land or Coast paths within the order limits; as such, no impacts to these features are likely.

We recognise the oLEMP's commitment to provide and maintain new permissive walking routes as well as the consideration of impacts to open space, leisure and play in section 3.4 [EN010141/DR/7.7]. We look forward to further working with the applicant to input into access provision, connecting people with nature, and designing access provision to minimise impacts to biodiversity.

## Natural England's Relevant Representations

### PART II: Natural England's detailed comments on the Development Consent Order (DCO) and associated documents

Page	DCO/DML or omission ref	Natural England's comments	Risk (Red/Amber/Green)
41	7 (1)	Natural England request to be consulted on the soil management plan prior to authorised development.	Amber

