

Date: 23 September 2025
Our ref: 527113
Your ref: EN010149



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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Jonathan Manning

**NSIP Reference: EN010149 – Springwell Solar Farm
Consultation: Examining Authorities Second Written Questions**

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.

Please find Natural England's responses to the Examining Authorities second written questions at **Annex A** below.

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

Yours sincerely

Sustainable Development Team
East Midlands Area Delivery
Natural England

Annex A

Question Reference	Question	Natural England response
Q2.4.5	<p>Bat Licence Application</p> <p>The Applicant stated in response to ExQ1.4.9 [REP1-071] that it is considered low risk that a bat roost will be directly affected, especially any significant bat roosts (such as a large maternity roost) and it is therefore not proposing to draft a ghost bat licence application. Are Natural England (NE) satisfied with the Applicant's approach?</p>	<p>Natural England concur with the applicant's statement that at this stage, based on surveys undertaken to date, it is considered low risk that a bat roost will be directly affected. As such, production of a ghost bat licence application is unlikely to be necessary.</p> <p>As set out in the SoCG between the Applicant and Natural England (REP 3-064), <i>'NE has not reviewed protected species survey approaches and results in detail but welcomes the Applicant's design approach to avoidance of impacts, which is in line with the established 'mitigation hierarchy'. No licence requirements have been identified to date; however, any future need for any European Protected Species (EPS) licences from NE will need to be applied for in the usual manner'</i>.</p> <p>However, in the interest of providing a robust response to this question, Natural England's Wildlife Licencing Service (NEWLS) have reviewed the approach to Bat survey & licencing set out in the ES. It is Natural England's advice that, whilst currently it is considered low risk that a bat roost will be directly affected, where impacts cannot be avoided as planned in the post-consent/construction phase, there is currently insufficient information to support an EPS Bat mitigation licence.</p> <p>NE would therefore advise the applicant that if trees are identified that require removal that they have an appropriate level of survey conducted on them. NE would expect to see up to three tree climbing surveys where safe to do so- spread between May – September (with two being within May-August). This is for all suitable trees to be directly and indirectly impacted by the proposed works. This is the</p>

		minimum level of survey data that would be required to inform any future licence application.
Q2.9.2	<p>Soil Handling</p> <p>The draft SoCG [REP3-063] with NE shows that there is still some disagreement over soil handling. The Applicant has amended the Outline Soil Management Plan (oSMP) [REP3-042] and added NE as a consultee in R18 of the dDCO [REP3-004]. Confirm whether this has addressed your concerns.</p>	<p>NE have reviewed the updated draft DCO submitted at D3 and welcome our inclusion as a consultee on the SMP (Requirement 18).</p> <p>NE have also reviewed the updated oSMP submitted at D3, and are satisfied with the omission of reference to windrows, and updated wording included at paragraph 2.2.22.</p> <p>This has been reflected in the SoCG to be submitted at D4 (this deadline) by the applicant.</p>