

Date: 28 May 2025
Our ref: 462330
Your ref: TR030008



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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Inspector,

NSIP Reference Name / Code: EN010152

Natural England's initial response to the Examining Authority's (ExA's) first written questions and requests for information (ExQ1).

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 Nicholas White at [REDACTED]@naturalengland.org.uk and copy to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]
Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Area Team
Natural England

1. Natural England's response to the Examining Authority's (ExA's) first written questions and requests for information (ExQ1)

Table A: Natural England's response to Examiner's initial questions (9 May 2025)			
ExA question ref	Question addressed to	Question	Answer
Q1.6.1	Natural England	<p>Burnet Heritage Trust candidate SSSI</p> <p>Please comment on where in the designation process the candidate SSSI is (as referred to in the Burnet Heritage Trust relevant representation [RR-011]). Please confirm what status a candidate SSSI holds and how much weight should be attributed to this designation.</p>	<p>Natural England has a published list of sites being considered for SSSI designation (Natural England designations programme for areas, sites and trails - GOV.UK) and are not taking any additional sites further at this time.</p> <p>Natural England has informed the Burnet Heritage Trust that we are not taking forward any investigation into the designation of this land as a SSSI at this point. We have neither investigated nor confirmed whether any of the habitats or species would meet the qualifying criteria. Therefore, the site does not have any SSSI designation status at this time.</p> <p>However, the ecological value of the area and potential impacts to habitats and species present should be adequately addressed within the application; we would defer to City of Doncaster's advice on this matter as it falls outside Natural England's statutory remit for NSIPs.</p>
Q1.6.6	Natural England, City of Doncaster, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust	<p>Protected Species. Please comment on:</p> <p>a) the reptile survey methodology (ES Appendix 8-2: Reptiles Report [APP-146]). In particular, that only 2.32 hectares of the suitable habitat were surveyed, that no areas within the grid connection corridor were surveyed and the limitations and outcomes described in paragraphs 3.5.2 – 3.5.8 in the Reptiles Report.</p>	<p>Natural England has no comments to make on these questions as they do not fall within our remit as set out in Advice on working with public bodies in the infrastructure planning process, Annex C: Natural England and the Planning Inspectorate. We defer to City of Doncaster's advice on these matters.</p>

Table A: Natural England's response to Examiner's initial questions (9 May 2025)			
ExA question ref	Question addressed to	Question	Answer
		<p>b) the Aquatic Ecology Report (ES Appendix 8-6: Aquatic Ecology Report [APP-151]) not providing mitigation measures during the operational phase and whether such mitigation measures should be provided.</p> <p>c) ES Appendices 8-7: Breeding Bird Report [APP-152 and APP-153] and 8-8: Non-breeding Bird Report [APP-154]. In particular, please comment:</p> <p>i. on the breeding bird and non-breeding bird survey methodology with regards to the baseline for breeding birds and the extent of the survey in particular on Marsh Harrier, Grasshopper Warbler, Marsh Warbler and Garganey.</p> <p>ii. there being no territory mapping surveys for the grid connection corridor within ES Appendix 8-7.</p> <p>iii. the extent of the limitations referred to in Section 3.5 of ES Appendix 8-7.</p>	<p>Natural England's standing advice for protected species can be found here: Protected species and development: advice for local planning authorities - GOV.UK.</p>
Q1.6.18	Natural England, City of Doncaster Council, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust	<p>Open Mosaic Habitat</p> <p>ES Chapter 8: Ecology Table 8-10 (page 8-93 OMH on PDL Priority Habitat) [APP-060] and fLEMP paragraphs 7.3.18 – 7.3.25 [REP1-029]. Given OMH is a Priority Habitat and substrate is to be removed during the installation of the grid connection corridor, do you have any concerns with the methodology set out within paragraphs 7.3.18 - 7.3.25 for its reinstatement and mitigation proposed.</p>	<p>Natural England has no comments to make on the Open Mosaic Habitat impacts, reinstatement and proposed mitigation as this does not fall within our remit as set out in <i>Advice on working with public bodies in the infrastructure planning process, Annex C: Natural England and the Planning Inspectorate</i>. We defer to City of Doncaster's advice on this matter.</p>
Q1.6.23	Natural England, City of Doncaster Council	<p>Biodiversity Baseline</p> <p>The applicant has stated [REP1-031] that it is adopting a deviation to the approach taken for other types of development, including under the TCPA 1990, for the biodiversity baseline by not including all land within the development's order limits in relation to the grid connection corridor. Please comment on this approach.</p>	<p>Natural England retains the opinion that the full red-line boundary should be used to determine the biodiversity baseline, in line with best practice for BNG. However, it should be noted that BNG is not yet mandatory for NSIPs and guidance on the required approach to BNG for NSIPs has not yet been agreed. Therefore, our comments are advisory only at this stage.</p>

Table A: Natural England's response to Examiner's initial questions (9 May 2025)			
ExA question ref	Question addressed to	Question	Answer
Q1.6.26	Natural England	<p>Open Mosaic Habitat</p> <p>The applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-031] (page 92) notes that whilst there is a failure to meet the trading rules for OMH, it is not considered significant due to the potential that temporary disturbance could be beneficial. Please comment on this approach.</p>	Natural England does not oppose the applicant's approach in this case.
Q1.6.28	Natural England, City of Doncaster Council	<p>UKHab Guidance</p> <p>Page 15 of the applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-031]. Please comment on the applicant's response that they challenge the UKHab guidance with regards to the categorisation of all of the Solar PV panel footprint being categorised as 'Grassland – modified grassland' rather than the strips of open habitat between the panels being recorded separately.</p>	Natural England can confirm that the applicant's approach to this matter is considered reasonable and that we have no objections to the footprint of the Solar PV panel being categorised as 'Grassland – modified grassland'.

