



Dean Moor Solar Farm

Statement of Common Ground with Natural England

on behalf of **FVS Dean Moor Limited**

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DEAN MOOR SOLAR FARM
STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND WITH NATURAL ENGLAND
PLANNING INSPECTORATE REFERENCE EN010155
PREPARED ON BEHALF OF FVS DEAN MOOR LIMITED

The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms
and Procedure) Regulations 2009 5(2)(Q)

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1 Introduction

1.1 Status of the Statement of Common Ground

1.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground ('SoCG') has been produced for FVS Dean Moor Limited ('the Applicant') to support the application for a Development Consent Order (the 'DCO application') to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero ('SoS') for Dean Moor Solar Farm ('the Proposed Development') located between the villages of Gilgarran and Branthwaite in West Cumbria (the 'Site'), which is situated within the administrative area of Cumberland Council ('the Council').

1.1.2 This SoCG has been prepared by (1) the Applicant and (2) Natural England (NE). It is agreed that this SoCG is an accurate description of the matters raised by NE and the status of each matter. A high-level overview of the engagement undertaken since September 2023 is summarised in section 3.

1.2 Purpose of this document

1.2.1 The SoCG has been produced to confirm to the Examining Authority (ExA) where agreement has been reached between the parties, and where agreement has not been reached. In the planning process, SoCGs are an established means of allowing all parties to identify and focus on specific matters that may need to be addressed during the Examination. This SoCG is the final version of this document, and has been signed by both parties at page 19.

1.3 Terminology

1.3.1 In the tables in Section 2 of this SoCG, '*Matter agreed*' indicates where issues are resolved.

2 Current Position

2.1 Position of NE and the Applicant

2.1.1 The Applicant and NE have had positive engagement on a number of issues, set out in Table 2.1 below covering a range of topics.

2.1.2 All matters are now agreed between the Applicant and NE. A previous iteration of the draft SoCG submitted at D3 [REP3-032] set out the in-principle agreement between the Applicant and NE on the actions required to resolve outstanding matters relating to peat resource management through updates to the Outline Soil Management Plan (OSMP). It was agreed that the Applicant would further consult NE on the OSMP ahead of its submission at D4 [REP4-032]. This has since been done, and NE have agreed that the updates to the OSMP are appropriate, and that the remaining 'matters under discussion' are now 'agreed', as captured within Table 2.1.

2.1.3 This SoCG captures the outcome of discussion between NE and the Applicant throughout the Examination, summarised as follows:

- The Applicant has provided a response to the matters raised by NE within their Relevant Representation (RR) [RR-009] within the 'Applicant Response to Relevant Representations' (ARRR) [REP1-002].
- NE submitted a Written Representation (WR) [REP2-060] at D2 which focused on the matter of peat. The Applicant and NE have had positive engagement since this WR to agree actions to resolve this matter, and this is reflected in Table 2.1 of this SoCG. The Applicant further provided a separate 'Applicant Response to Natural England's Written Representation' [REP3-005].

2.1.4 The shared position set out below within Table 2.1 '*Matters agreed*' is the agreed position.

2.2 Matters agreed

2.2.1 Table 2.1 below details the matters agreed with NE.

Table 2.1 Matters agreed

Ref	Topic	Shared position	Application Ref
NE1	Scope of surveys and survey report methodologies,	It is agreed that the assessment of impacts to biodiversity is based on an appropriate scope, as informed by the Applicant's engagement with NE, and range of surveys which have been conducted to recognised methodologies.	ES Ch8 Biodiversity [REP2-053] and associated appendices [APP-150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155]
NE2	Updating of the relevant surveys	It is agreed that it is appropriate to secure the updating of relevant environmental assessments to ensure an-up-to date ecological baseline in advance of construction and to inform the detailed design and the mitigation proposed within the control documents. It is agreed that a suitably qualified ecologist (or team of ecologists) will undertake further surveys pre-commencement where necessary across the Site to update the surveys carried out to date. An updated PEA will inform the need for updating species-specific surveys in advance of construction. The updated surveys will include an assessment of the habitats on Site and appropriate species surveys to ensure that proposed environmental management measures and risk avoidance measures are fit for purpose. Information derived from these surveys will inform the CEMP and associated (Risk Avoidance Method Statements (RAMS) pertaining to ecological receptors, Species Protection Plans ('SPP') and toolbox talks that will be facilitated by the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) (OCEMP 5.4.1). The final CEMP is secured as a DCO Requirement. The OCEMP includes the requirement that final CEMP will be informed by consultation with Natural England and other stakeholders for relevant matters in advance of submission to the Council to discharge the Requirement. The Applicant can confirm that the DCO Requirement has been updated to confirm a consultee role for Natural England. NE note that any CEMP that is produced and subsequently approved will be a 'live' document and will be updated as required and secured by a DCO Requirement (4).	ES Ch8 Biodiversity [REP2-053] ES Appx 5.1 OCEMP [APP-108] ES Appx 5.3 OSMP [APP-110] dDCO [REP2-005]

Ref	Topic	Shared position	Application Ref
NE3	Shadow Habitat Regulation Assessment (sHRA) methodology	There is agreement on the overall scope of the SHRA and the sites taken forward to the Screening Assessment and Appropriate Assessment. NE have agreed on the methodology and scope of the Appropriate Assessment with regards to the Solway Firth SPA and River Derwent and Lake Bassenthwaite SAC.	ES Ch8 Biodiversity [REP2-053] ES Appx 8.7 sHRA [APP-156]
NE4	sHRA conclusions and mitigation of potential impacts on the River Derwent and Bassenthwaite Lake SAC	It is agreed that the conclusions of the SHRA are sound subject to compliance with the final CEMP, SMP, LEMP, and Operational Management Plan (OMP), which are to be substantially in accordance with the outline versions. It is acknowledged that the relevant measures within the final control documents will require additional consideration and review by NE as part of the process to discharge the relevant DCO Requirements. As per NE2, it is agreed that final design and control documents will reflect an appropriate scope of updated surveys and assessment. Outline pollution prevention measures have been provided in the OCEMP which covers the main mitigation measures NE would expect for work in proximity to watercourses, and utilising appropriate Best Practice Guidance. NE note that no new water crossings are proposed for the scheme. NE agrees with the need for an ECoW who's role will include ensuring the adherence to the measures outlined in the CEMP to ensure no deterioration to the water quality of the SAC downstream. The ES states (8.6.11) that prior to works commencing, pre-construction surveys for otter, will be carried out by the ECoW to identify any change in Site use, including the potential for otter holts to have been created. It is noted that the Applicant has acknowledged that pre-construction surveys, Species Protection Plans, and RAMS are secured by the OCEMP, which is secured by a DCO Requirement.	ES Appx 8.7 sHRA [APP-156] ES Ch8 Biodiversity [REP2-053] ES Appx 5.1 OCEMP [APP-108] ES Appx 5.3 OSM [APP-110] ES Appx 3.1 OOMP [APP-107] ES Appx 7.7 OLEMP [APP-145]
NE5	sHRA conclusions and mitigation of potential impacts on the Solway Firth SPA	It is agreed that given the wider availability of suitable alternative habitat, the ecological dependence on the fields within the Site for loafing is not likely to be significant, and due to the potential for birds from the surrounding areas to use the Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA further south, the Proposed Development will not, in itself, have an adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA. As confirmed by NE, herring gull are a highly mobile species with a large foraging range up to 50km from their roosting colonies, such that inclusion of the SPAs within the 10km radius of the Site as per the sHRA is suitably precautionary.	ES Appx 8.7 sHRA [APP-156] ES Ch8 Biodiversity [REP2-053]

Ref	Topic	Shared position	Application Ref
		It is agreed that the assessment of in-combination effects has been appropriately considered based on the information that is publicly available from other known potential schemes, including the former Lostrigg Solar DCO (which has since been withdrawn as a DCO). Should that or any other scheme come forward under the DCO or TCPA regime they would be considered on their own merits and would have to account for the Proposed Development (if consented) in their assessment and mitigation proposals. Based on the number of herring gull recorded at the Lostrigg site, from raw data counts supplied for some months over winter, and the wide availability of similar loafing and foraging habitat available Natural England agree with the conclusion that there will be no in-combination adverse effects on the integrity of the SPA.	
NE6	Landscape and Ecological Enhancement, Management, and Monitoring	Enhancement will be achieved through new and improved vegetation and Site management, including monitoring to achieve conservative Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) outcomes. It is agreed that the approach established by the LSP and OLEMP provide an appropriate foundation for habitat and biodiversity improvement for the Site as a whole. It is agreed that the OLEMP (at section 1.6) provides the appropriate detail of roles and responsibilities, oversight, and procedures for third party involvement during the operational period, subject to NE's review of the detail in the final LEMP to be provided as a DCO Requirement. To secure green infrastructure enhancement and BNG, a LEMP should be in effect across the Proposed Development's operational life. To that end it is agreed that it is appropriate for the LEMP to be a 'live' document that will be updated every five years based on annual monitoring, and will need to support third party monitoring requirements. Existing management measures and mitigation outcomes will not be amended without the prior agreement of the Council. These OLEMP commitments will ensure that the management provided by the LEMP can be responsive to the Site's evolving environment and the changing climate while supporting relevant stakeholder oversight of BNG delivery. Natural England are supportive of the enhancements detailed in the OLEMP particularly the proposed enhancements to Dean Moor County Wildlife Site and the proposed enhancement of watercourses.	ES Ch7 Landscape and Visual [REP2-046] ES Appx 7.7 OLEMP [APP-145] ES Fig 7.6 LSP [REP2-046] ES Ch8 Biodiversity [REP2-053] ES Appx 8.8 BNG Report [APP-157]
NE7	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Calculation	It is agreed that while mandatory BNG does not apply to NSIPs, the BNG Report, establishes that the Proposed Development could deliver BNG of 114.69% for habitats, 44.84% for hedgerows, and 12.56% for watercourses (although note that these are indicative figures based on the LSP and OLEMP).	ES Appx 7.7 OLEMP [APP-145] ES Appx 8.8 BNG

Ref	Topic	Shared position	Application Ref
		It is also recognised that BNG metric outcomes could change based on an up-to-date assessment of baseline habitats in pre-construction, and it is therefore appropriate to take a conservative approach in establishing minimum commitments at the application stage so long as this does not unduly constrain more ambitious outcomes being delivered. The LSP and OLEMP provide a strong foundation for securing a significant minimum BNG based on detailed design, which would be at least 60% for habitats, 20% for hedgerows, and 5% for watercourses (see para 1.2.3 of the OLEMP). The Applicant aims to exceed these targets, which is supported by a commitment within the OLEMP to re-calculate the BNG based on the final design and LEP, with the final LEMP to reflect the management requirements to deliver the outcome of this calculation, which will be no less than the minimum commitments of the OLEMP. The LEMP will be formally updated every five years, will include annual monitoring, and will support third party monitoring, all of which will provide relevant stakeholder oversight of the Proposed Development's progress in relation to the BNG outcomes that will be established via the LEP and LEMP DCO Requirements. Natural England welcomes the inclusion of these calculations and note that the proposed gains are significantly above the intended 10% mandatory gain. However, they acknowledged that mandatory net gain does not apply to NSIP projects.	Report [APP-157] ES Fig 7.6 LSP [REP2-046]
NE8	Nature-based solutions approach to the Drainage Strategy (DS)	It is agreed that the principles of a landscape-led strategy which incorporates a nature-based solutions approach to drainage that maintains existing greenfield runoff characteristics as set out in the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Outline Drainage Strategy (ODS) can be supported subject to the detailed design conforming to the commitments of the ODS and OLEMP, and the final DS (DCO Requirement 8) being sufficiently comprehensive and including appropriate supporting evidence. Natural England welcome the nature-based approach and solutions in the outline Drainage Strategy.	ES Appx 2.4 FRA & ODS [REP2-022] ES Appx 7.7 OLEMP [APP-145]
NE9	Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Survey results	It is agreed that the full Site has been subject to ALC surveys conducted to the correct methodologies and standards to determine the quality of the agricultural land within the Order Limits. As confirmed by the ALC survey outcomes the land is of subgrade 3b or lower, meaning it does not meet the threshold for BMV designation under the National Planning Policy Framework. As such, there is no loss of high-grade	ES Appx 2.8 ALC Report [APP-105]

Ref	Topic	Shared position	Application Ref
		agricultural resource, and no additional safeguards or mitigation measures are required in this regard.	
NE10	Soil resource mitigation and conservation	It is agreed that a Soil Management Plan (SMP) is an appropriate means by which to provide dedicated management of soil resource conservation during the construction phase. The outline Soil Management Plan (OSMP) details soil handling and restoration measures based on site specific soil information and sets out specific mitigation measures with reference to the best practice guidance (Defra Construction Code of Practice) for peat resources across the Site including peaty soils and peat. It is agreed in principle that as long as soil resource management best practice is carried forward for maintenance activities in the OMP, alongside good ecological management via the LEMP, the Proposed Development has potential to provide benefits for soil health over the operational phase. It is understood that the OSMP, while primarily targeted to construction effects, represents the foundation of soil resource management for the Proposed Development as a whole, with the final SMP providing the detailed baseline for construction management that will be taken forward as appropriate.	ES Ch5 Construction and Decommissioning Methodology and Phasing [APP-036] ES Appx 5.3 Outline Soil Management Plan OSMP [APP-110] ES Appx 5.1 OCEMP [APP-108] ES Appx 3.1 OOMP [APP-107] ES Appx 5.4 FDMP [APP-111] ES Appx 7.7 OLEMP [APP-145]
NE11	Decommissioning and restoration effects on soils	The Applicant's approach to protecting soil resources during decommissioning, as established by the framework of measures within the Framework Decommissioning Management Plan (FDMP), is appropriate for this stage. It is agreed that the FDMP ensures that the final DMP document suite will include a management plan equivalent to the SMP for construction based on best practice guidelines at that time to provide measures to manage the handling and placement of soils during decommissioning along with a Site Restoration Scheme (SRS) to detail the condition to which the land will be restored. NE agree that before decommissioning a Decommissioning Soil Management Plan (DSMP) will be required as part of the final DMP suite which is based on best practice guidelines at that time.	ES Appx 5.3 OSMP [APP-110] ES Appx 5.4 FDMP [APP-111]
NE12	Approach to tree protections including Ancient Woodland &	It is agreed that while there is no ancient woodland present on the Site, there is a replanted ancient woodland (Lime Kiln Wood) adjoining (west of) the north of Area C. Trees on the Site have been surveyed, and are detailed in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) This includes one Veteran Tree on the south west boundary of Area C.	ES Ch8 Biodiversity [REP2-053] ES Appx 7.8 AIA [REP2-020]

Ref	Topic	Shared position	Application Ref
	Ancient/Veteran Trees	The inclusion of a 15m buffer between the replanted ancient woodland and generating station infrastructure within the Site (as secured by the Work Plans) is in accordance with Natural England (in partnership with the Forestry Commission) standing advice with regards to Ancient Woodland & Ancient/Veteran Trees. It is agreed that the Proposed Development includes no proposals for removal of woodland or hedgerows, although it is acknowledged that works to trees and some minor loss of hedgerow for widening of existing gaps may be required, with full details to be provided in the final CEMP, and with details of any compensation planting in the LEP and LEMP. The application includes appropriate commitments to safeguard trees and hedges during construction, as set out in the Arboricultural Management Plan (CEMP:AMP) at section 6 of the OCEMP. It is agreed that the CEMP shall be informed by an updating arboricultural assessment to ensure the detailed design and final CEMP reflect the up-to-date condition of trees and hedgerows (and their Root Protection Areas (RPA)).	ES Appx 5.1 OCEMP [APP-108] Work Plans [APP-007]
NE13	Nationally Designated Landscapes	During construction, operation, and decommissioning the proposed development will have a very low magnitude of impact on the character, setting, and Special Qualities of the Lake District National Park.	ES Ch7 – Landscape and Visual Impact [REP2-046]
NE14	Identification of peat deposits within the Site	It is agreed that the submitted Peat Survey Report (PSR) provides sufficient baseline information with regards to an initial investigation of peat deposits, to inform the baseline conditions at the Site, and the approach to mitigation within the application as submitted. It is also agreed that while the PSR can be relied on, the possibility of further peat deposits being found during pre-construction ground investigations, or later, cannot be discounted. It is agreed that relevant control documents will need to have regard for the PSR baseline and any new information (e.g. geotechnical surveys) which identifies additional peat deposits or advances the identification of peaty soils, and that the future SMP should include information to support a 'discovery strategy' for unexpected peat deposits being encountered in construction, as described in section 3.5 of the OSMP. It is agreed that the OSMP has drawn on the conclusions of the ALC survey to present the appropriate soil baseline data which reflects the peaty properties and conditions of soils at the Site and that the final	PSR [APP-173] OSMP [REP4-023] ALC Report [APP-105]

Ref	Topic	Shared position	Application Ref
		SMP will account for the ALC Report (including its Soil Resource Survey (SRS) data), the PSR, and any new information arising in the pre-commencement phase.	
NE15	Potential enhancement of peat as a BNG objective	Although acknowledged that peat restoration may be a highly beneficial biodiversity enhancement aspiration which NE would encourage, it is accepted that the Proposed Development excludes this objective from proposals (e.g. the LSP and OLEMP). This is due to the temporary nature of the generating station and the requirement to return the Site to its existing use which would not be compatible with the pursuit of this habitat.	LSP [REP2-046] OLEMP [APP-145]
NE16	Types of peat resources for relevant consideration	It is agreed that there is a distinction in terms between peat deposits, and peat resources which include deposits as well as peaty soils, which exist across a spectrum of peatiness. It is agreed that the appropriate definitions for peat, peaty, and organo-mineral soils are those set out in the MAFF (1988) 'Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales: Revised criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land.' It is agreed that it was appropriate to target peat surveys to Area C only, and that peat probing has been undertaken to an appropriate density to provide an indication of peat depth. It is acknowledged that the ground investigation of the PSR is only relevant to deep peat deposits, while the ALC Report is the source for identification of the presence of peaty soils (or soils otherwise high in Soil Organic Matter (SOM)) as determined through soil sampling undertaken for ALC classification. While these data sources can be complementary, they are independent types of survey with no direct crossover. It is agreed that the Applicant does not need to undertake any additional assessment prior to determination relating to peat deposits or peaty soils, and that the application provides a suitable baseline to inform design parameters and outline control documents and that the PSR and ALC Report help to provide a suitable initial baseline for the identification of peat deposits, and Site soil characteristics. The OSMP provides a strong evidence base and controls for soil handling, including soils higher in organic matter. Whilst it is agreed that the control documents do not make sufficient provision for peat handling, this may be appropriate on the basis of commitments of the OSMP and OCEMP that there will be no excavations of peat deposits, such that the mitigation for impact on peat deposits is to avoid impact	ES Ch10 - Ground Conditions [APP-041] PSR [APP-173] ALC Report [APP-105] OSMP [REP4-023] OCEMP [APP-108]

Ref	Topic	Shared position	Application Ref
		rather than introduce measures to minimise impacts. The commitments of the OSMP require the SMP include guidance to contractors on the identification of peat which will be supported by toolbox talks by the Soil Advisor and oversight by the ECoW. This is alongside the 'discovery strategy' which commits to stoppage and CEMP and/or SMP updates in the event of unexpected peat deposits being identified which have not been avoided in the final design and for which mitigation and management would be required if exclusion is not possible. This means that alongside the pre-construction assessments which can add to the baseline, there are further controls to identify deposits not identified in the PSR and to adopt RAMS accordingly.	
NE17	General approach to peat resource management	The protection of peat resources (deposits and peaty soils) applies across all phases of the Proposed Development. This includes commitments to avoid (exclude) identified peat deposit areas from the final design where development works would have the potential to harm peat deposits, and to include management methods in relevant control documents for mitigation of effects on peat deposits and soil resources, including peaty soils. It is agreed that peat management mechanisms are appropriately secured by the existing document suite, which reflect relevant principles of "Annex 1: Peat Management Plan" of SEPA's "Guidance on the Assessment of Peat Volumes, Reuse of Excavated Peat and the Minimisation of Waste" guidance where appropriate, it is agreed that a standalone Peat Management Plan (PMP) or DCO Requirement is not required. It is agreed that no currently identified peat deposits will be extracted, and the OSMP provides appropriate measures to ensure the discovery of additional deposits would trigger a requirement to stop works in the relevant area until there has been an investigation and review by the Soil Advisor which may necessitate updates to the CEMP / SMP following engagement with relevant stakeholders. It is agreed that, given the limited extent of peat across the Site, and the parallel arrangements which would be established to mitigate effects on both soil and peat, a single SMP sitting alongside the CEMP will be appropriate.	Work Plans [APP-007] ES Appx 5.1 OCEMP [APP-108] OLEMP [APP-145]
NE18	Construction phase peat protection	The Applicant's general approach to the establishment of peat resource protection mechanisms is weighed heavily in the relevant construction phase control documents. This is agreed as appropriate because the pre-construction ground investigations can add to the existing PSR/SRS baseline to inform	OCEMP [APP-108] OSMP [REP4-023]

Ref	Topic	Shared position	Application Ref
		the final measures for the CEMP and OSMP, because the construction phase poses the most risk to these interests due to the nature and intensity of activities on Site, and because all subsequent phases will base their measures on the mitigation required for construction and/or any additional data that arise from construction works. The relevant construction phase control documents include the OCEMP and the OSMP. Management measures are based on the mitigation hierarchy of avoid > mitigate > compensate, although it is not proposed that the latter will be engaged as management mechanisms are directed to prevent peat resource loss. The OCEMP deal with identified peat deposits while the complementary OSMP is the control document for soil resource management, including peaty soils. The OSMP provides the outline of a discovery strategy for peat deposits as it will be through the handling of soils (e.g. trenching) that unexpected conditions not reflecting expected soil types could be encountered which initiate a requirement for stoppage and additional investigation. Consideration of peat deposits is across the OCEMP, but particularly within section 11 (and specifically at section 11.3). The OCEMP also commits that the final CEMP (DCO Requirement 4) will be informed by ground investigation (e.g. geotechnical and other survey) outcomes. It is agreed that the OCEMP's commitment to avoidance provides a suitable foundation for peat deposit protection in construction in the final CEMP which will be subject to consultation with NE in advance of submission to discharge DCO Requirement 4. The OSMP provides governance for soil resource conservation during construction and provides a basis for awareness of existing baseline conditions based on surveys of soils across the Site. The OSMP also commits to more fully updating the baseline of information based on any further pre-construction data and its measures will be better targeted based on the final design and programme, including details of where things will be located, the methods of implementation, and the type of plant and machinery for which mitigation measures can be tailored. The production of a final SMP, to be substantially in accordance with the OSMP, prior to construction, is secured by DCO Requirement.	
NE19	Operational phase peat protections	The likelihood of effects during operations akin to the risks of the construction phase is highly limited due to the static low maintenance nature of solar energy generating technology. The application's approach to peat protection/management during the operational phase will be based on what is secured in the final CEMP and SMP for the construction phase and will reflect any updating	OCEMP [APP-108] OSMP [REP4-023] OLEMP [APP-145]

Ref	Topic	Shared position	Application Ref
		information arising from construction that may be relevant to peat protection/management moving forward (e.g. should a peat deposit be revealed in construction that was not identified in pre-construction, the construction phase measures would apply to that following discovery, and the baseline would be updated for the operational phase control documents. The Applicant proposes to bring forward any measures from the construction phase that could be relevant to mitigate potential effects during operations via the OLEMP and OOMP, with the commitment to do so secured by these documents. The final LEP and LEMP will also base landscape enhancement and management measures on updated assessments, including any new data on soils arising from pre-commencement surveys, and will appropriately account for different soil types and the presence of any peat deposits in the management measures. It is agreed that there will be further opportunity improve the control documents as the DCO Requirements for the CEMP and LEMP require consultation with NE before they are submitted to the Council to discharge the Requirements. NE are not named in the DCO Requirement for the SMP, but this would not prevent such engagement which the Applicant considers the only sensible way to approach the application process.	OOMP [APP-107] LSP [REP2-046]
NE20	Decommissioning phase peat protections	It is agreed that the provision of peat protection measures for the decommissioning phase are appropriately secured via the FDMP. This requires that a future DMP document suite provide a substantially similar array of management plan documentation for decommissioning as was provided for the construction phase, based on up-to-date baseline conditions and environmental best practice standards. The baseline will be informed by the monitoring required by the LEMP in relation to BNG, and is likely to also include habitat, species, and soil surveys as required. As the soils on the Site will have likely benefitted from the cessation of intensive agriculture and associated fertiliser/pesticide use, which is expected to improve soil structure and increase Soil Organic Matter (SOM) and Soil Organic Carbon (SOC) over time, the decommissioning soil management plan will need to factor in the evolved conditions on Site and provision in made for this within the FDMP (see also NE.11). It is agreed that the FDMP also provides a sufficient foundation for establishing appropriate measures which would avoid potential compaction or damage to the soil which may occur in association with	FDMP [APP-111]

Ref	Topic	Shared position	Application Ref
		decommissioning works, and enables the soils on Site to be restored to the baseline soil profile / properties.	

2.3 Matters under discussion

2.3.1 There are no matters under discussion between the Applicant and NE.

2.4 Matters not agreed

2.4.1 There are no matters which have not been agreed between NE and the Applicant.

3 Record of Engagement

3.1 Summary of consultation and engagement

3.1.1 The table below summarises communication in relation to progressing this SoCG.

Table 3.1 Summary of consultation and engagement with NE

Ref	Date	Engagement Type & Record	Key topics and outcomes
NE.A	05.09.23	NE input into EIA Scoping Opinion (ES Appx 2.2 EIA Scoping Opinion [APP-097])	- Confirmed that the Proposed Development had not triggered an Impact Risk Zone and is unlikely to adversely impact international or national designated sites. - Advised that a Habitats Regulations Assessment is necessary. - Agreed that Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land can be scoped out but that soil impacts should be assessed, with provisions set out in a Soil Management Plan. - Advised on the assessment of the River Derwent and Bassenthwaite Lake SAC and the River Derwent and Tributaries Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - Advised that ancient woodland should be scoped in for construction and decommissioning - Advised that the ES should include the measures taken to avoid or minimise lighting impacts on biodiversity - Advised that the ES should include an assessment of habitat loss, disturbance and fragmentation of modified sheep grazed grassland. - Recommended that the ecological baseline is robust and justifies extent and scale of surveys, including hen harrier, and advised on assessment of species. - Advised on how Dean Moor CWS has been considered as part of assessment and enhancements considered necessary.

Ref	Date	Engagement Type & Record	Key topics and outcomes
NE.B	13.09.23-09.11.23	Emails (ES Appx 8.9 Stakeholder Engagement [APP-158])	- The Applicant shared the scoping methodology for passage and wintering bird surveys for Natural England to confirm it was agreeable. - Natural England's ornithologist confirmed the methodology is suitable, although a specific survey to assess hen harrier usage will be required. - The Applicant requested feedback on the proposed hen harrier survey methodology. - Natural England confirmed the scope of the hen harrier survey methodology was acceptable
NE.C	16.05.24	Statutory Consultation Response summarised in Table 8.3 of ES Ch8 [APP-038]	NE advised that an SHRA would be needed to assess potential impacts on the River Derwent and Bassenthwaite Lake SAC NE advised on the scope of the SHRA, including assessment of potential disturbance of otters and Solway Firth SPA birds NE advised that pollution to designated sites should be scoped into the SHRA NE recommended nature-based solutions to manage and improve drainage on-site NE provided advice on the ALC report and requested an ALC survey of un-surveyed land in Areas A and B. NE provided advice on soil handling methodologies and reinstatement of soils to their baseline ALC grade post-decommissioning NE advised on the scope of the Outline Soil Management Plan and the handling of peat
NE.D	22.11.24	Emails (ES Appx 8.9 Stakeholder Engagement [APP-158])	The Applicant confirmed that wintering bird and hen harrier surveys are complete and that no hen harriers were observed.
NE.E	02.12.24	Meeting (ES Appx 8.9 Stakeholder Engagement [APP-158])	Applicant provided an update on the changes to the Proposed Development since the statutory consultation, and an overview of the engagement being undertaken. Discussion of each of the points raised by Natural England in their statutory consultation response, including: SHRA drainage; LEMP; dormice and great crested newt; and ALC and soil management. Applicant provided an overview of survey results for Phase 2 surveys, wintering birds, and hen harrier. Discussion of the proposals for mitigation and enhancement for biodiversity on-site. Discussion of Lostrigg Solar DCO and the assessment of cumulative impacts on the qualifying features of the SPA within the SHRA.

Ref	Date	Engagement Type & Record	Key topics and outcomes
			Discussion of the BNG calculation. Discussion of information boards proposed around the permissive paths.
NE.F	03.12.24	Emails (ES Appx 8.9 Stakeholder Engagement [APP-158])	The Applicant shared the wintering bird survey data in order confirm whether there is any link to the Solway Firth SPA with Natural England. Natural England's ornithologist reviewed the bird survey results.
	21.01.25	Emails (ES Appx 8.9 Stakeholder Engagement [APP-158])	Natural England confirmed they do not have data for dormice and GCN and to contact the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre. Natural England confirmed no amendments to make to the meeting minute.
NE.G	30.01.25	Emails (ES Appx 8.9 Stakeholder Engagement [APP-158])	The Applicant enquired whether there was any comment on Appendix 8.6 Wintering Bird and Hen Harrier Survey Report. NE confirmed they had no further comment.
NE.H	05.02.25	Emails (ES Appx 8.9 Stakeholder Engagement [APP-158])	The Applicant sought to confirm if comments on Wintering Bird and Hen Harrier Report would be provided or that report was satisfactory.
NE.I	10.07.25	Email	Natural England shared the draft SoCG with the Applicant and added additional rows to address the points raised in the NE RR on peat and Nationally Designated Landscapes. NE confirmed that all matters have been agreed, with the exception of the ongoing discussion on peat.
NE.J	10.07.25	Meeting and Email	NE returned the draft SoCG with comments, indicating that all matters are agreed with the exception of peat which is under discussion, and added points from the RR. NE and the Applicant met to discuss the SoCG and agreed that the Applicant would set out the approach to NE's Peat Specialist to progress resolution of this topic..
NE.K	18.07.25	Email	The Applicant wrote to NE to set out the approach within the application to peat management for the consideration of the NE peat specialist.
NE.L	20.08.25	Email	NE wrote to the Applicant with comments from the Soil Specialist on the Peat Survey Report. These are currently being considered by the Applicant.

Ref	Date	Engagement Type & Record	Key topics and outcomes
NE.M	08.09.25	Online meeting	The Applicant and NE met to discuss the Applicant's draft response to the NE Written Representation on the matter of the peat survey. The two parties agreed an approach for addressing NE's comments within the OSMP, in pulling together the conclusions of the PSR and SRS, which is reflected within this SoCG in Table 2.2.
NE.N	15.10.25	Email	The Applicant issued the OSMP to NE, which had been updated on the basis of the actions agreed in the meeting on the 08.09.
NE.O	20.10.25	Online meeting	The Applicant and NE met to discuss the updated OSMP. NE agreed that the amendments made to the document were sufficient to satisfy their previous comments, and agreed that these matters could now be resolved within the SoCG.

4 Signatures

4.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground is agreed upon:

On behalf of Natural England

Name: [REDACTED].

Senior Officer Sustainable Development

Signature: [REDACTED]

Date: 21/11/2025

On behalf of the Applicant:

Name: [REDACTED]

Signature [REDACTED]

Date: 21/11/2025