

Date: 19 August 2025
Our ref: 521022
Your ref: EN010157

The Planning Inspectorate
Major Applications & Plans
Temple Quay House
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6PN

PeartreeHillSolarFarm@planninginspectorate.gov.uk



Customer Services
Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Inspector,

NSIP Reference Name / Code: EN010157

User Code: F0F015D2C

Title: Natural England's comments in respect of the Peartree Hill Solar Farm Project, promoted by RWE Renewables UK Solar and Storage Limited (Deadline 1).

Examining Authority's submission deadline with a date of 27 August 2025.

Natural England notes that the key updated documents relevant to our remit have not been submitted prior to Deadline 1. We understand that the applicant will submit the updated Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and associated plans at Deadline 1. Our Written Representations, with a comprehensive table of resolved and outstanding issues, will therefore be submitted at Deadline 2.

Since 2024, Natural England has been working closely with RWE Renewables UK Solar and Storage Limited on the Peartree Hill Solar Farm Project, providing advice and guidance through our Discretionary Advice Service. Natural England has agreed to attend meetings with the Developer with a view to progressing Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) as part of the Examination process and facilitating the resolution of outstanding issues.

The applicant has recently provided Natural England with copies of the updated HRA and Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan prior to Deadline 1. However, due to the limited time available for a comprehensive review of the updated documents, only issues which were easily resolved have been addressed at this stage. These updates are reflected in the draft SoCG submitted at Deadline 1. All other outstanding issues will be considered and addressed in our Written Representations to be submitted at Deadline 2.

Please see below responses to the Examining Authority's first 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.

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

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]
Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Area Team
Natural England

Natural England's response to the Examining Authority's (ExA's) first written questions with a deadline of 27 August 2025

Table 1: Natural England's response to Examiner's initial questions			
ExA question ref	Question addressed to	Question	Answer
1.2.7	The applicant, ERYC, Environment Agency (EA), Natural England (NE), Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT)	<p>Requirements</p> <p>Do you consider whether any further requirements are needed, such as relating to/ to secure the following: proposed permissive paths; proposed community accessible areas; biodiversity net gain; foul and surface water drainage; skills, employment and supply chain (noting NPS EN-1 paragraph 5.13.12); and pre-construction protected species surveys. Please justify your answer and provide preferred wording of any requirements you consider necessary.</p>	<p>Natural England does not consider that any further requirements relating to our remit are required at this stage. Natural England welcomes the inclusion of relevant draft Requirements, including Requirements 4, 6, 9, 14 and 15, and consider that these adequately secure the required plans relevant to our remit. As stated in our Relevant Representation [RR-012], we advise that consultation with Natural England should be referred to in part 1 of Requirement 9.</p> <p>Please refer to our detailed advice on the associated draft plans in Part II of our RR-012. We may have further detailed advice on the relevant plans, if further information is provided at a later stage.</p> <p>Natural England note that the updated HRA (to be submitted at Deadline 1) states that the water for Horizontal Directional Drilling will be brought to site, and that no water will be abstracted from the River Hull or a tributary of the Humber Estuary, for this purpose. We advise that this should be adequately secured via the relevant plan.</p>
1.6.9	The applicant, NE	<p>HRA</p> <p>The HRA [APP-145] does not currently state whether the European sites considered are in favourable or unfavourable condition. Can the applicant and NE confirm for each of the five European sites considered in the HRA, whether they are in favourable or unfavourable condition.</p>	<p>Natural England highlight that the condition of designated sites is recorded by feature, rather than at a site level. We advise that the condition of the underpinning SSSI features is referred to in most instances for the most up-to-date information on the European site features.</p>

Table 1: Natural England's response to Examiner's initial questions

ExA question ref	Question addressed to	Question	Answer
			<p>The condition status of the features of Hornsea Mere SSSI can be viewed here: Site feature condition</p> <p>The condition status of the features of the Humber Estuary SSSI can be viewed here: Site feature condition. We have listed some of the key features impacted by this development, and their status, below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golden plover – favourable. • Lapwing – unfavourable no change. <p>The underpinning SSSIs for the Greater Wash can be found here: Designated Sites View. Please refer to each SSSI for the condition status of the features of the Greater Wash SPA.</p>
1.6.10	NE	<p>HRA</p> <p>Since no site-specific conservation objectives have been published for Ramsar sites, the HRA [APP-145] applies the Humber Estuary Special Protection Area's (SPA) objectives to the Humber Estuary Ramsar site. Please confirm whether you are content with this approach.</p>	<p>Natural England are satisfied with the proposed approach to apply the conservation objectives of the Humber Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) to the Humber Estuary Ramsar site, given the absence of site-specific conservation objectives for the Ramsar site. We note that some features of the Ramsar site are not covered by the SPA designation (such as river lamprey), but that these features have equivalents within the Humber Estuary SAC, whose conservation objectives can be used accordingly.</p>
1.6.11	NE	<p>HRA</p> <p>Please confirm whether you agree with the applicant's conclusions in respect of likely significant effects and adverse effects on integrity (AEoI) for the European sites and features considered in the HRA [APP-145] which are not specifically referenced in your RR [RR-012].</p>	<p>Where we have not provided comments in our Relevant Representations [RR-012], we confirm our agreement with the conclusions presented in the HRA [APP-145]. However, we note that this position may change if further information becomes available during the examination process.</p>

Table 1: Natural England's response to Examiner's initial questions

ExA question ref	Question addressed to	Question	Answer
			Natural England will review the updated information regarding the issues outlined in our Relevant Representations [RR-012] prior to Deadline 2.
1.6.16	The applicant, NE, EA	<p>HRA</p> <p>Section 4.5 of the HRA [APP-145] scopes out degradation of habitats as a result of changes to water quality as a result of release of sediment from construction/ decommissioning activities (such as installation of culverts) and from spillage of chemicals or contaminants.</p> <p><u>To NE and the EA</u></p> <p>a) Please confirm whether you are content for the HRA to scope out this impact pathway.</p> <p><u>To the applicant</u></p> <p>In relation to this, please address items NE5, NE6a and NE6b, Part II Table 1 of NE's RR [RR-012].</p>	<p>Natural England confirms that we are content for the HRA [APP-145] to scope out the impact pathway relating to degradation of habitats from changes to water quality due to the release of sediment during construction or decommissioning activities in this case. We highlight, however, that our Relevant Representations [RR-012] includes outstanding comments regarding potential water quality impacts from the spillage of chemicals or contaminants, specifically the risk of bentonite breakout associated with Horizontal Directional Drilling (NE5).</p> <p>Our updated position on operational water quality impacts, as outlined in NE6a and NE6b of our Relevant Representations [RR-012], is reflected in the draft Statement of Common Ground.</p>
1.6.17	The applicant, NE	<p>HRA</p> <p>With regard to the HRA monitoring outlined within the oLEMP [PDA-018] and the HRA [APP-145], should provision be made for results to be provided to NE for review/ comment?</p>	<p>Natural England note that 19.1.2 the oLEMP states that '<i>it is anticipated that following the review, any problems or changes that are impacting on the landscape will be accommodated with the agreement of East Riding of Yorkshire Council</i>'. We concur that provision should be made for the results of monitoring to be provided to the Local Planning Authority in the first instance. The Local Planning Authority can consult Natural England on this information, if it is deemed relevant/necessary.</p> <p>Provision should be made for monitoring results to be provided to Natural England should mitigation targets not be met.</p>