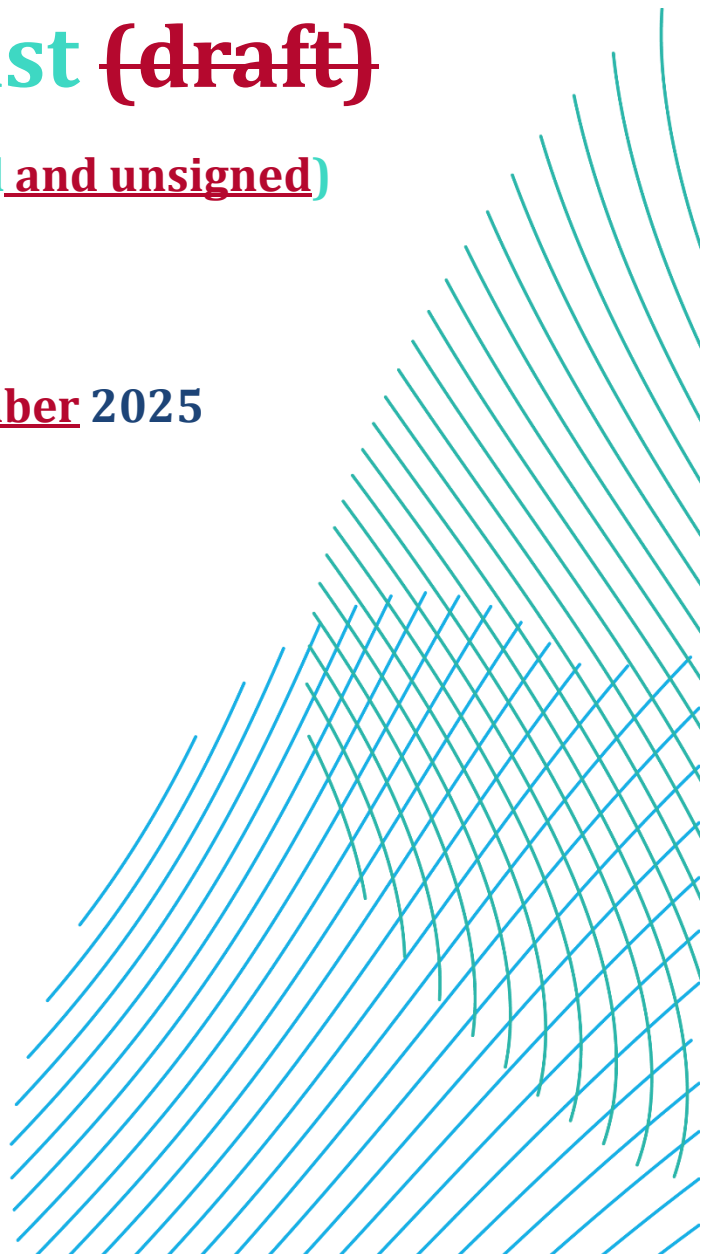




# Statement of Common Ground with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust ~~(draft)~~

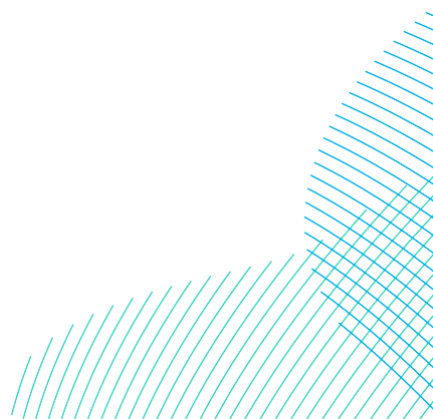
Revision ~~23~~ (tracked and unsigned)

~~October~~November 2025



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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of this document

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (hereafter referred to as the 'SoCG') has been prepared to support the Examination of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application (the 'DCO Application') for Peartree Hill Solar Farm (the 'Proposed Development').
- 1.1.2 The DCO Application is for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) for the construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) array electricity generating facility, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure which would allow for the generation and export of electricity.
- 1.1.3 The SoCG ~~is a 'live' document that~~ has been prepared collaboratively by the Applicant and the Consultee (Yorkshire Wildlife Trust).
- 1.1.4 The SoCG has been prepared in accordance with the Guidance for examination of DCO applications which was published in 2024 by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.1.5 This Guidance comments that:  
*"A statement of common ground is a written statement prepared jointly by the applicant and another party or parties, setting out any matters on which they agree, or indeed disagree. A SoCG helps to ensure that the evidence at examination focuses on the material differences between the main parties and therefore makes best use of the lines of questioning pursued by the Examining Authority".*

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<sup>1</sup> Planning Act 2008: Examination stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (April 2024)

- 1.1.6 The aim of this SoCG is to therefore provide a clear position of the progress and agreement made or not ~~yet~~-made between the Applicant and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust on matters relating to the Proposed Development. ~~Where matters are yet to be agreed, the parties will continue to proactively work to reach agreement.~~
- 1.1.7 The SoCG will be updated as more information becomes available and as a result of ongoing discussions between the Applicant and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. This SoCG has been updated at Deadline 5 to reflect the final position between the Applicant and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

## 1.2 Parties to this Statement of Common Ground

- 1.2.1 This SoCG has been prepared by (1) the Applicant and (2) Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.
- 1.2.2 Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is a charity that works to conserve, protect and restore wildlife and wild places in Yorkshire. There is the potential for the Proposed Development to have an effect on local wildlife and habitats.
- 1.2.3 Collectively, the Applicant and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust are referred to as ‘the parties’.

## 1.3 Terminology

- 1.3.1 Section 3 of this document sets out the relevant matters raised though discussion between the parties. It provides a summary of the position of each party and identifies the status of discussions on each matter:
- “Agreed” indicates where the issue has been resolved between the parties and is not anticipated to be subject to further discussions;
  - “Under discussion” indicates where a matter remains in active dialogue between the parties and a final position has not yet been reached;
  - “Not Agreed” indicates where the parties have established a final position that they cannot resolve the matter and will remain a point of difference.

## 2 Record of Engagement

### 2.1 Summary of consultation and engagement

- 2.1.1 The parties have been engaged in consultation and engagement throughout the development of the Proposed Development. Table 1 shows a summary of the meetings and correspondence that has taken place between the Applicant and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust in relation to the Proposed Development. This is limited to engagement which is materially relevant to the contents of this SoCG and does not seek to include every correspondence between the parties (e.g. that which was primarily administrative).

**Table 1: Record of Engagement since January 2024**

Date	Purpose of engagement	Description
<b>24 January 2024</b>	To introduce the Proposed Development.	Online meeting to discuss the Site's ecological baseline, potential affected receptors and potential mitigation measures.
<b>16 July 2024</b>	To discuss Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's comments on the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR).	Online meeting to discuss Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's comments on the PEIR including ecology baseline, local habitats and general approach on mitigation measures.
<b>December 2024 – January 2025</b>	To provide an update on the project and to consult on the Biodiversity Mitigation Strategy.	Email correspondence to share the Biodiversity Mitigation Strategy (for consultation purposes only – contents were subsequently incorporated into the submitted <b>Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [APP-156]</b> ) and respond to queries on the document.
<b><u>30 July 2025</u></b>	<b><u>To share the Grid Connection Cable Route Bird Survey Report.</u></b>	<b><u>Email sent to Yorkshire Wildlife Trust sharing the Grid Connection Cable Route Bird Survey Report [REP1-071]</u></b>
<b>31 July 2025</b>	To discuss Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's relevant representations.	Online meeting to discuss Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's relevant representations.
<b><u>October – November 2025</u></b>	<b><u>To discuss the outstanding matters within this SoCG.</u></b>	<b><u>Email correspondence in relation to the remaining outstanding matters within this SoCG.</u></b>

## 3 Current Position

3.1.1 The table below provides a summary of the ~~current~~final position of the Applicant and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust in relation to specific matters that have been under discussion to date.

3.1.2 Where a matter is not represented in the table, it should be assumed that it is either: (i) agreed between the parties and has not been the subject of detailed discussion; or (ii) not relevant to the discussion between the parties.

~~3.1.3 As noted above, this is a 'live' document and there are some aspects that are still under discussion between the parties. The intention is to provide a final position in subsequent versions of the SoCG, addressing and identifying where changes have been made and where agreement has been reached between the parties.~~

**Table 2: Current position of the Applicant and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust in relation to specific matters that have been under discussion to date**

Ref	Topic	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Position	Applicant's Position	Status
YWT01	Statutory and non-Statutory wildlife sites  <i>Biodiversity</i>	<p>In their relevant representation [RR-017], Yorkshire Wildlife Trust welcomes the removal of Land area A and Cable A-B from the Order Limits. However, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust still has concerns regarding Leven Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Tophill Low SSSI, and Pulfin Bog SSSI and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Reserve being sensitive receptors during construction. These sites form part of the Leven Carrs Wetland Scheme.</p> <p><u>Yorkshire Wildlife Trust confirmed via email on 17 October 2025 that it feels the Leven Carrs Wetland Scheme should be considered as a sensitive receptor as it is ecologically linked to the three SSSIs mentioned above.</u></p>	<p>As set out within Table 7-3 of <b>ES Volume 2, Chapter 7: Biodiversity [EN010157/APP/6.2 Revision 2]</b>, <u>since the removal of Land Area A and Cable A-B from the Order Limits prior to submission of the DCO Application (as set out in Table 4-3 of <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 4: Alternatives and Design Iteration [APP-040]</b>), Tophill Low SSSI (approximately 5.3km from the Order Limits) and Leven Canal SSSI (approximately 1.1km from the Order Limits)</u> have been scoped out of the assessment due to distance from the Site, lack of hydrological linkages to the Proposed Development, and intervening features between the Proposed Development and the SSSIs.</p> <p>Pulfin bog SSSI is <del>over 2</del><u>approximately 3.4</u>km from the Proposed Development <u>(i.e. outside of the 2km study area for national statutory designated sites as set out in <b>ES Volume 2, Chapter 7: Biodiversity [EN010157/APP/6.2 Revision 2]</b> and is separated from the Site by the busy A1035</u></p>	Not agreed Under discussion

Ref	Topic	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Position	Applicant's Position	Status
			<p>road and extensive areas of farmland, therefore has not been included within the assessment.</p> <p>Leven Carrs Wetland Scheme is not a statutory or non-statutory designated site and therefore has not been assessed as an ecological receptor.</p> <p>Furthermore, Pulfin Bog SSSI, Leven Canal SSSI and Tophill Low SSSI are all situated upstream of the River Hull. Measures aimed to reduce potential effects to the River Hull will be included within the Construction Environmental Management Plan, if required. However, given that works within 50m of the River Hull are restricted to horizontal directional drilling associated with the grid connection cable route under the river (a commitment for HDD launch/receptor pits to be positioned a minimum of 50m from Main Rivers is secured in the <b>Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010157/APP/7.2 Revision 72]</b>), it is anticipated that the measures within the <b>Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010157/APP/7.2</b></p>	

Ref	Topic	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Position	Applicant's Position	Status
			<b>Revision 72</b> ensure there would be no significant effects to the SSSIs associated with the Leven Carrs Wetland Scheme.	
YWT02	Local Nature Recovery Schemes <i>Biodiversity</i>	In their relevant representation <b>[RR-017]</b> , Yorkshire Wildlife Trust encourages the Applicant to consider the Hull and East Riding Local Nature Recovery Schemes when developing the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan post-examination.	The Applicant agrees to this request. The Landscape and Ecological Management Plan will consider the Hull and East Riding Local Nature Recovery Schemes.	Agreed
YWT03	Cote Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS) - ancient woodland <i>Biodiversity</i>	In their relevant representation <b>[RR-017]</b> , Yorkshire Wildlife Trust accepts the implementation of a 15m buffer around Cote Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS), an area of ancient woodland, as suitable mitigation against potential adverse impacts of the Proposed Development on that site.	The Applicant welcomes this comment. The 15m buffer from ancient woodland is secured in the <b>Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [EN010157/APP/7.5 Revision 3]</b> .	Agreed
YWT04	Ecological mitigation – construction phasing <i>Biodiversity</i>	In their relevant representation <b>[RR-017]</b> , Yorkshire Wildlife Trust encourages a phased approach to construction to ensure any birds disturbed by the construction have other suitable areas to move into temporarily.	The Applicant welcomes this response. As detailed within <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description [APP-039]</b> the Proposed Development will be constructed in phases.	Agreed
YWT05	Functionally linked land <i>Biodiversity</i>	In their relevant representation <b>[RR-017]</b> , Yorkshire Wildlife Trust agrees with the conclusions of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) that the surrounding	Tophill Low SSSI is <del>over 2km</del> <u>approximately 5.3km</u> from the Order Limits and the breeding habitat associated with this designated site will not be affected by the	Under discussion <del>Not Agreed</del>

Ref	Topic	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Position	Applicant's Position	Status
		agricultural land is functional land for lapwing, golden plover and other species. However, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust believes marsh harrier should also be considered, as two breeding pairs are known to reside in Tophill Low SSSI and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust believes the Applicant should consider this site as a sensitive receptor to potential impacts of the Proposed Development.	Proposed Development. As detailed within <b>ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.3: Breeding Bird Survey Report [APP-107]</b> , no breeding marsh harriers have been recorded within or adjacent to the Proposed Development.	
YWT06	Ecological mitigation – scrapes  <i>Biodiversity</i>	In their relevant representation <b>[RR-017]</b> , Yorkshire Wildlife Trust welcomes the incorporation of scrapes into the mitigation design strategy and is satisfied that a suitable management plan has been considered to ensure these scrapes hold water throughout the winter, which will provide a favourable habitat for wintering birds.	The Applicant welcomes this response. See the <b>Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [EN010157/APP/7.5 Revision 3]</b> for details.	Agreed
YWT07	Figham Pastures LWS  <i>Biodiversity</i>	In their relevant representation <b>[RR-017]</b> , Yorkshire Wildlife Trust welcomes the assessment of impacts on Figham Pastures LWS and encourages the commitment to encouraging native species. Yorkshire Wildlife Trust expects to see more detailed seed mixes and possible local donor sites discussed and may wish to comment on these when further detail is added.	The Applicant agrees to this request. Outline seed mix species are listed within the <b>Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [EN010157/APP/7.5 Revision 3]</b> . Final seed mixes, which will consider the use of local donor sites and local plant nurseries, will be included within the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan.	Agreed

Ref	Topic	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Position	Applicant's Position	Status
YWT08	Livestock use  <i>Design of Development</i>	<p>In their relevant representation <b>[RR-017]</b>, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust requested further details to demonstrate that appropriate infrastructure is in place to support livestock use. It is not clear that the design of this infrastructure will be implemented if it is left up to the landowners to choose later. This will also affect how the Applicant plans to manage the grasslands and could impact the proposed soil recovery, with potential knock-on impacts for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).</p> <p>Yorkshire Wildlife Trust confirmed via email on 30 October 2025 that it is satisfied with the Applicant's response to this request.</p>	<p>Appropriate livestock and livestock densities will be included within the Landscape and Environmental Management Plan. The <b>Outline LEMP [EN010157/APP/7.5 Revision 7]</b> has been updated to state that Yorkshire Wildlife Trust will be consulted in relation to a detailed grazing strategy that will be included in the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan.</p> <p>The <b>Outline LEMP [EN010157/APP/7.5 Revision 7]</b> will be submitted at Deadline 4.</p>	Agreed
YWT09	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and longevity of habitat creation  <i>Biodiversity</i>	<p>As discussed in an online meeting on 31 July 2025, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust accepts that the Proposed Development is temporary (with an anticipated lifetime of 40 years, after which it would be decommissioned) and subject to landowner agreements. However, it maintains its position that areas of habitat creation/enhancement, and therefore benefits of Biodiversity Net Gain, should be secured in perpetuity (as set out in its relevant</p>	<p>The BNG proposed to be delivered as part of the Proposed Development is presented in <b>ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.10: Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment [APP-115]</b>. The maintenance and management of the BNG proposed is secured for the lifetime of the Proposed Development in the <b>Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [EN010157/APP/7.5 Revision 3]</b> which is secured by Requirement 9 of the <b>Draft</b></p>	Not agreed

Ref	Topic	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Position	Applicant's Position	Status
		representation [RR-017]). Yorkshire Wildlife Trust does not consider the proposal to allow the area of habitat creation to be potentially returned to a different use to be appropriate.	<p><b>Development Consent Order [EN010157/APP/3.1 Revision 4].</b></p> <p>Further information will be released on the mechanism to secure the gains for the lifetime of the Proposed Development during the post-examination period.</p> <p>As set out in the <b>Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010157/APP/7.4 Revision 2]</b>, at the end of the Proposed Development's lifetime areas of community accessible land and environmental mitigation and enhancement areas will be returned to the landowner in private ownership.</p> <p><u>The Applicant notes the recent decision from the Tillbridge Solar DCO. In that case, the Secretary of State agreed that BNG need only be maintained for the lifetime of the development. This is in line with paragraph 5.4.44 of the overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) which requires that "Any habitat creation or enhancement delivered including linkages with existing habitats for compensation or biodiversity net</u></p>	

Ref	Topic	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Position	Applicant's Position	Status
			<u>gain should generally be maintained for a minimum period of 30 years, or for the lifetime of the project, if longer".</u>	

## 4 Signatures

4.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground is agreed upon:

On behalf of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

On behalf of the Applicant:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

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