

Date: 17 March 2026
Our ref: 542968
Your ref: EN010162



The Planning Inspectorate

BY EMAIL ONLY

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

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Sir/Madam,

NSIP Reference Name: Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park
Interested Party Reference: [REDACTED]

The Examining Authority's Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES) and second set of written questions and requests for information (ExQ2) relating to the Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park

Examining Authority's submission deadline: 25th March 2026

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.

Natural England is pleased to provide our response to the Examining Authority's Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES), as set out in Annex 1 to this letter. Our response to the Examining Authority's second written questions and requests for information (ExQ2) is set out separately in Annex 2 of this letter.

We hope our Deadline 4 response will be of assistance and we will continue to work collaboratively with the Applicant to address and resolve any outstanding matters.

For any further advice on this consultation please contact
consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

Sustainable Development Team
East Midlands Area Delivery – Natural England

Annex 1: Natural England comments in response to the Report on Implications for European Sites (RIES)

Natural England's response to the RIES with a deadline of 25th March 2026

Table 1: Natural England's response to the Report on Implications for European Sites (RIES)			
ID	Addressed to	ExA Question	Natural England Response
RIES Q3	Natural England	RIES Q3. The applicant's conclusions of no AEoI for all sites were not disputed by ANCB during the examination, and no comments have been received to date on the revised HRA report [REP2-015] which progresses to an assessment of AEoI. Can NE confirm it agrees with the applicant's conclusions?	Natural England can confirm that we agree with the applicant's conclusions of no AEoI for the sites assessed. We also acknowledge and support the updated precautionary approach adopted to assess impacts to lamprey at the appropriate assessment stage. On this basis, Natural England agrees with the outcomes of the assessment and has no outstanding concerns regarding the conclusions of no AEoI.

Annex 2: Natural England comments in response to the Examining Authority's written questions and requests for information (ExQ2)

Natural England's response to ExQ2 with a deadline of 25th March 2026

Table 1: Natural England's response to the Examining Authority's written questions and requests for information (ExQ2)			
ID	Addressed to	ExA Question	Natural England Response
Q4.2.1	NSDC, NCC and Natural England	Mitigation and Enhancement With regards to mitigation and enhancement measures, and how these have been considered by the applicant in its assessment of effects on ecology and biodiversity, could the parties please address the following points: - If you have any comments on the applicant's position on its approach to mitigation and enhancement, as set out in paragraphs 1.6.12 to 1.6.15 of [REP1-068] (and in [EV3-005]) - Do you agree with the applicant that an approach where enhancement accompanies mitigation, rather than the two being separate, represents good practice?	Natural England hold the view that enhancement can be delivered alongside mitigation rather than as a separate activity, provided it is clearly demonstrated that the full mitigation requirement has been fulfilled. Once the necessary mitigation has been delivered, any additional measures beyond that baseline can be considered enhancement. Natural England agree with paragraph 1.6.15 of [REP1-068] which states that this approach is now recognised as good practice. This approach ensures that enhancements are directly relevant to the feature, habitat, or resource being affected.