

Ouse & Derwent Internal Drainage Board's Response to the Examining Authority's written questions and requests for information (ExQ1) issued on 22 September 2026 – Light Valley Solar Project

Q1.15.11	Drainage of access roads The oDS [REP2-085] does not clearly differentiate between temporary and permanent access roads and internal roads. Furthermore, the oDS does not appear to calculate runoff volumes for proposed roads or alteration of existing public and private roads and seems to provide flexibility for impermeable surfaces at detail design. In addition, the applicant's response to representation reference IDB-11 [REP2-109] explained surfacing would be permeable where feasible and where high flows or overtopping are possible, more robust or reinforced surfaces may be required. The applicant is to review the oDS to provide clarity between temporary and permanent access roads and internal roads; and review the DPC [REP2-021] and oCEMP [REP2-089] to ensure consistency.	We appreciate that this question has not been directed to ourselves but we thought it may assist if we answer this also. Our understanding after discussions with the applicant is that for any temporary or permanent access roads (internal or external), the applicant will use permeable surfacing where possible. The Board wants to ensure that permeable really does mean permeable and will allow water to drain through. We therefore raised the matter that we treat Type 1 materials as "impermeable" and Type 3 materials as "permeable" and that if Type 1 materials (or similar) are therefore used, a drainage strategy will be required. This was agreed with the applicant and is noted in section 3.4.3 of REP2-085 [ES Volume 3 - Appendix 15.4 Outline Drainage Strategy (Clean) (Version 2)].
Q1.15.12	Existing land drainage Paragraph 5.7.10 of the oDS states "Where land use changes from agricultural use to solar PV, existing agricultural land drainage systems would no longer be required. Where there is the potential for interaction with existing land drains that are required to be retained, their locations would be identified through pre-construction surveys and measures implemented to avoid, protect and/ or divert them where practicable". This suggests that existing land drainage systems may be removed, or not protected, during the lifetime of the proposed development, unless identified as required to be retained.	This is partially outside of our remit but the Board's view is that an agricultural land drainage system is usually installed to collect and redirect excess surface water and groundwater to ensure suitable soil health for crops to grow. A landowner is not required to install a land drainage system or to maintain their existing system. If the land drainage systems under the solar panels are retained/maintained then this could result in an increase of water being discharged into the outfall locations (such as watercourses) as the land will be going from fully permeable (with crops for example) to partially impermeable with the solar panels.

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	All parties are to provide a view on what extent this could affect the water environment and whether removal or alterations to agricultural land drainage systems should be included in drainage plans to be submitted and approved through requirement 10 of the draft DCO?	The IDB has tried to find a compromise with solar panel sites requesting the following: a) There must be a greenfield buffer area 9 metres from the top of the embankment of any watercourse to try and slow any overland flows from the solar panels. b) The area directly underneath the solar panels must have continuous grass/vegetation all year round. The IDB do not want bare soil. We want vegetation to store the water and slow the flows coming off the solar panels. We hope that with the above provisions, this will slow water flows somewhat and hopefully avoid additional water being discharged into the watercourse systems. Provided the land drainage systems adjacent to the project are not cut off or are diverted around the project area, our view is that this should be satisfactory. The Board does not feel the agricultural land drainage systems for solar farm site itself need to remain.
Q1.15.13	Planting near watercourses The updated DPC [REP2-021] submitted at deadline 2 states that “planting within the 10m buffer of Ouse and Derwent IDB watercourses will only be on one side of the watercourses and will be on the side that the IDB don't work from”. Parties are to provide a view whether the same, or similar, commitment should be made for all other watercourses?	The IDB were able to agree this on this specific site based on the size of the watercourses and what we have historically agreed with the landowners surrounding the watercourses on Site 1 specifically. However, this is not something we could agree on every watercourse in our district – we sometimes have to work on both sides. This agreement with the applicant was very much specific to Site 1.

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Q1.16.21	Article 17 – Discharge of water All parties are to provide a view on whether article 17 should, for certainty and clarity, reference that any discharge of water should be in accordance with the approved surface water drainage scheme and foul water drainage scheme.	The IDB would ask that the provision states something along the following lines: <i>“Notwithstanding the requirements set out within this article, any discharge of water should be in accordance with the surface water drainage scheme and foul water drainage scheme approved under Requirement 10.”</i> The IDB wants to ensure that it is clear that having an approved surface water/foul drainage scheme from the Planning Authority does not mean that any other necessary consents are not obtained as sometimes the Planning Authority may agree a drainage scheme which is not agreed/wholly agreed by the IDB.
Q1.16.43	Requirement 10 – Surface and foul water drainage The applicant's response to relevant representation reference IDB-12 [REP2-109] explained that if a drainage strategy was deemed necessary by the Ouse and Derwent Internal Drainage Board due to the duration of the proposed temporary works, the protection provisions in part 3 of schedule 15 in draft DCO [REP2-004] would facilitate this. The Examining Authority's understanding is these protective provisions would only apply to drainage works within 7m to 9m of a watercourse, as defined in paragraph 20, part 3 of schedule 15. Parties are to provide a view on: a) whether requirement 10 of schedule 2 in the draft DCO should explicitly require a drainage plan for the construction and operation phases of the proposed development, to be submitted and approved in writing by the planning authority	The IDB would welcome both proposals within a) and b).

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	b) whether the relevant planning authority must consult with the Lead Local Flood Authority, Internal Drainage Board and the Environment Agency before determining an application for approval of the final surface and foul water drainage details. An example of such drafting is contained in requirement 16 of schedule 2 in the Dogger Bank South East and West Offshore Wind Farms Order 2026.	
Q1.16.55	Schedule 15 – Protective provisions Part 3 – paragraph 20 Parties are to provide a view whether the distances stated in “specified work” should be updated to reflect the applicant’s new commitment that planting in the 10m buffer on Ouse and Derwent IDB watercourses would only be on one side of a watercourse?	This is something we have been able to agree specifically for Site 1 with the applicant. The IDB only needed a 9m commitment but the applicant agreed 10m. The IDB has provided the applicant directly with a drawing showing which side the IDB works from and therefore where planting must be avoided on Site 1. As the Protective Provisions mean that the applicant must obtain our approval for any works within 9 metres of a watercourse, we are satisfied we can ensure the planting is on the correct side. The IDB will also be reviewing the proposed updated Landscaping Plans once these are available. The IDB have already informally reviewed a draft version of the landscaping plans for Site 1 and provided comments directly to the consultant. We await amended versions.