Light Valley Solar

Environmental Statement Volume 3

Appendix 6.2: Otter Report

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APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)

Light Valley Solar

Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

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

Light Valley Solar

DCO Submission

Appendix 6.2: Otter Report

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

1.1.1 This otter *Lutra lutra* survey report has been produced by Tyler Grange Limited on behalf of Light Valley Solar Limited ('The Applicant') and relates to the Proposed Development of a solar photovoltaic (PV) modules and associated development comprising Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure.

1.1.2 The Proposed Development's boundary, herein referred to as the Order Limits, is made up of four broad areas, the Solar Development Sites (900 hectares (ha)), Cable Route Corridor (328.5 ha), Highways Improvements Areas (17.1 ha), and Solar Development Site 8 Access (24.1 ha). Underground electric cables laid within the Cable Route Corridor will connect the Solar Development Sites and the existing Monk Fryston Substation, where the Proposed Development will connect to the National Grid. The Highways Improvement Areas are sections of the highway network that will contain localised improvements to allow movement of construction vehicles on narrower sections of the local highway network, such as improvements to the road edge, traffic management, and provision of temporary passing places or visibility splays. The Solar Development Site 8 Access area will provide optionality to access Solar Development Site 8 from the north. The entirety of the Order Limits is within the administrative area of North Yorkshire Council and falls within what was Selby district.

1.1.3 The Solar Development Sites are split across a total of seven separate land parcels (Solar Development Sites 1-4 and 6-8) as presented in Figure 2.1: Illustrative Site Layout Plans (ES Volume 2) [**EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.02.02.01**] and in the Outline Environmental Masterplan [**EN0110012/APP/LVS/02.12**]. The Solar Development Sites largely comprise agricultural fields bound by hedgerows, ditches, and mature trees, with smaller areas of woodland, grassland and scrub. The River Aire is also located approximately 465 metres (m) south of Solar Development Site 4. The Cable Route Corridor is similarly comprised of agricultural fields and associated boundary features and passes through the River Ouse and Selby Dam. The Highways Improvements Areas, and Solar Development Site 8 Access largely comprise hardstanding roads and adjacent habitats, with Solar Development Site 8 Access also passing through Selby Dam.

1.1.4 Within the report, the Cable Route Corridor, Highways Improvements Areas, and Solar Development Site 8 Access are collectively referred to as "Order Limits Outside of the Solar Development Sites".

1.1.5 This survey report aims to assess the presence of otters within the Order Limits, including the locations of any holts or resting places.

1.1.6 All watercourses within the Solar Development Sites were surveyed for otters. The same was also completed for the Order Limits Outside of the Solar Development Sites, excluding the watercourses where Avoidance Areas have

been identified and trenchless techniques will be used to cross the watercourse, as this is anticipated to result in reduced impacts to the watercourse (with entry and exit pits located a minimum of 50 m from the bank top of the River Ouse, and 10 m from the bank top of all other watercourses), as agreed with North Yorkshire Council (see Table 6-8 within Chapter 6: Biodiversity (ES Volume 1) [**EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.01.06**]. These watercourses will however have a pre commencement check for otter completed prior to the start of works to confirm otter holts/resting places are absent, with appropriate mitigation implemented as necessary, such as supervision by an Ecological Clark of Works (ECoW), to prevent impacts (further assessment of potential impacts provided within Chapter 6: Biodiversity (ES Volume 1) [**EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.01.06**]).

1.1.7 The otter surveys within the Order Limits Outside of the Solar Development Sites were completed in tandem with the water vole surveys and therefore the proposed watercourse crossing point, plus 200 m either side of the crossing point was surveyed for the two species (Please see Appendix 6.7: Water Vole Report (ES Volume 3) [**EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.03.06.07**] for the water volve survey results). The location of watercourses surveyed within the Order Limits Outside of the Solar Development Sites is shown in Figure 6.7: Otter Survey Results (ES Volume 2) [**EN0110012/APP/LVS/ 06.02.06.07**].

1.2 Quality control

1.2.1 All ecologists at Tyler Grange Group Limited are members of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) or are working towards membership, and act under the direction of members and abide by the Institute's Code of Professional Conduct (Ref 1).

1.3 Legislation and conservation status

1.3.1 Otters are protected under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence, with certain exceptions, to:

1) Intentionally or deliberately capture, kill, or injure an otter;
2) Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, and disturb otters in a place used for shelter or protection, or obstruct access to such areas;
3) Damage or destroy an otter breeding site or resting place;
4) Possess an otter, or any part of it, unless acquired lawfully; and
5) Sell, barter, exchange, transport, or offer for sale an otter or parts of them.

1.3.2 Actions that are prohibited can be made lawful by a licence issued by the appropriate Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (Natural England).

1.3.3 Otters are a Priority Species in the 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework' which provides a statutory list of priority species in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as required under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

(England), Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Section 2(4) of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, and Section 3(1) of the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. Decision-makers such as Local Planning Authorities must have regard to Priority Species in all their activities, including when making decisions on planning applications. Otters are a Local Biodiversity Action Plan Species within North Yorkshire.

2 Methodology

2.1 Desk study

2.1.1 Desk study data from North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre (NEYEDC) for protected species from, the last 10 years, including otter, was requested for up to 2 kilometres (km) in March 2025 from the Order Limits.

2.2 Field survey

2.2.1 The surveys followed the best-practice guidelines outlined in the CIEEM guidance (Ref 1) for surveying otters which utilises the guidance set out within Chanin (Ref 2 and Ref 3).

2.2.2 The survey included an assessment of the watercourse banks up to 5 m from the waters' edge or 3 m from the bank top, whichever was greater. A search was made for field signs indicating the presence of otters including spraints, prints, runs/pathways, slides and holts. Field signs were recorded by type, location, condition and age to determine habitat use and activity. Where it was safe, the water feature was entered to fully assess the bank. Where it was not safe to enter the water, just the bank tops were searched. Field signs searched for included:

1) Holts and denning areas-These vary greatly in size from enlarged rabbit holes to tree root cavities in banks and rock piles. Often heavily marked by spraint, although natal holts (for rearing young) can be cryptic and have few identifying features (Ref 4);
2) Slides- Bank slides into water typically 200 millimetres (mm) wide but may be much wider with heavy use. Tracks may be present where otters have propelled themselves;
3) Nests/Couches- These occur close to the water's edge, in vegetated banks and marshes. Recognised by an area of flattened and twisted grass or soil and may have evidence of feeding remains;
4) Spraint/faeces- Irregular, sometimes short, rounded segments, sometimes flattened, containing fish bones, scales and cray fish parts. When fresh they are often greenish and slimy, turning grey and brittle with age. Most often found on banks or on raised features such as logs, rocks and headwalls;
5) Latrines- Often found in high places similar to the individual spraints above, but with flattened vegetation and multiple scats, and are used for territory marking; and
6) Footprints- Five toes on front and rear tracks with the front track often being wider and rounder than the rear. Asymmetry or toe and interdigital pads can often be an indicator between dog and otter, with toes fanning out. The claws, if present, are blunt. Approximately 60 mm wide from base of track and 90 mm long.

2.2.3 In addition to the otter survey, a habitat suitability assessment was undertaken. Data relating to the quality of identified water features was reviewed so that a general assessment could be made as to the suitability of the habitat for otter. This involved a review of the aerial maps and data searches in local records.

2.2.4 Factors that are likely to influence the survival of local otter were judged to be of the greatest importance when evaluating habitat value. As otter populations may be limited by prey abundance, areas possessing or allowing access to optimal foraging habitat were judged to be of key importance. Areas possessing sub-optimal foraging habitat but that had other habitat qualities (e.g. low levels of disturbance and dense riparian cover) were of lesser importance, as they are less likely to be vital to local otter survival. Details of how values of importance to the local otter population were derived are given below:

1) Very high value – A locally unique key resource, vital for maintenance of existing otter population.
2) High value - Optimal foraging habitat owing to locally abundant prey items coupled with low disturbance and suitable riparian habitat for cover and lying-up sites i.e. holts and couches.
3) Medium value - Despite abundant prey items, location is considered sub-optimal due to either moderate disturbance levels or poor riparian habitat for cover and/or lying-up sites.
4) Low value - Location offers marginal food resources and / or poor habitat/cover and/or suffers from substantial disturbance.

2.2.5 The otter survey completed within the Order Limits Outside of the Solar Development Sites were undertaken in tandem with the water vole surveys and therefore the proposed watercourse crossing point, plus 200 m either side of the crossing point was surveyed for the two species (Please see Appendix 6.7: Water Vole Report (ES Volume 3) [**EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.03.06.07**] for the water volve survey results). The location of watercourses surveyed within the Order Limits Outside of the Solar Development Sites is shown in Figure 6.7: Otter Survey Results (ES Volume 2) [**EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.02.06.07**].

2.2.6 Dates and weather conditions for the otter surveys are provided in Table 1 and Table 2 below:

Table 1 Solar Development Sites Survey Dates and Weather Conditions

Date	Weather Conditions
13 January 2025	Dry, 2 - 5°C, Wind F3 - 4, Cloud 6/8
15 January 2025	Dry, 8-10°C, Wind F1-2/SW, Cloud 4/8
16 January 2025	Dry, 2°C, Wind F1/SE, Cloud 1/8
27 January 2025	Dry, 3°C, Wind F2-3/S, Cloud 3/8
28 January 2025	Dry, 6°C, Wind F2, Cloud 8/8
29 January 2025	Dry, 3°C, Wind F2, Cloud 0/8 (misty/fog)
06 February 2025	Dry, 2 - 5°C, Wind F2, Cloud 6/8

Date	Weather Conditions
18 February 2025	Dry, 3°C, Wind F3, Cloud 4/8
19 February 2025	Dry, 5°C, Wind F2, Cloud 3/8

Table 2 Order Limits Outside of the Solar Development Sites Survey Dates and Weather Conditions

Date	Weather Conditions
22 July 2025	Dry, 19°C, Wind F2/W, Cloud 7/8
23 July 2025	Dry, 20°C, Wind F2/W, Cloud 4/8
30 July 2025	Dry, 20°C, Wind F1/W, Cloud 6/8
28 August 2025	Dry, 21°C, Wind F3, Cloud 5/8
09 September 2025	Dry, 20°C, Wind F4, Cloud 3/8
30 September 2025	Dry, 17°C, Wind F3, Cloud 4/8
29th September 2026	Dry, 15°C, Wind F4, Cloud 6/8

2.3 Limitations

2.3.1 A limited number of watercourses had dense vegetation surrounding the watercourse, which made access / vision of the bank / channel difficult. However, as the majority of the watercourses were clear of dense vegetation, this is not thought to have impacted results significantly.

3 Results

3.1 Desk study results

3.1.1 The data search did not return any records of otter within the Order Limits. In addition, no records of otter were returned in 2 km of the Solar Development Sites. There were however two records of otter located within 2 km of the Highways Improvements Areas, where Dam Lane crossed Selby Dam. The records were located approximately 100 m east and 615 m east of this point, associated with Selby Dam.

3.2 Field survey

Solar Development Site 1

3.2.1 No signs of otter were recorded within Solar Development Site 1.

3.2.2 The watercourses present were all agricultural drainage ditches (Ditch 1.1 – Ditch 1.13) which were heavily managed channels of varying width, with steep grassy banks and mud substrate. Water depth ranged from approximately <10 cm to over 1.5 m, with little / no flow, and it is likely that many of the shallower ditches hold little/no water for a significant proportion of the year and are only seasonally wet.

3.2.3 The majority of the ditches had undergone recent management, whereby bankside vegetation had been cut over winter and/or the ditches dredged (with freshly discarded silt laid out on the top of the bankside).

3.2.4 Overall, Solar Development Site 1 is assessed as being of low value for otter, however, could be utilised in a commuting context by the species, whereby otter may move through the Solar Development Site to higher value habitat. Some of the ditches are bordered on one side by woodland plantation, or mature trees/hedgerow, which could provide opportunities for laying up, but no evidence of this was found during the survey. Photographs from the survey, and associated descriptions, can be found in Annex A.

Solar Development Site 2

3.2.5 Two agricultural drainage ditches (Ditch 2.1 – Ditch 2.2) were present within Solar Development Site 2. A single spraint was recorded on a grass tussock on the southern bank of Ditch 2.1 (D2.1) (Fleet Dike) in the centre of Solar Development Site 2, adjacent to where the ditch is culverted under the central access track.

3.2.6 In addition, a possible historic sprainting site was also recorded on a rock approximately 15 m west of the confirmed spraint within D2.1. Photographs from the survey, and associated descriptions, can be found in Annex A and the location of the field signs are shown on Figure 6.7: Otter Survey Results (ES Volume 2) [**EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.02.06.07**]. No other otter signs were recorded with Solar Development Site 2.

3.2.7 D2.1 was found to be an agricultural ditch with an approximate 1.5 m wide channel and a bankside gradient of >45°. The water depth was 30-50 cm, with deep mud/silt substrate. The ditch had been subject to dredging over winter. Very little dense vegetation (scrub and trees) was present on the banksides; however, the ditch did flow past an off-site woodland copse on the eastern boundary, which could provide opportunities for laying up, but no evidence of this was found during the survey.

3.2.8 An additional ditch, Ditch 2.2 (D2.2) extended along a short section of the north-eastern corner of Solar Development Site 2 and comprised an agricultural ditch, with shallow water levels approximately <30 cm. D2.2 was approximately 1 m wide, and heavily overgrown with bramble *Rubus fruticosus agg*. and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*. Due to the overgrown nature of D2.2, there is potential for otter to lay up in the dense vegetation, however no signs were recorded during the survey.

3.2.9 Overall, Solar Development Site 2 is assessed as being of low value for otter, however D2.1 has been confirmed as a commuting feature for otter, although the shallowness of the water means the on-site ditches are unlikely to offer foraging opportunities for the species. Due to the overgrown nature of D2.2, and as D2.1 flows past a woodland copse, there is potential for otter to lay up in the dense vegetation, however no signs were recorded during the survey.

Solar Development Site 3

3.2.10 Two agricultural drainage ditches (Ditch 3.1 – Ditch 3.2) were present within Solar Development Site 3. No signs of otter were recorded within Solar Development Site 3. The watercourses present were both agricultural drainage ditches approximately 1.5 m wide, with water depths of 30-50 cm and mud/silt substrate. Both ditches had little to no shading/no dense vegetation adjacent to the ditch and appeared heavily managed. Photographs from the survey, and associated descriptions, can be found in Annex A.

3.2.11 Overall, the Solar Development Site 3 is assessed as being of low value for otter. However, Site 3 could be utilised in a commuting context by the species whereby otter may move through the Solar Development Site to higher value habitat. No suitable resting places/locations were recorded, and foraging opportunities appeared limited.

Solar Development Site 4

3.2.12 The River Aire is present approximately 465 m south of Solar Development Site 4 (outside of the Order Limits), where numerous otter signs were recorded including prints, slides (entry/exit points) and a possible couch in the grassland adjacent to the riverbank. The river was surveyed because at the time of survey, the Order Limits were adjacent to the river. The Order Limits has since moved to its current location, 465 m north of the river. Nevertheless, results recorded along the river are included in this report for context, with photographs from the survey,

and associated descriptions, located in Annex A. The River Aire provides high value habitat for otter offering foraging and resting place opportunities.

3.2.13 Numerous ditches are present within Solar Development Site 4 (Ditch 4.1 – Ditch 4.8 and D 4.13 – D4.14), however signs of otter were only recorded within Ditch 4.1 (D4.1) on the northern boundary of Solar Development Site 4, where otter prints were recorded. The location of the field sign is shown on Figure 6.7: Otter Survey Results (ES Volume 2) [**EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.02.06.07**].

3.2.14 The ditches present within Solar Development Site 4 were predominantly heavily managed agricultural ditches on field boundaries, with varying water depths of approximately 20 cm to 1 m. Some ditches had dense vegetation present along one bankside, due to the presence of off-site woodland copses or hedgerows, which could offer potential laying up opportunities for otter. However, no laying up locations were identified within Site 4 during the survey.

3.2.15 Otter presence within the River Aire was confirmed during the survey. This river and its associated banks are anticipated to form suitable foraging, resting and breeding habitat for the species. Due to the relative proximity of the Solar Development Site 4 to the River Aire, with signs of otter recorded in D4.1 (prints), it is likely otter utilise the drainage ditch network within Solar Development Site 4 for commuting. The adjacent off-site woodland copses also provide potential resting place opportunities, however no laying up locations were identified. As such, Solar Development Site 4 is considered to offer medium value habitat for otter, mainly due to the relative proximity of the River Aire.

Solar Development Site 6

3.2.16 No signs of otter were recorded within Solar Development Site 6. The watercourses present within Solar Development Site 6 were all agricultural drainage ditches (Ditch 6.1 – Ditch 6.6), with a channel width of approximately 1-3 m and a bankside gradient of 45°, with little to no shading. The ditches had a water depth of approximately 30-50 cm, with a deep mud / silt substrate, and appeared to be heavily managed. Photographs from the survey, and associated descriptions, can be found in Annex A.

3.2.17 Overall, Solar Development Site 6 is considered to be of low value for otter, however, could be utilised in a commuting context whereby otter may move through the Solar Development Site to higher value habitat. No suitable resting places/locations were recorded, and foraging opportunities appeared limited.

Solar Development Site 7

3.2.18 No signs of otter were recorded within Solar Development Site 7. A single ditch, Ditch 7.1, was located on the southern boundary. The channel was approximately 1 m wide, with a water depth of 10-30 cm, silt/mud substrate and a bankside gradient of 45°. The ditch was heavily managed with little to no shading. Photographs from the survey, and associated descriptions, can be found in Annex A.

3.2.19 Overall, Solar Development Site 7 is considered to be of low value for otter, however, could be utilised in a commuting context whereby otter may move through the Solar Development Site to higher value habitat. No suitable resting places/locations were recorded, and foraging opportunities appeared limited.

Solar Development Site 8

3.2.20 No signs of otter were recorded within Solar Development Site 8. A single ditch, Ditch 8.1 (Habholme Dike), was located on the western boundary and was approximately 2 m wide, with a bank height of approximately 4 m, steep grassy banks >45%, and a water depth of approximately 30-50 cm. No dense vegetation was present immediately adjacent to the ditch. However, woodland was located to the west of the ditch, separated from the ditch by a bare ground track. The woodland outside the Order Limits could provide opportunities for laying up, but no evidence of this was found during the survey. Photographs from the survey, and associated descriptions, can be found in Annex A.

3.2.21 Overall, Solar Development Site 8 is considered to be of low value for otter, however, could be utilised in a commuting context whereby otter may move through the Solar Development Site to higher value habitat. There is potential for otter to lay up in the woodland outside the Order Limits, however no signs were recorded during the survey, and foraging opportunities appeared limited.

Order Limits Outside of the Solar Development Sites

3.2.22 The majority of the watercourses surveyed for otter within the Order Limits Outside of the Solar Development Sites were found to be of negligible value for otter as they were either dry or had no suitable surrounding vegetation. No evidence of otter was recorded at any survey point within the Order Limits Outside of the Solar Development Sites.

3.2.23 Six survey points within the Order Limits Outside of the Solar Development Sites recorded low suitability for otter. These were as follows:

1) Where the Cable Route Corridor connected to the Solar Development Sites within D4.8 (CRC 4-POC) and D6.3 (CRC 2-6);
2) Within Ditch 9.16 (D9.16) and Ditch 9.18 (D9.18) in the Cable Route Corridor itself (both CRC 1-4), due to the fact that D9.16 connected to the River Ouse and D9.18 connected to Selby Dam, which comprise watercourses of high value to otter (discussed below);
3) Where a permanent watercourse crossing and culvert is proposed within Habholme Dike, within the Solar Development Site 8 Access at survey point D8.1a; and
4) Within D9.28 (CRC 1-4) where a temporary open span bridge may require installation during the construction phase should the access option over Dam Dike (D9.28) be utilised. This access option is referred to as “alternate access route via CA1” introduced in Change Request 1 within the Change Application submitted during Examination.

3.2.24 The location of these six survey points is shown on Figure 6.7: Otter Survey Results (ES Volume 2) [**EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.02.06.07**]. These ditches would only be utilised in a commuting context whereby otter may move through the Order Limits Outside of the Solar Development Sites to higher value habitat, as they had no suitable resting places noted, foraging opportunities appeared limited, and no evidence of otter was recorded within these ditches.

3.2.25 It is however important to note that the Cable Route Corridor passes through the River Ouse and Selby Dam (both CRC 1-4), and these rivers are anticipated for form high value habitat for otter, including resting places and foraging opportunities. This being said, these watercourses, and their surrounding habitat, will be retained through the Proposed Development as trenchless techniques will be used to cross these watercourses. As such, these watercourses were not surveyed for otter at this stage as impacts to the species in these locations are anticipated to be reduced (with entry and exit pits located a minimum of 50 m from the bank top of the Rover Ouse, and 10 m from the bank top of all other watercourses), as agreed with North Yorkshire Council (see Table 6-8 of Chapter 6: Biodiversity (Volume 1) [**EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.01.06**]). These watercourses will however have a pre commencement check for otter completed prior to the start of works to confirm otter holts/resting places are absent, with appropriate mitigation, such as supervision by an ECoW, implemented as necessary to prevent impacts (further assessment of potential impacts provided within Chapter 6: Biodiversity (Volume 1) [**EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.01.06**]).

3.2.26 The Avoidance Areas where trenchless techniques will be employed, including the associated entry and exit pits, are shown on the Figure 2.5: Avoidance Areas (ES Volume 2) [**EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.02.02.05**].

3.2.27 A third and final section of river is included within the Order Limits Outside of the Solar Development Sites, comprising an existing crossing over Selby Dam which will be utilised as part of the Solar Development Site 8 Access. In this location, it is likely the existing crossing will be used, and the footprint of the culvert will be maintained. However, as a worst-case scenario assessment, the existing culvert may need replacing with a new crossing structure. As such, an otter survey of this location was completed. No otter field signs or potential holt locations were recorded at this survey point; however, the river was assessed as providing high value habitat for otter due to its connectivity and foraging opportunities. Otter may therefore use this section of river in a commuting / foraging context.

4 Conclusions

4.1.1 Presence of otter was confirmed in a singular ditch (D2.1) within Solar Development Site 2 (spraint) and a singular ditch (D4.1) within Solar Development Sites 4 (prints). Prints, slides, and a possible couch were also recorded approximately 465 m south of Solar Development Site 4, associated with the River Aire.

4.1.2 The River Aire, located outside the Order Limits, approximately 465 m south of Solar Development Site 4, offers high value habitat for otter, including resting places and foraging opportunities. The numerous field signs of otter recorded along the river, indicate frequent use by the species.

4.1.3 High value habitat for otter is also anticipated to be provided within the River Ouse and Selby Dam, which the Cable Route Corridor passes through. However, as trenchless techniques will be used to cross these watercourses, the watercourse and their surrounding habitat be retained through the Proposed Development, and therefore these watercourses were not surveyed for otter at this stage as impacts to the species in these locations are anticipated to be reduced (with entry and exit pits located a minimum of 50 m from the bank top of the Rover Ouse, and 10 m from the bank top of all other watercourses), as agreed with North Yorkshire Council (see Table 6-8 in Chapter 6: Biodiversity (ES Volume 1) [**EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.01.06**]). These watercourses will however have a pre commencement check for otter completed prior to the start of works to confirm otter holts/resting places are absent, with appropriate mitigation, such as supervision by an ECoW, implemented as necessary to prevent impacts (further assessment of potential impacts provided within Chapter 6). The Avoidance Areas where trenchless techniques will be employed, including the associated entry and exit pits, are shown on the Figure 2.5: Avoidance Areas (ES Volume 2) [**EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.02.02.05**].

4.1.4 Solar Development Site 4 has been assessed as offering medium value for otter due to its relative proximity to the River Aire, and it is likely otter utilise the drainage ditch network within Solar Development Site 4 for commuting. The woodland copse outside the Order Limits adjacent Solar Development Site 4 also provides potential resting place opportunities, however no laying up locations were identified within Site 4 during the survey.

4.1.5 Solar Development Sites 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8, as well as D9.16, D9.18 and D9.28 within the Cable Route Corridor, and D8.1a within the Solar Development Site 8 Access have been assessed as being of low value for otter, with the majority of watercourses comprising heavily modified drainage ditches, with limited foraging opportunities and only occasional suitable cover for resting. These watercourses and surrounding habitat will however likely be utilised by commuting otter, which has been confirmed in Solar Development Site 2 by the recorded spraint in within D2.1. No other evidence of otter was returned within the habitat assessed as being low value to otter.

4.1.6 In addition to the two sections of river discussed above in the Cable Route Corridor, a third and final section of river is included within the Solar Development Site 8 Access, comprising an existing crossing over Selby Dam. In this location, if this access option into Site 8 is utilised, it is likely the existing crossing will be used, and the footprint of the culvert will be maintained. However, as a worst-case scenario assessment, the existing culvert may need replacing with a new crossing structure. As such, an otter survey of this location was completed. No otter field signs or potential holt locations were recorded at this survey point; however, the river was assessed as providing high value habitat for otter due to its connectivity and foraging opportunities. Otter may therefore use this section of river in a commuting/foraging context.

4.1.7 The remaining watercourses surveyed for otter within the Order Limits Outside of the Solar Development Sites were found to be of negligible value for otter as they were either dry, or had no suitable surrounding vegetation, with no evidence of otter recorded.

References

Ref 1 CIEEM, “Code of Professional Conduct,” 2022. CIEEM, Winchester

Ref 2 Chanin, P. “Ecology of the European Otter,” 2003a. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Ecology Series No. 10. English Nature, Peterborough.

Ref 3 Chanin, P. “Monitoring the Otter *Lutra lutra*,” 2003b. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Ecology Series No. 10. English Nature, Peterborough.

Ref 4 Liles, G. “Otter Breeding Sites. Conservation and Management,” 2003. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Ecology Series No. 5. English Nature, Peterborough.

Annex A Photographs

Description	Location (what three words)	Photograph
Solar Development Site 1, Ditch 1.3 – heavily managed agricultural ditch.	///feared.sweeper.juggles	
Solar Development Site 1, Ditch 1.10 – agricultural ditch with off-site woodland flanking the bankside which may offer laying up opportunities for otter. However, no signs of otter were recorded during survey.	///ridiculed.cares.firmer	
Solar Development Site 2, Ditch 2.1 - fresh otter spraint recorded on tussock of grass on bank	///mole.paradise.homeward	

Description	Location (what three words)	Photograph
Solar Development Site 2, Ditch 2.1- flows through the centre of the Solar Development Site and past an off-site woodland copse	///postcard.camera.picturing	
Solar Development Site 2, Ditch 2.2- overgrown by bramble and bracken	///listen.ruler.clocking	
Solar Development Site 3, Ditch 3.2 heavily managed agricultural ditch	///dummy.leave.control	

Description	Location (what three words)	Photograph
Solar Development Site 4, Ditch 4.1- probable otter print on top of ditch bank	///nametag.intruded.precautions	
Solar Development Site 4, Ditch 4.1- Example of ditch network which is dominated by heavily managed agricultural ditches	///waistcoat.hothouse.seeing	

Description	Location (what three words)	Photograph
465 m south of Solar Development Site 4, River Aire- otter prints, likely exit/entry point and possible couch	///knee.situation.wipe ///skate.grudges.crouching ///skews.grew.furniture	 
Solar Development Site 6, Ditch 6.2- A heavily managed agricultural ditch	///sisters.scariest.homeward	

Description	Location (what three words)	Photograph
Solar Development Site 7, Ditch 7.1- heavily managed agricultural ditch	///reprints.trappings.steep	
Solar Development Site 8, Ditch 8.1- present along the western boundary flanked by off-site woodland along part of the ditch	///retaliate.healthier.hips	
Cable Route Corridor, Ditch 9.16- heavily managed agricultural ditch however connection to the River Ouse makes it more likely to be utilised by commuting otter	///pegged.starch.asse ss	

Description	Location (what three words)	Photograph
Cable Route Corridor, Ditch 9.18- overgrown agricultural ditch however connection to Selby Dam makes it more likely to be utilised by commuting otter	///gulped.resembles.giraffes	
Cable Route Corridor, Ditch 9.28- Managed agricultural ditch which is assessed as providing low value habitat for commuting otter. Temporary open span bridge may require installation during the construction phase should the access option over Dam Dike (D9.28) be utilised. This access option is referred to as “alternate access route via CA1” introduced in Change Request 1	///outgrown.popping.audible	

Description	Location (what three words)	Photograph
Cable Route Corridor, Selby Dam-Anticipated to form high value habitat for otter however will be crossed using trenchless techniques as outlined in Chapter 2: The Proposed Development (ES Volume 1) [**EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.01.02**]	///steroids.yesterday.quicker	
Solar Development Site 8 Access, Ditch 8.1a- Permanent watercourse crossing and culvert is proposed within Habholme Dike which is assessed as providing low value habitat for otter	///pausing.boring.wager	
Solar Development Site 8 Access, Salby Dam- Located between arable fields and grazed grassland, vegetation on bank tops highly managed and short cut, but vegetation on banksides is abundant. Shallow depth along length surveyed (<0.5 m) but holds water throughout entirety of channel. No otter field signs or	///blending.workbench.rejected	

Description	Location (what three words)	Photograph
potential holt locations were recorded at this survey point; however, the river was assessed as providing high value habitat for otter.		

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