THE DROVES
SOLAR FARM

The Droves Solar Farm

Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) with Environment Agency (Clean)

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

1.1.0 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared as part of the application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) (the DCO Application) for The Droves Solar Farm (the Scheme) made by The Droves Solar Farm Limited (the Applicant) to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero (SoS) pursuant to the Planning Act 2008.

1.1.1 SoCGs are an established means in the DCO consenting process, of allowing all parties to identify and focus on specific issues that may need to be addressed during the examination.

1.1.2 This SoCG is being submitted to the Examining Authority (the ExA) at Deadline 6 to reflect the final position between the parties.

1.2 Parties to this Statement of Common Ground

1.2.0 This SoCG has been prepared by the Applicant and the Environment Agency (EA).

1.2.1 Collectively, the Applicant and EA are referred to as 'the parties.'

1.3 Purpose of this Document

1.3.0 This SoCG represents the final position between both parties being submitted to the ExA.

1.3.1 The SoCG is intended to provide information for the examination process, facilitate a smooth and efficient examination, and manage the amount of material that needs to be submitted.

1.4 Terminology

1.4.0 This SoCG summarises the main topics covered and the status of the matter. The colour coding system used within the table in Section 4 has been outlined below.

Cell	Status
	Agreed – indicates where an issue has been resolved.

	Under Discussion – indicates where points continue to be the subject of ongoing discussions wherever possible to resolve, or refine, the extent of disagreement between the parties.
	Not Agreed – indicates a position where both parties have reached a final position that a matter cannot be agreed between them.

2 The Scheme

2.1 Scheme Description

2.1.0 The Scheme is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) for the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating station and associated development comprising a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), a Customer Substation and Grid Connection Infrastructure, including a new National Grid Substation. The Scheme would allow for the generation and export of over 50 megawatts (MW) Alternating Current (AC) of renewable energy, connecting into the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS) overhead line that passes through the Site.

2.1.1 The **Location Plan [APP-007]** shows the Order limits for the Scheme, which is approximately 840 hectares (ha) of land within Norfolk (the 'Order limits').

3 Record of Engagement

3.1 Summary of Engagement

3.1.0 The parties have been engaged in consultation since December 2024.

3.1.1 A non-statutory consultation took place between 17 September and 1 October 2024. The statutory consultation process took place between 21 May and 9 July 2025.

3.1.2 The Applicant and EA have engaged extensively throughout the pre-application and Environmental Impact Assessment stages of the Scheme. The key engagement has included discussions on protecting groundwater and chalk rivers, BESS firewater, and piling impacts.

3.1.3 Table 3.1 shows a summary of key engagement that has taken place between the Applicant and EA in relation to the Application.

Table 3.1 – Record of Engagement

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key topics discussed and key outcomes
05/12/2024	Written responses to EIA Scoping	Key topics discussed: • Drinking Water Protected Areas within the Core Study Area • Methodology for assessing magnitude of water quality impacts (WFD status) • Risks of pollution to the River Nar (including ephemeral / dry valleys)

		• Sensitivity of chalk stream habitats (River Nar SSSI)
		• Sediment control, runoff, and pollution prevention during construction
		• Surface water and contaminated runoff management at BESS and substations
		• Firefighting water containment at BESS
		• Sewage management during construction and operation
		• Surface water abstraction constraints
		Key outcomes:
		• Drinking Water Protected Areas were formally included as sensitive receptors in the Water Resources assessment.
		• WFD status change retained as an indicator of impact magnitude, with clarification that no WFD deterioration would be acceptable.
		• Additional embedded mitigation secured through:
		  ○ **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [APP/7.6.1]**
		  ○ Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)
		• Commitment to:
		  ○ Dedicated contaminated water containment tanks with penstocks at BESS and substations

		○ Enhanced sediment and runoff control measures ○ SuDS designed to 1% AEP + 40% climate change • EA concerns were addressed and incorporated into **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]** and **ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [AS-053]**.
07/07/2025	Written responses to PEIR	Key topics discussed: • Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZ 1 and SPZ 2) • Vulnerability of the Chalk Principal Aquifer • Location and design of BESS, Customer Substation and National Grid Substation • Foundation depths and piling impacts on groundwater • Adequacy of groundwater baseline data and monitoring • Firewater and contaminated runoff risks at BESS • Infiltration SuDS acceptability in SPZs • Private water abstractions and potable supplies • Land contamination risks (marl pits, historic land use) • Decommissioning risks (cables left in situ) • Adequacy of impact magnitude and significance matrices

		Key outcomes:
		• Siting of BESS and substations revised to avoid SPZ 1, demonstrated in **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]** figures.
		• Confirmation that Work Nos. 2–4 are outside SPZ1 and sited preferentially where lower permeability deposits exist.
		• **ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [AS-053]** updated to:
		  ○ Include sealed drainage systems and dedicated contaminated water storage
		  ○ Provide headroom for combined fire and flood events
		  ○ Include 2D direct rainfall modelling and hydraulic reporting
		• Clarification and amendment of:
		  ○ Piling depths (up to 4 m for PV, up to 12 m for BESS/substations)
		  ○ Impact assessment methodology and significance matrices
		• Addition of commitments to:
		  ○ Foundation Works Risk Assessment
		  ○ Breakout fluid containment for HDD
		  ○ Unexpected contamination protocols

		• EA objections were addressed through design changes, strengthened mitigation and DCO-secured requirements, allowing progression of the application.
July 2025	Email request for Environmental Information	The Applicant requested up to date records of licenced groundwater abstraction data. The EA provided records of licenced groundwater abstractions within the WSSA in August 2025.

September 2025	Teams meeting	Key topics discussed:
		
		• To discuss the assessment of groundwater and commitments in the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]**
		
		Key outcomes:
		
		• Meeting feedback directly informed revisions to:
		  ○ Water Resources assessment
		  ○ **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]** commitments
		  ○ FRA design principles

March 2026	Email request from the Applicant for Environmental Information	The Applicant requested the following: • Groundwater monitoring data • Abstraction and licensing records • Geological and Hydrogeological information

		• Additional Monitoring datasets • North East Anglian Chalk (NEAC) Model outputs
23/04/2026	Teams Meeting – Applicant and Environment Agency	Key topics discussed: • NEAC outputs including groundwater levels, flow directions Key outcomes: • NEAC groundwater levels are less conservative than Applicant's groundwater assessment • NEAC Model outputs can be used to inform the assessment of groundwater
May-July 2026	Disapplication email correspondence and meeting (18 06 2026)	Key topics discussed: • Work no.11 is considered by Applicant as area needing a FRAP, and thereby seeking disapplication and protective provisions with DCO. • Environment Agency state works associated with floodplain of Ordinary Watercourse, and thereby don't need a FRAP. • Environment Agency advise that we require upfront detail for disapplication of FRAPs Key outcomes: Environment Agency shared standard wording regarding what's needed for disapplication 07 July 2026.

June 2026	Written Relevant Representation	See EA issues EA01 – EA51 in tables below. Key Outcomes: • Issues are primarily matters of clarity, assurance and detail, with risks considered manageable and capable of resolution through updated ES material and secured DCO controls rather than fundamental objection.
July – August 2026	Statement of Common Ground Correspondence	Correspondence via email to update the SoCG and include additional updates made at Deadline 4.
October 2026	Meeting and Statement of Common Ground Correspondence	Correspondence via email to update the SoCG and include additional updates made at Deadline 5.
October 2026	Meeting and Statement of Common Ground Correspondence	Correspondence via email, as well as a meeting on 29 October 2026, to update the SoCG and include additional updates made at Deadline 6.

3.1.4 It is agreed that this is an accurate record of the key meetings and consultation undertaken between the Applicant and the EA in relation to the issues addressed in this SoCG.

4 Matters of Discussion

4.1 Overview

4.1.0 The following tables detail, by topic, the matters agreed, under discussion, or not agreed between the Applicant and the EA at the point of this document being submitted.

Table 4.1 – Water, Flood Risk & Drainage

Reference	EA Issue Reference	Topic	Consultee's Position	Applicant's Position	Status
1-1	EA01	Source Protection Zone	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that 6.3 Environmental Statement Figure 12.5 [APP-119] was unclear in regard to how the draft Order Limits, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) sites, substation sites and SPZs intersect. 6.3.1 ES Figure 12.5 Source Protection Zones [REP3-046] was updated at deadline 3, improving the clarity. However, we also recommended, for completeness, that the SPZ3 designation should also be added to the figure and represented in the key.	**ES Figure 12.5: Source Protection Zone [APP/6.3.1]** was intended to show what infrastructure is located within SPZ 1 and 2; however, to aid the Environment Agency's interpretation, this Figure was updated at Deadline 3. The SPZ3 designation has been added to Figure 12.5 at Deadline 4.	Agreed

			Figure 12.5 Source Protection Zones [REP4-023] has now been updated as requested.		
1-2	EA02	Drinking Water Protected Area	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that Figure 12.12 [APP-126] does not show all of the drinking water protection designations, including the Drinking Water Surface Water Safeguard Zone and Drinking Water Groundwater Safeguard Zone. The reader is therefore unable to see these designations in the context of the draft Order Limits. 6.3.1 ES Figure 12.12 Drinking Water Protection Designations [REP3-042] has been updated sufficiently.	It is noted that **ES Figure 12.12: Drinking Water Protected Area [APP-126]** does not show other drinking water protection designations and this Figure was updated at Deadline 3 **ES Figure 12.12: Drinking Water Protection Designations [APP/6.3.1]**.	Agreed
1-3	EA03	3D Representation of Groundwater	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that 6.3 Environmental Statement Figure 12.7 3D Representation of Groundwater [APP-121] is difficult to interpret, which limits its value. We requested additional views of the modelled area, with a clearer indication of view orientation and contouring of the groundwater surface, if applicable. We have reviewed the following:	To aid the Environment Agency's interpretation of **ES Figure 12.7: 3D Representation of Groundwater [APP/6.3.1]**, the following changes were made at Deadline 3. • Addition of orientation labels or description • Elevation shading to show mAOD values for the maximum groundwater elevation surface and foundation extent surface; and	Agreed

			• 6.3.1 ES Figure 12.7 Triangulated Baseline Groundwater Elevation [REP3-048] • 6.3.1 ES Figure 12.8 Depth to Triangulated Baseline Groundwater Elevation [REP3-049] • 6.3.1 ES Figure 12.9 Depth to NEAC Groundwater Wet Conditions [REP3-050] We are content to resolve this issue. *Additional advice* The baseline groundwater elevations are subdivided into 6 ranges in the key but only 5 categories are visible in the figure - looks like the 45.001-50 category is the one not represented visually.	• Figures and text refer to groundwater elevation (mAOD) rather than groundwater level to increase clarity between absolute elevation and depth below ground. ES Figure 12.7 shows 6 ranges in the key. All ranges are shown within the Order limits. The minimum range (23.06-25) is the northern most part of the Order limits on Low Road. The maximum range (45.001-50) is found within the south western part of the Order limits, including the A47 junction.	
1-4	EA04	Groundwater Flow Direction	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the groundwater flow direction shown in figures 12.7 to 12.16 may be inaccurate. We advised that the claims made in sections 12.6.37 and 12.6.38 of 6.2 Environmental Statement Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061] should be revised, supported by new evidence. Following our review of additional information submitted at deadline 3, we were content for this issue to the resolved,	The Applicant maintains that reference to Figure 12.10 has been made as the dry scenario, and was updated at Deadline 4. Reference to the groundwater model used to create the NEAC model has been changed to MODFLOW 5 at Deadline 4. Figure 12.9 shows depth to the NEAC groundwater baseline which has been calculated using the difference between the NEAC groundwater elevations wet scenario and LiDAR, and therefore the title of Figure 12.9 is correct, as it reflects the source of data.	Agreed

			as set out in our follow-on letter dated 25 August 2026 [AS-088]. However, we noted a number of issues with the North-East Anglian Chalk (NEAC) Groundwater Model and recommended the following corrections: • To either change the references to Figure 12.10 to the correct scenario (i.e. Wet to Dry) or add the correct figure if available; • Change reference to the groundwater model used to create the bespoke NEAC groundwater model (i.e. TUFLOW 5 to MODFLOW 5) • Correct the source for data used in Figure 12.9. 6.2.3 ES Chapter 12 Water Resources (Tracked) [REP4-022] was amended to the correct reference of the MODFLOW 5 and dry scenario. 6.3.1 ES Figure 12.9 Depth to NEAC Groundwater Wet Conditions [REP3-050] has not been updated since deadline 3, and still incorrectly references the Environment Agency NEAC model. 6.3.1 ES Figure 12.10 Groundwater Flow Directions from NEAC Groundwater Model [REP3-041] has not been amended, but the text in Chapter 12		

			has now been updated to correctly state the dry scenario, which we deem satisfactory.		
1-5	EA12	Flood Risk - BESS	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that there was insufficient flood mitigation provided for BESS units. In the 8.4 Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067], it is stated that the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) includes a commitment to produce a drainage design based on the detailed site design, post DCO, based on the 1 in 100 year rainfall event + 40% climate change allowance. If localised flood depths cannot be managed by the drainage strategy, then BESS units will be appropriately raised to 300 mm above the modelled flood level. We find this acceptable.	The Scheme has Work Nos. and does not have a detailed design at this stage. A detailed drainage plan will be provided once the detailed design of the Scheme has been progressed and finalised, following the issue of the DCO (if consented), as detailed within Section 12.4 of **ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [APP-170]**. If localised flood depths cannot be managed via the drainage strategy, **ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [APP/6.4.3]** was updated at Deadline 2 to confirm that BESS units will be appropriately raised to 300 mm above the modelled flood level. It should be noted that the 2D pluvial modelling represents flow pathways and flood depths using baseline topography. Groundworks / enabling works for Work Nos. 2 to 4 are likely to level the area to remove topographical hollows, meaning the baseline flooding scenario is unlikely to be representative of the post-development scenario. As the Scheme does not have a detailed design at this stage, there is a commitment in **ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [AS-053]** to have a formal	Agreed

				drainage system for the BESS and Customer Substation designed to the 1% AEP + 40% climate change allowance, with no flooding of the drainage system built into the design, as per National Standards. As such, the current pluvial ponding would enter the drainage system, rather than flow across or pond on the surface of Work Nos. 2 to 4. The Environment Agency have agreed that this principle is acceptable in their Statement of Common Ground on the Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park, where the BESS area was modelled to have pluvial depths greater than for the Scheme (see EA025 of the EA's SoCG for Great North Road).	
1-6	EA14	Private Water Supplies	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. The groundwater elevation records which have been provided to date appear to represent groundwater within the underlying Chalk Principal aquifer. The potential for some of the identified abstractions to draw from the Superficial Secondary A aquifers, which are locally present along the River Nar, cannot be discounted. However, we acknowledge that the elements of the Proposed Development which could pose the highest risk to water quality within the Superficial deposits – i.e. the BESS, Substation and trenchless drilling activities – are located away from areas in which	As outlined in paragraph 12.6.48 of **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]**, private water supplies in proximity to the Scheme abstract groundwater, as indicated by council records, and as such the levels derived from the triangulated groundwater elevation model is suitable to determine groundwater abstraction depths. As outlined in paragraph 12.8.107 of **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]**, effects on the groundwater resource from the Scheme of which private water supplies draw, as a result of embedded mitigation outlined in the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]**, is negligible.	Agreed

			Superficial deposits are recorded in BGS mapping. Provided the Applicant ensures that post-consent groundwater investigation, and monitoring, establishes the groundwater hydraulic head and flow direction within the Chalk Principal aquifer within the Order Limits, we concur that dipping of private groundwater abstraction boreholes is not required	As such, it is not necessary to undertake dipping of PWS.	
1-7	EA16	Abstraction Licence	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the possibility of identified licensed abstraction (6/33/58/*G/0248) being in use had been ruled out, and this could therefore result in an incorrect assessment of impacts to all receptors. We note the comments in 8.4 Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067]. As post-consent groundwater monitoring will be followed by hydrogeological risk assessment for foundation works, we are therefore consent to resolve this issue. If conditions are found to differ substantially from the interpolated model to the extent effects to this abstraction could occur, these would be required to be duly assessed.	Paragraph 12.8.123 of **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]** states that *"Whilst the property is derelict and uninhabited, the licence is still extant and therefore requires assessment. Triangulation/interpolation of hydrometric monitoring data available on Hydrology Data Explorer, which shows a maximal groundwater level of 25.2m BGL"*. As such, the Applicant considers that abstraction licence 6/33/58/*G/0248 has been assessed appropriately.	Agreed

1-8	EA18	Groundwater Levels	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that there was a lack of clarity regarding where groundwater levels have been recorded as artesian or sub-artesian. Furthermore it was not readily apparent how the recorded borehole groundwater level, and interpolated groundwater levels reported in Table 12.8 [APP-061] related to ground level. Tables 12.7 and 12.8 in 6.2.1 Chapter 12 Water Resources (Tracked) [REP2-011] have been updated appropriately and 8.14 Technical Information Note - Groundwater Elevation Methodology [REP2-029] is suitable. We are content that the Applicant's hydrogeological conceptual model is suitable for this stage of the Proposed Development. We acknowledge that a postconsent programme of intrusive ground investigation and monitoring is secured under the 7.6.2 Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked).pdf [REP2-023], which will be used to inform subsequent risk assessment and detailed design. The Applicant has confirmed that should recorded groundwater elevations be higher than is anticipated in the conceptual model, this will be accounted for in the subsequent Foundation Works Risk	Tables 12.7 and 12.8 in **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP/6.2.2]** has been updated at a Deadline 2 for depth relative to groundwater within boreholes to include depth to groundwater, ground elevations, and artesian indicators. An Environmental Information Request has been submitted to the Environment Agency to verify whether further groundwater monitoring locations exist within the wider study area to ensure the dataset reflects all reasonably available information. The conceptual model conceptual model was updated at a Deadline 2. Regarding the statement that the *"presence of multiple springs and standing water bodies within the draft Order limits area suggests that artesian and/or sub-artesian conditions could be encountered during construction works"*, no springs were encountered during either the Hydrology or Ecology walkovers, and this is reflected in **ES Figure 7.2: Habitats and Ecological Features [APP-110]** and **ES Figure 12.1: Ephemeral Ditches [APP-115]**.	Agreed

			Assessments. This will ensure foundation construction works do not impact groundwater quality		
1-9	EA20	Boreholes	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the BSG borehole groundwater depths have been reported inaccurately in section 12.6.50 of [APP-061] and requested that it should be updated to refer to the correct borehole groundwater depths. Section 12.6.60 of 6.2.1 Chapter 12 Water Resources (Tracked) [REP2-011] has been amended appropriately to refer to the correct borehole groundwater depths.	It is noted that there are minor discrepancies in recording of borehole groundwater depths within Section 12.6.50 of **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]**. These were checked and updated at Deadline 2 (**ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP/6.2.2])**. However, the borehole records were used to verify the groundwater surface developed through groundwater monitoring station data and an update of these borehole groundwater depths will not change the groundwater elevation surface.	Agreed
1-10	EA32	Drainage System	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that was unclear how the surface water drainage infrastructure at the BESS, Customer Substation, National Grid Substation and infiltration basin would be managed at decommissioning stage. The 6.4.2 Appendix 12.2 Flood Risk Assessment (Tracked) [REP2-019] has been updated to state that any infrastructure that is to remain in place after the lifetime of the scheme, will retain the drainage features which serve it. Furthermore, it will be the	As detailed within paragraph 12.4.16 of **ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [AS-053]**, any infrastructure that is to remain in place after the lifetime of the Scheme will retain the drainage features which serve it. The Scheme has Work Nos. and does not have a detailed design at this stage. However, the Applicant notes that Requirement 11 of Schedule 2 of the **draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]** states that "*no part of the authorised development may commence until written details of the surface water*	Agreed

			responsibility of National Grid Electricity Transmission (or the equivalent future regulator) to maintain effective drainage measures that remain in situ for the National Grid Substation and the Grid Connection Infrastructure, after the Decommissioning phase of the Scheme.	*drainage scheme and (if any) foul water drainage system for that part have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority*".	
1-11	Appendix B - Informatives	Water Supply and Demands	Chapter 12 [APP-061] includes a good appraisal of water demands and potential sources of supply and provides reasonable confidence that a water supply can be found practically and sustainably. *With regards to HDD drilling* Table 12.17 in Chapter 12 [APP-061] states that the maximum total water demand for HDD drilling is given as 25.1 m3 /day. If HDD drilling uses an abstraction as a source of supply this may not be exempt from licensing as the maximum water demand is above the de minimus amount exempting an abstraction from licensing. The Applicant should ensure early engagement with the Environment Agency if there is a likely need for an abstraction licence. The Abstraction Licensing Strategy for North West Norfolk is available here: North West Norfolk Abstraction Licensing Strategy - GOV.UK.	The Applicant welcomes the Environment Agency's assessment of **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]**. With regard to the Environment Agency's comment in relation to licensing, the Applicant will engage with the EA to discuss the requirement for abstractions, following the granting of the DCO (if consented).	

1-12	Appendix B - Informatives	Abstraction Licence	*With regards to the use of the landowners (existing) abstraction licence* The Applicant should be familiar with the licence intended to be used and understand what changes are required to make it suitable for purposes not already listed on the licence. If as suggested in Section 12.6.54 of Chapter 12 [APP-061], the licence intended to be used is 6/33/58/*G/0248, the Applicant should note the low quantities available on the licence (7000m3 at 24m3/day) respective to the quantities specified in the appraisal of construction water demands. Particularly if this water is continued to be used for the purpose of Livestock watering stated in the previous 2023 renewal determination.	The Applicant confirms that it is fully aware of the scope and limitations of abstraction licence *6/33/58/G/0248, including that it is currently authorised for livestock watering only and is restricted to 7,000 m³ per annum (24 m³/day) as confirmed by the 2023 renewal determination. The Applicant understands that use of the licence for construction purposes not currently authorised would require a formal licence variation, including amendment of the authorised purpose and, if necessary, abstraction quantities, to be agreed with the Environment Agency in advance. The Applicant also acknowledges that the licensed volumes are materially lower than the peak construction water demands identified in the construction water appraisal and therefore does not rely on this licence as the primary source of construction water, particularly where abstraction for livestock watering continues. Construction water demand will be met through alternative lawful supplies and demand management, with any abstraction remaining strictly within licence limits unless and until an approved variation is secured. On this basis, the Applicant is satisfied that the licensing constraints are fully understood and that there is no risk of unauthorised abstraction or environmental harm.	

Table 4.2 – Design

Reference	EA Issue Reference	Topic	Consultee's Position	Applicant's Position	Status
2-1	EA05	Maximum Foundation Extents	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that figures 12.13 [APP-127], 12.14 [APP-128], 12.15 [APP-129] and 12.16 [APP-130] do not clearly define the area represented by the drawings, including view orientation, or the elevation values. We have reviewed the following: • 6.3.1 ES Figure 12.13 Work No. 2 Maximum Potential Foundations and Groundwater Elevation [REP3-043] • 6.3.1 ES Figure 12.14 Work No. 3 Maximum Potential Foundations and Groundwater Elevation [REP3-044] • 6.3.1 ES Figure 12.15 Work No. 4 Maximum Potential Foundations and Groundwater Elevation [REP3-045] We find the updated figures satisfactory for defining the 3D model view, and elevation the maximum extent of the foundations	Figures 12.13 to 12.16 of **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]** were used to illustrate the maximum groundwater elevation surface across the Core Study Area and identify where proposed foundation depths could theoretically intercept shallow groundwater under worst-case conditions. The figures also demonstrate at a concept level where piling may be required depending on foundation design. The following changes were made at Deadline 3 to aid the EA's interpretation: • Addition of orientation labels or description • Elevation shading to show mAOD values for the maximum groundwater elevation surface and foundation extent surface • Highlight areas where foundations intersect or exceed groundwater elevation surfaces; and • Figures and text refer to groundwater elevation (mAOD) rather than groundwater level to increase clarity	Agreed

				between absolute elevation and depth below ground. The Applicant agrees that the conceptual model present is not the final tool for foundation design, but rather to provide a screening-level assessment of groundwater conditions and to identify areas needing piled or shallow~~ed~~ foundations and will be aligned with EA regional groundwater understanding (NEAC model). The **Design Principles, Parameters Commitments [APP/5.8.3]** was updated at Deadline 2 to commit to foundations not directly interacting with groundwater. The Applicant maintains the position that a potential interaction of up to 1 m has been determined for a very small section of Work No. 4 and that Figure A12-1-10 displays this minimal interaction northeast of Work No. 4, should the full Work No. be developed.	
2-2	EA38	Storage of Waste Batteries	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that there was an absence of mitigation measures relating to the storage of waste batteries. The 7.14.1 outline Battery Safety Management Plan (Tracked) [REP3-072] was updated to include suitable measures.	An **outline Battery Safety Management Plan (oBSMP) [APP-194]** has been prepared as part of the DCO Application which sets out the mitigation measures to be secured via Requirement 6 of the **draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]**. The **oBSMP [APP/7.14.1]** has been updated at Deadline 4 to confirm the management of damaged or end-of-life batteries by the following:	Agreed

			We note the additional text in paragraph 5.4.5 of the 7.14.2 outline Battery Safety Management Plan (Tracked) [REP4-027] and confirm that the additional text is acceptable.	End-of-life or damaged BESS units are to be electrically disconnected from the system when identified as being required. When disconnecting damaged or defective units, a specific risk assessment shall be conducted prior to the removal of the defective module to ensure the safety of employees and contractors. Damaged or defective units will be inspected and placed in an approved protective container prior to being transported from Site, to ensure against any risk of contaminants entering ground- or surface water. End-of-life batteries awaiting regular replacement will be stored in situ. This is considered most appropriate due to existing contamination bunding and surface-water runoff protections associated with the BESS enclosure. Batteries that are removed from the BESS are not stored at the Site; they are returned to the battery manufacturer for repair/ refurbishment. As such a fire watch is not required at the site. Under current UK legislation, end-of-life BESS infrastructure is controlled under The Waste Batteries and Accumulators Regulations 2009. These require battery producers to receive, sort, and suitably handle batteries and deliver to an approved battery treatment operator for treatment and recycling. As such, any potential for contamination will be managed by transport	

				offsite to one of these approved facilities. The **outline Decommissioning Strategy (oDS) [APP/7.10.1]** provides for decommissioned infrastructure to be managed in accordance with the applicable legislation relating to waste and recycling that is in force at that time, and is secured by Requirement 20 of Schedule 2 to the **draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]**. As requested by the Environment Agency in EA40 above, the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]** was updated at Deadline 1 to commit to installing 'sentinel' monitoring systems for the drainage system serving Work Nos. 2 – 4 and therefore any leakage from damaged batteries being stored on Site will be detected and not released to the wider hydrological environment.	

Table 4.3 – Impact on existing apparatus / infrastructure

Reference	EA Issue Reference	Topic	Consultee's Position	Applicant's Position	Status
3-1	EA06	Avoidance of Pipelines	While we previously advised that we consider this issue resolved, we have reviewed 6.3.1 ES Figure 16.1 Utilities Plan [REP3-051] again and would like to take the opportunity to provide additional advisory comments.	A figure showing the underground pipelines was produced at Deadline 3, **ES Figure 16.1: Utilities Plan [APP/6.3.1]**. Paragraph 12.7.7 of **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]** states that pipelines will be located using techniques such as CAT scanning or hand digging,	Agreed

			We previously raised concerns that figure 16.1 of [APP-131] didn't show the approximate routes of the former Ministry of Defence (MoD) oil pipeline or Exolum pipeline, which traverse the draft Order Limits. Having reviewed the most recent version of the Utilities Plan, we note the close proximity between the former pipeline and the BESS and substations, and PV infrastructure. Deep foundation or ground improvement works, such as piling associated with the construction of the BESS, Customer Substation and National Grid (NG) Substation, could create a pathway for migration of mobile contaminants associated with the redundant pipeline if present. Construction activities in the vicinity of the pipeline, such as soil compaction resulting from heavy mobile plant, or as part of ground improvement, could also impact the integrity of the pipeline even if direct contact with the feature does not occur. PV Array construction could result in damage the redundant pipeline, and mobilise contaminants if carried out above or in close proximity to the pipeline. We acknowledge that the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan commits to a Foundation Works Risk Assessment (FWRA), informed by groundwater-level monitoring and ground	therefore limiting the potential to introduce contaminants to groundwater.	

			investigation. Furthermore, a watching brief and other protocols should ensure any need for remediation associated with unexpected contamination is addressed. Therefore, we remain satisfied that this issue can be considered resolved. Please note, there is a contradiction between the oCEMP and Permitted Preliminary Works Environmental Management Plan (PPWEMP) regarding the need for ground investigation which will also need to be addressed. See EA48 below. We have set out below, our expectations for the design and management of contamination risks during the discharge of requirements and implementation phases of the project: When the FWRA is prepared in due course, we expect it to ensure that the foundation design is based on site-specific ground-investigation and monitoring data, including geoenvironmental considerations, and accords with the Environment Agency's Land Contamination Risk Management guidance and BS 10175:2026. The pipelines should be located, and the Applicant should conduct intrusive investigations prior to construction, to		

			establish whether contamination associated with the redundant MoD pipelines is present within the extents of Work Nos. 2, 3 and/or 4. The Applicant should ensure that a sufficient easement is established to avoid the construction of PV panel arrays (Work No. 1) where interaction with the pipelines could occur. The CEMP should clearly determine what construction activities cannot take place within the defined easements. Any ground improvement works proposed within potential influencing distance of the pipelines should be subject to risk assessment. Should contamination posing a potentially significant risk to controlled waters be identified, this should be subject to risk assessment and, as required, remediation to ensure pollution of controlled waters does not occur. This should be secured under the CEMP. Our suggested process is: 1. In the event that contaminated land, including groundwater, is found at any time when carrying out the authorised development, which was not previously identified in the environmental statement, then no further development (unless otherwise approved in writing by the		

			relevant authorities) shall be carried out within the identifiable perimeters of the area in which the suspected contamination is located. It must be reported as soon as reasonably practicable to the local planning authority, and where necessary, the Environment Agency. The undertaker must complete a risk assessment of the contamination in consultation with the local planning authority, and where necessary, the Environment Agency. 2. Where the undertaker determines that remediation of the contaminated land is necessary, a written scheme and programme for the remedial measures to be taken to render the land fit for its intended purpose must be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, following consultation with the Environment Agency. 3. Remediation must be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme under sub paragraph (2).		

			Following the implementation of the remediation strategy approved under sub-paragraph (2), a verification report, based on the data collected as part of the remediation strategy and demonstrating the completion of the remediation measures must be produced and supplied to the relevant planning authority and the Environment Agency. We recommend the Applicant engages with the British Pipeline Agency (BPA) for advice on locating the redundant fuel pipelines, and conducting construction activities and developing infrastructure in the vicinity of the pipelines. The Applicant may also wish to refer to National Gas Transmission: Specification for safe working in the vicinity of National Gas Transmission high pressure gas pipelines and associated installations – requirements for third parties (1080 April 24 DM A5 Safe Working Booklet - 23.04.2024). Although this guidance applies to gas pipelines rather than fuel pipelines, the controls identified in Section 6.1 of the guidance may be of use in developing avoidance and mitigation measures. These include the avoidance of mechanical excavation within 3m of the located asset and the limitation of topsoil stripping to no greater than 0.25m using light tracked vehicles equipped with a toothless bucket.		

Table 4.4 – Planning Policy

Reference	EA Issue Reference	Topic	Consultee's Position	Applicant's Position	Status
4-1	EA07	Environmental Legislation	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned over Omission of Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024 and The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 in Appendix 7.1: Consultation and Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance [APP-147], Section 7.2. We have reviewed the 6.4.1 ES Appendix 7.1 Consultation and Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance (Tracked) [REP1-045], and note that the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024 and The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 have been included.	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms that **ES Appendix 7.1: Consultation and Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance [APP/6.4.1]** was updated at Deadline 1 to include the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024 and The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017.	Agreed
4-2	EA39	Fire Suppressant Chemicals	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that if fire suppressant systems contain polluting or hazardous chemicals, these could potentially impact groundwater quality if discharged to ground.	Internal Fire Suppression System details will only be known once this infrastructure is selected. It should be noted that most commercially available Suppression media for BESS are PFAS free. The **oBSMP [APP-**	Agreed

			In consideration of the Applicant's efforts to include drainage features for containing fire water, we are content to resolve this issue. Additional advice We recommend that the Applicant includes an assessment of the pollution potential of chemical fire suppressants, when carrying out options appraisal at detailed design stage.	194] will be updated once this information becomes available.	

Table 4.5 – Ecology and Biodiversity

Reference	EA Issue Reference	Topic	Consultee's Position	Applicant's Position	Status
5-1	EA08	Watercourse Buffers	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that there were Insufficient buffer zones around watercourses. We have reviewed the 6.2.1 Chapter 7 Ecology and Biodiversity (Tracked) [REP1035] and 7.6.1 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP1-051], and are content with the updating of the buffer size to 10m around watercourses, and 15m for temporary construction compound screening. Further Advice We recommend that table 2 of the outline CEMP is also	The Applicant takes note of this inconsistency. Table 7-10 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology and Biodiversity [APP/6.2.1]** was updated at Deadline 1 to state 10m buffer zones around ditches. The 10 m buffer zones for all above ground development will apply from watercourse or ditch bank tops and this will be stated within **ES Chapter 7: Ecology and Biodiversity [APP/6.2.1]**. Table 5-2 of **ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [APP/6.1.2]** was updated at Deadline 1 to commit to a 10 m buffer of watercourses.	Agreed

			updated to include the mitigation measures for temporary construction compound screening. .	It is not anticipated that construction compounds will be located within 15m of a watercourse. The **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]** has been updated to commit temporary construction compounds within 15m of watercourses could be screened with fencing on sides adjacent to the watercourse, and working lighting could be positioned to avoid light-spill onto sections of the watercourse.	
5-2	EA09	Otter & Water Vole	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that there were inconsistencies in monitoring requirements for otter and water vole. We acknowledge the note in the 8.4 Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067] which draws attention to the lack of connected drains and watercourses within the Site. We accept that this would reasonably suggest that the species will be absent within the site. We note that table 2 in the 7.6.1 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP1-051] states that a precautionary update may be undertaken prior to the commencement of construction; these would be completed as appropriate to reconfirm the status of protected species identified, to inform mitigation requirements and support protected species license	As clearly set out within **ES Chapter 7: Ecology and Biodiversity [APP/6.2.1]** (see paragraphs 7.8.54, 7.8.55, 7.8.99, 7.8.100, 7.8.157, 7.8.158), the Site does not contain any suitable watercourses or connected waterbodies that could support Otter or Water Vole and accordingly, it has been concluded that these species are absent from the Site and adjacent areas and will not be adversely affected. Accordingly, no populations are present that could be subject to monitoring and therefore Table 7-12 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology and Biodiversity [APP/6.2.1]** remains accurate and appropriate in this regard. Measures set out within the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]** in relation to Otter and Water Vole (Table 2) refer to further update surveys that may be required in order to reflect the passage of time and confirm that any such position has not	Agreed

			applications. We are therefore content to resolve this issue	changed prior to commencement of construction activities (in regard to these species representing a precautionary measure outside of any ES requirement, likely to confirm that suitable habitat remains absent) rather than any specific monitoring requirement. Accordingly, Table 7-12 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology and Biodiversity [APP/6.2.1]** and the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]** are entirely consistent and it is not proposed to update Table 7-12 at this stage.	
5-3	EA10	Invasive Non-Native Species	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the Applicant had committed to eradicating invasive non-native species within the site, but had not consistently updated documents. Section 7.8.46 (or 7.9) of 6.2.1 Chapter 7 Ecology and Biodiversity (Tracked) [REP1-035] had not been updated. We have reviewed 6.2.2 ES Chapter 7 Ecology and Biodiversity (Tracked) [REP3-039], and note that section 7.8.46 has been updated to state "Embedded mitigation includes measures to prevent the spread of these species as a result of works at the Site, whilst also seeking to eradicate these	The Applicant confirms that reference to management of Invasive Non-native Species within **ES Chapter 7: Ecology and Biodiversity [APP/6.2.2]** was updated at Deadline 3 to confirm that the INNS Management Plan will seek to eradicate the named Invasive species within the site.	Agreed

			species from the Order limits, which would represent a beneficial impact."		
5-4	EA15	Chalk Rivers	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the sensitivity of the receiving surface waterbody (River Nar) had been underestimated. Table 12.3 of [APP 061] doesn't not recognise that the River Nar and several of its tributary watercourses are defined as Priority Habitat Chalk Rivers. Table 12.3 in 6.2.1 Chapter 12 Water Resources (Tracked) [REP2-011] has been updated to recognise the River Nar and several of its tributary watercourses as Priority Habitat Chalk Rivers, and therefore as high sensitivity.	The Applicant refers to its response above to EA14 on this matter.	Agreed

Table 4.6 – Waste Management

Reference	EA Issue Reference	Topic	Consultee's Position	Applicant's Position	Status
6-1	EA11	Waste Classification	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved.	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms that the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [APP/7.6.3]**, **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [APP/7.8.3]**, and	Agreed

			We were concerned that there was a lack of detail regarding outline measures for Duty of Care to ensure waste is described, and classified, correctly by the waste producer or holder, throughout all phases. The following documents have been updated to refer to the Environment Agency WM3 Technical Guidance: • 7.6.3 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP3-074]; • 7.8.3 outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP3-078]; • 7.10.2 outline Decommissioning Strategy (Tracked) [REP3-068]. This will ensure that there is a Duty of Care to ensure waste is described, and classified, correctly by the waste producer or holder.	**outline Decommissioning Strategy [APP/7.10.2]** was updated at Deadline 3 to make specific reference to WM3, to ensure all waste is appropriately classified before a suitable route for recovery or disposal can be identified.	

Table 4.7 - Approach to EIA

Reference	EA Issue Reference	Topic	Consultee's Position	Applicant's Position	Status

7-1	EA13	Sensitivity Criteria for Receptors	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the sensitivity of receptors in table 12.2 of [APP 061], including Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and private groundwater abstractions for potable use, had been underestimated. This was because Water Framework Directive (WFD) status hadn't been used to characterise receptor sensitivity. Tables 12.2 and 12.3 in 6.2.1 Chapter 12 Water Resources (Tracked) [REP2-011] have been updated to include SSSIs and GWDTEs as high sensitivity receptors.	The determination of sensitivity criteria for these receptors is well-precedented and has been developed in consultation with regulatory bodies. It should be noted that the sensitivity criteria outlined in **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]** is analogous with those used for the Mallard Pass, Cleve Hill, Byers Gill and Great North Road solar DCOs. As the River Nar and its tributaries are defined as Priority Habitat Chalk Rivers, this waterbody should be identified as a high sensitivity receptor. The reclassification of this receptor was undertaken at Deadline 2. In accordance with Table 12.3 of **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]**, no change to the output of determined impact significance on watercourses will occur. Sensitivity for SSSI designations was reassessed at Deadline 2. As noted by the EA, the resource being utilised by abstractions has been assigned high sensitivity and therefore private water supplies utilising groundwater, by default, have been assessed accordingly.	Agreed
7-2	EA17	WFD Groundwater Bodies	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that table 12.6 failed to consider all WFD Groundwater bodies	It is noted that the Cam and Ely Ouse Chalk WFD Groundwater Body has not been included within the wider study area assessment. For completeness, Table 12.6 of **ES Chapter 12:**	Agreed

			within the Hydrology Study as defined in figure 12.3 of [APP-171]. Table 12.3 in 6.2.1 Chapter 12 Water Resources (Tracked) [REP2-011] has been updated to include the Cam and Ely Ouse Chalk WFD Groundwater Body. It is described and screened out of further assessment as it lies outside the draft Order Limits area.	**Water Resources [APP-061]** was updated to ensure reference to the WFD Groundwater body underlying the Site at Deadline 2. **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP/6.2.2]** was updated to include both Groundwater bodies underlying the Site at Deadline 3. However, as noted by the Environment Agency, the outcome of the assessment will not change.	
7-3	EA19	Accuracy of Hydrogeological Model	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the accuracy of the hydrogeological model was unclear. The Applicant has confirmed in the 8.4 Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067] a commitment to installing boreholes within Order Limits to monitor groundwater levels prior to construction. This ensures that construction activities such as Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) and foundation works do not occur when groundwater levels are high enough to interact with them. Furthermore it allows the data to be used to refine the hydrogeological conceptual model.	It is noted that the current conceptual model relies on a limited number of groundwater monitoring locations, situated largely outside the Order limits. It is acknowledged that the current model has not yet integrated regional controls including regional interpretation shown in the NEAC groundwater model and potentiometric surfaces shown in the BGS Hydrogeological Map (1976). Following an Environmental Information Request, the conceptual model was updated at Deadline 2. It will integrate outputs from the NEAC groundwater model, particularly for the wet-month scenario to ensure the conceptual understanding aligns with regional flow patterns. It should however be noted that the conceptual model was intended as a screening-level assessment with the purpose of identifying whether shallow groundwater poses a risk to foundations,	Agreed

				trenchless installation or local construction processes, and was not intended to represent a definitive or high-resolution groundwater flow model. Paragraph 12.8.23 of **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]** and Table 4.8 of the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]** commits to installing boreholes within the Order limits to monitor groundwater levels prior to construction to ensure that construction activities, such as HDD and foundations, do not occur when groundwater levels are high enough to interact with the activity, and the data could be used to refine the hydrogeological model.	
7-4		Embedded Operation Phase Mitigation	The Embedded Operation Phase Mitigation of Chapter 12 [APP-061] does not mention the outline OEMP, outline BSMP or a Drainage Strategy. These are all essential documents that contain mitigation measures which will help protect the water environment, therefore Chapter 12 should be updated to reflect this.	Reference was made in **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]** to the **oOEMP [APP/7.8.1]** and **oBSMP [APP-194]** at Deadline 2. The Scheme has Work Nos. and does not have a detailed design at this stage. A detailed drainage strategy that will serve Work Nos. 2 – 4 will be provided once the detailed design of the Scheme has been progressed and finalised, following the issue of the DCO (if consented), as secured within Section 12.4 of **ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [AS-053]**.	

Table 4.8 - Construction

Reference	EA Issue Reference	Topic	Consultee's Position	Applicant's Position	Status

8-1	EA21	Trenchless Installation Methods	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that Section 12.7.7 [APP-061] excludes some key mitigation measures related to the hydrological environment. We requested inclusion of the following measures: • Hydrogeological Impact Assessment (HIA) for all trenchless crossings due to the sensitivity of watercourses and Principal aquifer, including Water Features Survey for all surface water bodies; • Development of drilling fluid breakout plans for all trenchless crossings; • Clarify the launch/receptor pit working area distance from watercourses. 7.6.3 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP3-074] has been updated to include Hydrogeological Impact Assessments for all trenchless works.	The **oCEMP [APP/7.6.3]** and **Design Principles and Parameters [APP/5.8.3]** were updated at Deadline 3 to also to commit to undertaking a Hydrogeological Impact Assessment for all trenchless crossings.	Agreed
8-2	EA22	Shallow Groundwater	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that that groundwater levels may be higher than anticipated, rendering the approach set out in section 12.8.23 [APP-061] impossible. The 5.8.1	Paragraph 12.8.23 of **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]** states that HDD works would not take place if groundwater levels were within 15m BGL based on pre-construction monitoring boreholes. This measure was intended as a precautionary safeguard until additional site-	Agreed

			Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments (Tracked) [REP1-017] states that "An alternative construction methodology to HDD, such as open cut, will be selected if groundwater conditions require it." We are therefore content to resolve this issue	specific groundwater level data becomes available. An alternative construction methodology will be selected if groundwater conditions require it, and the **Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.1]** was updated at Deadline 1 to reflect this. The **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]** commits to groundwater borehole monitoring within the Order limits and will be decommissioned in accordance with best practice at the time.	
8-3	EA23	Interaction with Groundwater	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that section 12.7.7 of [APP-061] excludes key mitigation measures for trenchless installation methods, which could result in unacceptable impacts to controlled waters. The Applicant has carried out a review of their conceptual hydrogeological model as reported in the updated 6.2.1 Chapter 12 Water Resources (Tracked) [REP2-011] and 8.14 Technical Information Note - Groundwater Elevation Methodology [REP2029]. Furthermore, they commits to ground investigation, monitoring and the production of Foundation Works Risk Assessments (FWRA) post-consent, which will inform the detailed design. We note that although groundwater rest levels within the	It is noted that the current conceptual model relies on a limited number of groundwater monitoring location, situated largely outside the Order limits. It is acknowledged that the current model has not yet integrated regional controls including regional interpretation shown in the NEAC groundwater model and potentiometric surfaces shown in the BGS Hydrogeological Map (1976). Following an Environmental Information Request, the conceptual model was updated at a Deadline 2 to reflect the Environment Agency's levels, if more conservative than that of the Applicant. It will integrate outputs from the NEAC groundwater model, particularly for the wet-month scenario to ensure the conceptual understanding aligns with regional flow patterns.	Agreed

			maximum anticipated depth of PV Array piling activities have been recorded within the draft Order Limits area, the results of modelling demonstrate that this is not anticipated to affect proposed PV Array areas (such as in Work No. 1).	An Environmental Information Request has also been submitted to verify whether further groundwater monitoring locations exist within the wider study area to ensure the dataset reflects all reasonably available information. Following an Environmental Information Request, the conceptual model was updated at Deadline 2. The **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]** commits to groundwater borehole monitoring within the Order limits. This monitoring data will be used to replace or refine interpolated groundwater surfaces presented within **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]** and used to confirm whether PV arrays or foundation zones may interact with groundwater which will determine whether specific mitigation measures are needed. **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]** was updated at Deadline 2 to confirm that the depth of PV array piles and foundation design for the BESS and substations will be reassessed against the refined highest groundwater elevation dataset and the **Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.1]** was updated at Deadline 1 to reflect this. Paragraph 12.8.20 of **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]** commits to pile depth being designed to maximum groundwater elevation. If groundwater proves shallower than currently inferred, mitigation measures will be	

				applied. If artesian pressures are identified locally, works will be designed or sequenced to ensure no groundwater breakthrough or loss of control during pilling.	
8-4	EA24	Foundation Works Risk Assessment	We cannot resolve this issue. We were concerned that the FRA [APP-170] stated that a Foundation Works Risk Assessment would only be required if piling goes deeper than the highest recorded groundwater level. In the 8.4 Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067] it is stated that "the oCEMP [APP/7.6.1] has been updated to state that the final choice of foundations for Work Nos. 2 to 4 will not indirectly interact with the underlying aquifer". We have been unable to located this statement within the 7.6.1 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP1-051]. We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the FRA [APP-170] stated that a FWRA would only be required if piling goes deeper than the highest recorded groundwater level. The 6.4.2 Appendix 12.2 Flood Risk Assessment (Tracked) [REP2-019] has been amended to state that all piling and foundation methods will be determined via a FWRA.	The Applicant confirms that the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.3]** was updated at Deadline 3 to explicitly state that the final choice of foundations for Work Nos. 2 to 4 will not indirectly interact with the underlying aquifer	Agreed

			Further advice 6.2.1 Chapter 12 Water Resources (Tracked) [REP2-011] Section 12.8.28 and Water Framework Assessment Table 12-4 both state that "…a Foundation Works Risk Assessment will likely be required to ensure piled foundations do not create additional contaminant pathways and any potential impacts on the underlying aquifers, such as turbidity, are managed." We strongly recommend that Chapter 12 [REP2-011] and 6.4.1 ES Appendix 12.3 Water Framework Directive Assessment (Tracked) [REP2-013] are updated to make it unambiguously clear that a FWRA will be carried out for all piling and foundation works. This would be consistent with the statements in the 7.6.2 Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked).pdf [REP2-023] and Flood Risk Assessment [REP2-019]. We expect a FWRA to be carried out for PV piling works, should post-consent ground investigation and monitoring demonstrate that these may interact with groundwater.		
8-5	EA25	Construction Mitigation Measures	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned about the lack of detail regarding the construction mitigation measures for HDD, BESS and the	Mitigation measures are secured within Table 7 of the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]** and was updated at Deadline 1 to confirm that a Foundation Works Risk Assessment, HIAs and drilling fluid breakout plans will be	Agreed

			substation. The 7.6.1 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP1051] has been updated to confirm the mitigation measures that will be undertaken. We find this acceptable.	undertaken for foundations at the Scheme based on groundwater monitoring levels of boreholes to be installed within the Order limits. As outlined within paragraph 12.8.23 of **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]**, groundwater monitoring will occur prior to the commencement of the construction phase to ensure that HDD does not have the potential to interact directly with groundwater.	
8-6	EA26	Drilling Fluid Breakout Plan	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that Tables 6 and 17 [APP-186] stated that no monitoring was required for drilling fluid seepage during borehole operations. The 7.6.1 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP1051] has been updated to: • explicitly state that a Drilling Fluid Breakout Plan will be included in the detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan, to be submitted prior to the construction phase (table 7). • state that monitoring activities, a Foundation Works Risk Assessment, HIAs and drilling fluid breakout plans will occur to reduce the risk of breakout during drilling (tables 6 and 18).	Table 7 of the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]** states that monitoring activities will occur to reduce the risk of breakout during drilling. The **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]** was updated at Deadline 1 to explicitly state that a Drilling Fluid Breakout Plan will be included in the detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan to be submitted prior to the construction phase. Tables 6 and 17 of the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]** were also updated at Deadline 1 to state that monitoring activities, a Foundation Works Risk Assessment, HIAs and drilling fluid breakout plans will occur to reduce the risk of breakout during drilling.	Agreed

8-7	EA27	Hydrogeological Impact Assessment	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the definition provided in table 6 [APP-186] was vague in regard to the trenchless crossing techniques, and that mitigation measures to avoid impacts to groundwater may not be sufficient. 7.6.3 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP3-074] has been updated to include Hydrogeological Impact Assessments for all trenchless works.	The Applicant confirms that tables 6, 7, and 17 of the **oCEMP [7.6.3]** were updated at Deadline 3 to include reference to the production of a HIA for trenchless works.	Agreed
8-8	EA28	Spills and Leaks	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that mitigation measures to prevent spills and leaks from construction compounds were not well defined. Spillages of fuel or drilling fluid are not mentioned in the outline CEMP. We requested that the Applicant provides details of mitigation measures, to prevent fugitive emissions from temporary construction and decommissioning compounds from impacting controlled waters. Specifically section 5.4.50 [APP-054] should clarify whether sheltered	As outlined in Table 18 of the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]**, machinery will be regularly maintained to minimise the potential for fuel or oil leaks and spillages to occur. All maintenance will be conducted over drip trays or suitably absorbent spill pads to minimise the potential for groundwater and surface water pollution. All machinery will be equipped with drip pans to contain minor fuel spillage or equipment leakages. It is also stated that temporary construction compounds will be sited outside Source Protection Zone 1 where possible to reduce	Agreed

			means fully covered (i.e. no rain access), and if any storage will utilise double-skinned tanks. The Applicant has updated the 8.4 Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067] and 6.1.2 ES Chapter 5 The Scheme (Tracked) [REP1033] to make reference to the above requests.	likelihood of groundwater contamination further. Paragraph 5.4.36 of **ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [APP/6.1.2]** was updated at Deadline 1 to reference fugitive emissions from temporary Construction Compound(s). Paragraph 5.4.50 will clarify whether sheltered means fully covered (i.e. no rain access), and if any storage will utilise double-skinned tanks. Mitigation measures at Construction Compounds within the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]** has been made reference to.	
8-9	EA40	Spacing of BESS	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that there was a risk that firefighting methods may not be able to prevent propagation of fire along rows of BESS containers. The Applicant has stated in 8.4 Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067] that BESS separation distances are defined by the UL9540A Large Scale Burn Test. We are therefore content to resolve this issue.	The BESS separation distances are defined by the UL9540A Large Scale Burn Test, and the BESS original equipment manufacturer will determine from the results the minimum space required to avoid onward propagation via radiated heat / flames. The spacing of the BESS will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the BESS original equipment manufacturer. The spacing is therefore sufficiently protective of groundwater quality.	Agreed
8-10	EA41	Thermal Effects of Buried Cables	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned regarding the omission of buried cables from potential	The Applicant maintains that the potential for thermal effects on groundwater is low. The Scheme is substantially compliant with the exemptions listed in the EA's *Closed loop*	Agreed

			contaminant sources in the Operational Phase Conceptual Site Hydrogeological Model, and their thermal impacts. Within the 8.16 Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 2 Submissions [REP3-078] the Applicant provides sufficient justification for discounting significant thermal impacts from buried HV cables.	*ground source heating and cooling systems: exemption conditions* guidance, specifically: • The buried cable system would be a fully sealed system and would not discharge pollutants to the environment during operation. • The Scheme has been designed to avoid surface water or groundwater pollution, as measures to protect the water environment during construction are secured through the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.3]** and the commitment to a FWRA. • The cable route is not located within 50m of a well. Spring or borehole used for domestic or food production purposes. • **ES Figure 7.1: Ecological Designations [APP-109]** shows the CSA is not located within any protected ecological sites or ancient woodland that could be affected by localised thermal changes. • As outlined in **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP/6.2.2]** designations are approximately 1 km from Work No.s which could have cabling and will therefore not be affected by thermal emissions.	

				• The cable route is not located adjacent to a septic tank, cesspit or associated infiltration system. • Measures to prevent pollution of groundwater during decommissioning are secured through the **outline Decommissioning Strategy [APP/7.10.2]**. It should be noted that the majority of cabling will be installed to a depth of 1.2m to 2m, as outlined in Table 3-1 - Work No 1 of **Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.3]** and as such has very limited potential to transfer heat to groundwater. The very western section of the Order Limits is located within Source Protection Zone 1, as shown on Figure 12-5: Source Protection Zones submitted at Deadline 3. Maximum groundwater elevations in this section of the Order Limits are 25-30m below ground level. As such, there is 10-15m headroom between the maximum cable depth for HDD and groundwater, meaning there is negligible potential for heat to be transferred from cables. Where groundwater elevations in the wider Order Limits have the potential to be within 15m of the ground surface, the interaction with HDD / cables is a very small proportion of the North West Norfolk Chalk Water Body which has an approximate area of 36,631.4ha. The	

				considerable size of the overall groundwater body area means that a substantial volume of groundwater will be moving through the body at any given time. As shown on the flow pathway outputs of the Environment Agency's NEAC groundwater model, the chalk aquifer is characterised by continual groundwater movement and significant groundwater storage. Consequently, any localised heat transfer to groundwater would be subject to rapid dilution, dispersal and thermal dissipation within the wider groundwater body. Any temperature increases would therefore be highly localised, temporary and indistinguishable from normal natural temperature variations within the subsurface environment. As such, the effects of dilution and heat dissipation on any localised groundwater that interacts with the buried cables will be substantial and the risks relating to groundwater temperature changes are considered to be very low, especially at the abstraction point (Marham) approximately 6.5km south east of the Scheme. The Applicant, therefore, maintains that the conclusions presented within the **Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations**	

				[REP1-067], remain robust and that buried cable thermal emissions do not represent a significant environmental effect requiring further assessment or mitigation.	
8-11	EA42	Missing Legislation	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that two key pieces of guidance were missing from the list of guidance and legislation, and that outline drainage proposals have not been designed in accordance with such. Table 7 of the 7.6.3 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP3-074] confirms that contractors will adhere to the Environment Agency Approach to Groundwater Protection and the National Standards for SuDS. The 5.8.3 Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments (Tracked) [REP3-027] also commits to drainage systems incorporating SuDS design principles.	The **oCEMP [APP/7.6.3]** was updated at Deadline 3 to include the addition of the EA's approach to groundwater protection and national standards for SuDS to the list of guidance and legislation.	Agreed
8-12	EA43	Use of Concrete	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the 7.6 outline Construction Environmental Management [APP-186] did not contain sufficient	Table 7 of the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]** secures mitigation measures to protect the hydrological environment during the use of concrete.	Agreed

			mitigation measures to protect water quality from the use of concrete. Table 7 of the 7.6.1 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP1-051] has been updated to: • commit to identifying within the detailed CEMP all areas where concrete works are proposed, whether cast in situ or pre-cast and delivered, • state that should in-situ concrete pouring be required, construction works would be minimised during heavy precipitation events, and carried out during dry months where practicable. We find this acceptable.	The **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]** was updated at Deadline 1 to: • Identify all areas where concrete works are proposed • Specify whether any of these will be cast in-situ or pre-cast and delivered; and • For in-situ concrete pours, suggest timing, weather conditions, and runoff control. These construction works should be minimised during heavy precipitation events and carried out during dry months where practicable.	
8-13	EA44	Wheel Washing Facilities	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned there was a lack of clarity for the containment and disposal of any water from wheel washing facilities. Table 3.7 of the 7.6.1 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP1-051] has been updated to state that water from the wheel wash is to be collected and tankered off site to a licensed waste carrier. We find this acceptable	Table 7 of the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]** states that the wheel wash facility will work on a closed cycle, which limits the potential for contained releases of pollutants to the hydrological environment. The **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]** was updated at Deadline 1 to outline how water from the wheel wash will be disposed of, if dry wheel wash facilities are not used, which is likely to involve a sump and an impermeable lined designated area for such activities. The sump will act to capture sediment. Given the absence of watercourses within Work Nos. 1 to 4, which includes Site entrances, it is highly unlikely that wheel washes will discharge to a watercourse.	Agreed

8-14	EA45	Water Quality Monitoring	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that there was insufficient detail provided regarding monitoring for increased sediment in surface water runoff and chemical pollution. We have reviewed the 8.16 Applicant's response to Written Representations and other Deadline 2 Submissions [REP3-087]. We can confirm that the 7.6.3 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP3-074] contains appropriate surface water quality monitoring measures.	Regarding monitoring locations, as outlined in ES Chapter 12: Water Resources, the watercourses within Work Area which require construction activities are not hydrologically connected to the wider surface water environment i.e. are blind ditches without outfalls or confluences. As such, the Table 7 Water Resources of the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.3]** commits the Scheme to monitoring at locations on the principal watercourses downstream of the Scheme infrastructure and upstream of other non-natural influences and the locations and parameters will be agreed with the EA prior to establishing the hydrochemical baseline. This is appropriate as the mechanism of hydrological linkage is likely to be throughflow (subsurface) rather than via watercourse transfer. Regarding sampling frequency, Table 7 Water Resources of the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.3]** already commits to monitoring twice per month for at least six months prior to the construction phase and, as such, does not require updating. Table 7 Water Resources of the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.3]** also commits to monitoring six months post-construction, therefore monitoring will occur into operation.	Agreed

Table 4.9 - Land contamination

Reference	EA Issue Reference	Topic	Consultee's Position	Applicant's Position	Status
9-1	EA29	Unexpected Contamination	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the stated mitigation measures do not include a watching brief for unexpected contamination or a discovery strategy. The 7.6.1 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP1051], 7.8.1 outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP1055] and 7.10.1 outline Decommissioning Strategy (Tracked) [REP1-059] have all been updated sufficiently to include a watching brief for unexpected contamination or a discovery strategy.	The **oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]**, **oOEMP [APP/7.8.1]**, and **oDS [APP/7.10.1]** were all updated at Deadline 1 to include the provision of a watching brief for unexpected contamination and a Discovery Strategy to be employed where contamination is encountered. During this update, the **oDS [APP/7.10.1]** has had the page numbers updated as presented on page iv.	Agreed
9-2	EA30	Contaminated Soils	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the outline Soil Management Plan does not address management of contaminated soils if encountered. We are confident that measures listed under Table 17 in the 7.6.1 outline Construction	The Applicant notes and agrees with this comment. This matter will be addressed in the detailed Soil Management Plan that is to be produced before the commencement of the construction phase, as a requirement under the DCO.	Agreed

			Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP1-051] will ensure that soil management measures will address contaminated soils if encountered.		

Table 4.10 – Decommissioning

Reference	EA Issue Reference	Topic	Consultee's Position	Applicant's Position	Status
10-1	EA31	Removal of Buried Cables	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that decommissioning proposals did not determine whether buried cabling would be removed, or detail the mitigation measures to minimise their potential to act as a contamination source if retained. Table 7 of the 7.10.2 outline Decommissioning Strategy (Tracked) [REP3-068], commits to an environmental risk assessment and Best Practicable Environmental Option to inform decisions on cables left in situ. We are therefore content to resolve this issue.	The commitment to an environmental risk assessment and Best Practicable Environmental Option to inform decisions on cables left in situ is already included within Table 7 of the **outline Decommissioning Strategy [REP3-068]** at Deadline 3**.**	Agreed

Table 4.11 - BESS / Fire Safety

Reference	EA Issue Reference	Topic	Consultee's Position	Applicant's Position	Status
11-1	EA33	BESS Mitigation Measures	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) [APP-186] did not clearly state that the BESS units would only be installed once the mitigation measures are in place. The 7.6.3 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP3-074] has been updated to state that fire risk mitigation measures will be in place, and confirmed as operational before BESS installation takes place.	The Applicant notes this comment and updated the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.3]** at Deadline 3 to state that the minimum components of the site fire safety systems will be identified in the CEMP and that these components must be in place and confirmed as operational before installation of the BESS, including drainage infrastructure (including a penstock), firefighting water supply, and access roads to ensure these measures are secured.	Agreed
11-2	EA34	Penstock Valve	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that it was unclear within the 6.2 Environmental Statement Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061], 6.4 Environmental Statement Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [APP-170] and the 7.14 outline Battery Safety Management Plan [APP-194] whether the automated penstock valve at the BESS, Customer Substation and National Grid Substation Sustainable Drainage Systems	The **oBSMP [APP/7.14.1]** was updated at Deadline 3 to state that in the event that the penstock automated system fails, there will be an option to manually close the penstock valve and that the valve will be subject to a programme of regular inspection and maintenance.	Agreed

			(SuDS)/contaminated water tank would have a backup manual operation. The 7.14.1 outline Battery Safety Management Plan (Tracked) [REP3-072] has been updated to state that if the automated penstock system fails, there will be an option to manually close the penstock valve, as well as a programme of regular inspection and maintenance.		
11-3	EA35	Removal of Captured Firefighting Water	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that there were insufficient arrangements to ensure that the removal of captured firefighting water would not pose a risk of environmental pollution. The 6.4.2 Appendix 12.2 Flood Risk Assessment (Tracked) [REP2-019] has been amended to refer to the same arrangements for the removal of captured fire water as mentioned in the 7.8.1 outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP1-055] (and [REP2-025]). We are therefore content to resolve this issue.	The Applicant commits to locating BESS infrastructure at least 300 mm above the modelled design flood level where required, which is secured within **Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.3]**. **ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [APP/6.4.2]** was updated at Deadline 2 to explicitly address BESS fire scenario s under flood conditions, including the behaviour of contaminated firewater, interaction with floodwater and confirmation that containment and isolation systems remain effective during such events. These measures are secured through the updated **ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [APP/6.4.3]** and the relevant DCO Requirement and that captured fire suppressant will be tankered offsite to a licenced facility, rather than be tested and released to the wider hydrological environment. This approach is consistent with that of the Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park DCO.	Agreed

11-4	EA36	Underground Contaminated Water Tanks	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that spent firefighting water was proposed to be contained within a dedicated underground contaminated water tank(s). This may result in the underground storage of hazardous substances within a Principal aquifer within Source Protection Zone 2, which may not be compliant with Position Statement D2 of The Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection. The Applicant has updated the 6.4.5 **ES Appendix 12.2 Flood Risk Assessment (Tracked) (Rev 5) [REP5-059]** and the 7.6.5 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) (Rev 5) [REP5-063] to commit to carrying out an options appraisal as part of the detailed drainage design to determine whether above-ground storage should be selected. If above-ground storage is not the preferred option but is nevertheless taken forward, the appraisal will provide sufficient justification for that decision.	**ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [APP/6.4.5]** has been updated at Deadline 5 to confirm that, should there be space following the detailed design of the Scheme, then aboveground, impermeably lined detention basins will be favoured over belowground structures. A commitment has been made within the **oCEMP [APP/7.6.5]** and **ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [APP/6.4.5]** to carrying out an Options Appraisal as part of the detailed drainage design. If the Options Appraisal indicates that above-ground storage is not the preferred option, the appraisal will contain sufficient justification for this option not being progressed. Additionally, there will be a commitment that the containment area will be fully cleaned prior to any shut-off valves being re-opened.	Agreed

11-5	EA37	Spills and Leaks – BESS and Substation Drainage Systems	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that there was an absence of measures to identify and manage the risk of pollution during normal operation of the BESS and Substation sites, when surface water runoff would directly infiltrate into groundwater and surface waterbodies. The 7.6.1 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP1051] was updated at deadline 1 to confirm that drainage system outfalls, such as installing 'sentinel' monitoring systems, will quickly identify if pollutants are found to be entering the drainage system and enable remedial action. The 6.4.2 Appendix 12.2 Flood Risk Assessment (Tracked) [REP2-019] has been updated at deadline 2 in alignment with the same measures.	The Applicant confirms that the FRA **ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [APP/6.4.2]** was updated at Deadline 2 to confirm that drainage system outfalls, such as installing 'sentinel' monitoring systems, will quickly identify if pollutants are found to be entering the drainage system and enable remedial action.	Agreed
	EA52	Rainwater harvesting	We need to raise a new issue regarding the use of harvested rainwater from Work Nos.2-4 (Work No. 2: BESS Compound, Work No. 3: Customer Substation and Work No. 4: National Grid Substation), following an amendment to the 6.2.4 ES Chapter 12	The Applicant notes the new issue raised by the EA and agrees that this matter was discussed at the meeting between the parties on 29 October 2026. On reflection, the Applicant considers that the **outline Operational Environmental Management**	Under discussion

			Water Resources (Tracked) (Rev 4) [REP5-049]. Paragraph 12.8.156 of this document was updated to state that PV panel cleaning will be undertaken using water either sourced from a water tanker supplier "or via rainwater harvesting within Work No's 2 – 4, with a small deionising plant within Work Nos 2 – 3, as deionised water will be used." We are concerned that, without adequate mitigation, harvested rainwater could be contaminated by plant and infrastructure within Work Nos.2-4. If used to clean the PV panel arrays, this could subsequently enter the water environment, as the solar array areas do not benefit from the same drainage containment measures provided for work no.2-4. Therefore there is a potential pathway for contaminated runoff from panel washing to discharge directly to ground and surface water, and risk deterioration in water quality. The Applicant should confirm how they would ensure that the rainwater harvesting process did not introduce contaminants, associated with spills and leaks and other potential pollution sources in Work Nos.2-4, into the deionised water product used for panel washing. We engaged with the Applicant on 27 and 29 October 2026 to discuss this issue. The Applicant proposed amending the Design	**Plan [APP/7.8.6]** is the appropriate control document to secure the commitment requested by the EA to address this issue, and has therefore updated that document at Deadline 6 in this regard, but appreciates that the EA is unable to confirm agreement until it has reviewed that updated/submitted document.	

			Principles, Parameters and Commitments document to confirm that any harvested rainwater will be managed under the same pollution prevention and control measures as the rest of work nos.2–4, with laboratory testing undertaken prior to its use. We consider this approach acceptable to resolve the issue. However, this issue will remain unresolved until the 5.8.5 Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments document has been amended accordingly and submitted to the examination.		

Table 4.12 - Draft DCO

Reference	EA Issue Reference	Topic	Consultee's Position	Applicant's Position	Status
12-1		EA Response Provision	Applications made under requirement We have reviewed the 8.16 Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 2 Submissions [REP3-078]. We find the Applicant's response acceptable, noting that under paragraph 2(1) of Schedule 16 of the draft Development Consent Order, the Applicant is required to submit the relevant documentation to the named consultee at the same time as submitting it to the relevant planning authority. This should ensure that the Environment Agency has	The Applicant notes that the wording and timeframes proposed in paragraph 3(3) of Schedule 14 of the **Draft DCO [APP/3.1.3]** are precedented in the Longfield Solar Farm Order 2023 and the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025, and therefore the Applicant does not propose to depart from this precedent by amending the wording as proposed. The Applicant refers to the **Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's Schedule of Changes to the draft DCO [APP/8.30]** for its full position on this matter.	Agreed

			sight of the documentation from the start of the discharge process. We are also pleased to note the Applicant's confirmation that it is in the Project team's interest to engage with us early, and are willing to approach us for pre-submission consultation where appropriate. On this basis, we are content that our concern has been addressed.	The Applicant is pleased that the EA is now in agreement in relation to this matter.	
12-2	EA46	Environment Agency Protective Provisions	We cannot resolve this issue. We have reviewed the 3.1.5 draft Development Consent Order (Tracked) [REP5-005] and the 8.30 Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's Schedule of Changes to the draft DCO [REP5-079]. The Applicant has not removed the protective provisions for the Environment Agency, despite the examining authority's proposed changes (in Schedule of Changes to draft Development Consent Order [PD-012]) stating that they should be removed. We support the ExA's proposed changes relating to Article 6(1)(e) to (g) and Part 15 – Protected Provisions, Part 5 – For the protection of the Environment Agency. We re-iterate the position raised in our previous response letters: we do not give permission for the inclusion of protective	The Applicant has been in discussions with the Environment Agency in relation to this matter. It is the Applicant's position that, whilst the majority of the Order Limits are located within Flood Zone 1, there is a minor section of Work No. 11: Mitigation and Enhancement Area, associated with Skylark plots, which is located in Flood Zones 2 and 3. As such, activities could be carried out on the floodplain of a main river, more than 8 metres from the river bank, such as stockpiling in this area. Therefore, in accordance with the Government's guidance entitled 'Flood risk activities: environmental permits', such activities could require a FRAP. The inclusion of disapplication therefore serves as a contingency to avoid unnecessary consenting duplication, rather than reflecting a substantive need for FRAP consent across the Scheme.	Not agreed

			provisions for the Environment Agency. Section 150 of the Planning Act 2008 states that for certain types of consents, the relevant body must give permission for the legislation to be included in the DCO. Once the draft Development Consent Order has been updated in accordance with these changes, we can resolve this issue.	In accordance with this approach, the Applicant updated the protective provisions for the benefit of the Environment Agency in Part 5 of Schedule 15 of the Draft DCO at Deadline 1 to mirror the Environment Agency's preferred wording. The Applicant refers to the **Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's Schedule of Changes to the draft DCO [APP/8.30]** for its full position on this matter.	
12-3	EA47	Requirement Wording	We cannot resolve this issue. We were concerned over the use of the word "substantially" on numerous requirements in the 3.1 draft Development Consent Order [APP-018], as its inclusion would render those requirements imprecise and unenforceable. This is against government policy (National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the six tests cited in Paragraph 57 of the NPPF. We have reviewed the 8.16 Applicant's response to Written Representations and other Deadline 2 Submissions [REP3-087], and do not agree with the Applicant's response.	The Applicant does not have anything further to add to its response contained in the **Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067]** on this matter. The Applicant does not agree with the assertion that the word "substantially" results in a requirement being unenforceable and imprecise, nor is this wording against Government policy. This phrasing, for detailed management plans to be substantially in accordance with outline management plans, is extremely well-precedented across made DCOs (i.e. statutory instruments) from all industries, including all made solar DCOs. The Applicant, therefore, does not propose to depart from standard practice in this regard.	Not agreed
12-4	EA48	Permitted Preliminary Works	We cannot resolve this issue. We were concerned that the definition of "permitted preliminary works" includes *'(d)*	The Applicant has submitted an updated **Permitted Preliminary Works Environmental Management Plan**	Under discussion

			remedial work in respect of any contamination or other adverse ground conditions', while the definition of "commence" excludes activities defined as "permitted preliminary works", i.e. it does not include 'remedial work in respect of any contamination or adverse ground conditions. Therefore, the CEMP secured via Requirement 13, only requires submission of a detailed CEMP prior to commencement. This means that remediation of the site could take place without the CEMP being approved or in place, and therefore without the controls and mitigation commitments offered by the CEMP. Within Comments on the Deadline 4 submissions and any other information requested by the ExA for Deadline 5 [5-088], we raised a number of concerns relating to the Permitted Preliminary Works Environmental Management Plan (PPWEMP). The 3.1.5 draft Development Consent Order requirement 13.(1) states the permitted preliminary works must be carried out in accordance with the permitted preliminary works environmental management plan. We are not satisfied that the 8.25 Permitted Preliminary Works Environmental Management Plan [REP4-038] contains sufficient mitigation measures to prevent deterioration in surface water	**[APP/8.25.1]** at Deadline 6, which it considers addresses the concerns and suggestions raised by the EA, but appreciates that the EA is unable to confirm agreement until it has reviewed that updated/submitted document. The Applicant has also updated the **outline Operational Management Plan [APP/7.8.6]** at Deadline 6 in the manner requested by the EA to address the issue of pollution events and flooding, but appreciates that the EA is unable to confirm agreement until it has reviewed that updated/submitted document.	

			and groundwater quality, and therefore cannot accept this requirement. We have reviewed the 5.13.3 Statement of Common Ground with Environment Agency (Tracked) [REP5-017], and note that the Applicant will consider our comments (see deadline 5 comments below) and will respond in full at Deadline 6. We note that the 7.8.5 outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) (Rev 5) [REP5-067] has been updated to state that "An emergency response plan will be developed in consultation with the relevant local authority emergency planning officer, emergency services including the local fire service, as well as the Environment Agency in relation to responding to flood warnings and events." To be consistent with our comments raised in regards to the PPWEMP, we request that the outline Operational Environmental Management Plan is updated to make reference to pollution incidents, in addition to flooding. Our deadline 5 comments were as follows: 13.(1) in the Schedule 2 Requirements of the 3.1.4 draft Development Consent Order (Tracked) [REP4-004] states the permitted preliminary works must be carried out in accordance with the permitted preliminary		

			works environmental management plan. However, it should state that these works may not proceed until the Permitted Preliminary Works Environmental Management Plan (PPWEMP) has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Environment Agency. This is because we have not yet agreed the contents of the PPWEMP. This wording would not be needed if the Applicant addresses our concerns stated below regarding the 8.25 Permitted Preliminary Works Environmental Management Plan [REP4-038]. Having reviewed 8.25 Permitted Preliminary Works Environmental Management Plan [REP4-038], we have the following comments: <u>Water Quality Monitoring</u> We are concerned about how the PPWEMP will be secured. Section 2.5.1 references the 7.6.4 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP4-031] (oCEMP). However, given that section 1.1.5 states that the PPWEMP is a detailed plan, and that no approval mechanism is necessary under the Requirements, it is not clear how we can provide comments. This is relevant because the oCEMP currently contains more details about surface water		

			monitoring, with specific locations and parameters still to be agreed with the Environment Agency post-decision. If the PPWEMP will collect the baseline water quality monitoring, then further information and consultation on this will be required. Additionally, the timing of any pre-construction activity baseline water quality monitoring is unclear. Many of the activities listed in 2.1.2 will have a likelihood of disturbing sediment and changing surface runoff. Therefore, it is important that establishing an accurate and reliable baseline is completed prior to having plant onsite and moving soil. We recommend that a baseline is completed as part of the pre-Commencement Surveys (mentioned in section 2.4.1) before any PPW begins. <u>Remediation of contamination</u> With regard to remediation, Table 2-1 Preliminary Works and Locations within the PPWEMP states that no specific need for remediation has been identified at this time, and that mitigation needs are outlined in the oCEMP. However, it is not confirmed that mitigation measures outlined in the oCEMP will be incorporated into the PPWEMP. Remediation is explicitly listed as a Permitted Preliminary Works activity, however there is no mechanism to secure that it would be undertaken in the		

			construction phase and subject to mitigation secured under the CEMP. It cannot be ruled out that potential sources of contamination requiring remediation will be encountered during elements of the permitted preliminary works such as ground investigation, archaeological surveys and site clearance. In particular, there is potential for localised contamination associated with the disused former MoD pipeline as shown in 6.3.1 ES Figure 16.1 Utilities Plan [REP3-051]. This combined with the high sensitivity of the underlying strata (Principal aquifer / Groundwater Source Protection Zone 2), requires robust groundwater mitigation measures. The PPWEMP currently lacks any defined mitigation for ground conditions, and there is no commitment to the avoidance or investigation of this feature within the Plan. A discovery and inspection strategy should be put in place which details the requirements and procedures for encountering and managing land and / or groundwater contamination, should they be encountered during the Permitted Preliminary Works. While a discovery strategy is already included in the commitments under the oCEMP (in table 17), this would not apply to the Permitted Preliminary works, which could take place		

			before the construction phase; the PPWEMP does not mention this or any equivalent mechanisms. The controls currently outlined for management of risks to controlled waters from the pre-construction activities, defined in Section 2 of the PPWEMP, are not sufficient to manage the risks which may be associated with all Permitted Preliminary Works activities. Training should be provided to site personnel on: • The sensitivity of the groundwater and surface water environment within the Proposed Development, and the procedures to follow in the event of an accidental pollution event; • The potential for contamination to be encountered, and the procedures to follow in the event it is encountered, should be employed for all personnel carrying out activities which may encounter soil and/or groundwater contamination. <u>Groundwater Monitoring</u> According to Part 1 2(1) of the draft Development Consent Order and Section 2.1.2, 'Permitted Preliminary Works' activities include:		

			• environmental surveys, geotechnical surveys, intrusive archaeological surveys and other investigations for the purpose of assessing ground conditions; • site clearance (including vegetation removal, demolition of existing buildings and structures). We note that intrusive ground investigation and groundwater monitoring are not explicitly included in the list of Permitted Preliminary Activities, despite statements in Table 7 of the oCEMP that groundwater monitoring will be undertaken. This was requested in EA19 of our Relevant Representations [AS-062] and the following response was provided by the Applicant in Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067]: *"Paragraph 12.8.23 of ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061] and Table 4.8 of the oCEMP [APP/7.6.1] commits to installing boreholes within the Order limits to monitor groundwater levels prior to construction to ensure that construction activities, such as HDD and foundations, do not occur when groundwater levels are high enough to interact with the activity, and the data could be used to refine the hydrogeological model."*		

			Paragraph 12.8.23 of 6.2.3 ES Chapter 12 Water Resources (Tracked) [REP4-022] also states *"Should HDD techniques be required in Fields 25 to 27, 29 and 30 then these works would be undertaken when groundwater levels elevations are not within 15m of ground level, and this would be informed by monitoring boreholes to be installed within these fields prior to the construction phase."* Details are also provided in paragraph 12.8.25 regarding foundation design at Work No. 2, 3 and 4. The above demonstrates that intrusive ground investigations within the Order Limits will take place post-consent and prior to construction, to inform detailed design of the Proposed Development. As such, these form part of the Permitted Preliminary Works activities, and should be clearly identified as such, along with details of mitigation of associated environmental risks, including the potential for localised contamination associated with the disused former MoD pipeline. <u>Responding to environmental incidents</u> Section 2.12 Responding to Environmental Incidents and Emergencies of the PPWEMP confirms that the Emergency Response Plan will be shared with relevant Local Authority emergency planning officer, emergency services and the Environment		

			Agency in relation to flood warnings and events, detailing procedures for responding to incidents and emergencies onsite and any reporting. While this is acceptable, the Emergency Response Plan should address pollution incidents in addition to flooding.
			
			<u>Managing Risks to Water Resources</u>
			Table 3-4 Water Resources within the PPWEMP outlines proposals for managing risks to water resources. There appears to be inconsistency with the mitigation measures proposed in table 3-4 and those within the 7.6.4 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP4-031]. We have the following comments on the contents of table 3-4:
			• Increased sediment in surface water runoff:
			  • In this section of the table, we advise that the Local Authority and Environment Agency should also be consulted on the Pollution Prevention Plan for agreement prior to the commencement of PPW.
			  • It is unclear how drainage will be managed during the PPW. Unlike in the oCEMP, there is no reference to the inclusion of silt Traps, silt Matting, swales,		

			drainage ditches, settlement lagoons or check dams. Further detail is required in this section on how surface water will be managed during the PPW.
			• Chemical Pollution:
			  ○ This section of table 3-4 states that appointed refuelling personnel trained in correct refuelling procedure and spill response procedure. This should also include reporting. The Environment Agency should be immediately informed in the event of a suspected pollution incident.
			  ○ The table does not include mitigation measures for chemical storage or accidental spillage. The Applicant should include this to be consistent with the oCEMP or confirm that there will be no fuel, oil, chemicals or other hazardous substances onsite during PPW.		

			▪ Fuel, oil and chemical storage should be conducted in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance including The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 and Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001. The Applicant should commit to the use of biodegradable hydraulic oils where practicable. ▪ There are no mitigation measures regarding concrete in the table. The Applicant should either confirm there will be no concrete laying in PPW, or if there will be, ensure that measures are		

			consistent with the oCEMP. • Foul drainage: o the Applicant should confirm that the portable toilet facilities will be sealed to prevent any discharge into the water environment, and emptied regularly. The Guidance section of Table 3-4 correctly identifies that contractors will act in accordance with Environment Agency guidance 'Approach to GW Protection' and 'National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems' guidance. Other key guidance should also be listed and followed, including but not limited to: • Control of Pollution Act 1974 • BS6031:2009 Code of Practice for Earthworks • BS10175:2016 Investigation of Potentially Contaminated Sites – Code of Practice. • Control of water pollution from construction sites. Guidance for consultants and contractors (C532). CIRIA, 2001		

			• Pollution Prevention for Businesses. Defra, 2016 • Land Contamination Risk Management. Environment Agency, 2020 • Environmental Good Practice on Site Guide C811. CIRIA, 2023 • Guidance for Safe Intrusive Activities on Contaminated or Potentially Contaminated Land. British Drilling Association, 2020 • Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 • Oil Storage Regulations for Businesses. Environment Agency and Defra, 2015 • Considerate Constructors Scheme. The code of considerate practice (CCS) We also consider that if the PPWEMP is a detailed plan, it should contain more information and commitments in line with the oCEMP. We consider that the following matters should also be included within table 3-4: • Measures to mitigate impacts to water quality from drilling lubricants, drilling mud/flush water, and arisings		

			associated with intrusive investigations and any necessary site remediation should be incorporated into the PPWEMP and Pollution Prevention Plan. Where practicable, drilling lubricants should be biodegradable and minimal quantities should be used. • No mitigation is identified in the event that groundwater is encountered during the Permitted Preliminary Works, for example during intrusive investigations and remedial activities or other intrusive works, such as archaeological trial trenching. The PPWEWP should address dewatering considerations, including the process should dewatering exceed the exemption thresholds to comply with the Water Resources Act 1991 and Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016. • Mitigation measures for washing down of vehicles and equipment should be established to prevent these activities from passing untreated wash down effluent into		

			watercourses or being discharged to ground. While section 2.9.2 of the PPWEMP states "wheel cleaning facilities will be used by vehicles", it is unclear how this will be contained and prevented from discharging. Furthermore, there is no mention of wheel washing in Table 3-4. The Applicant must add in the details already committed to in 7.6.4 outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP4-031] on wheel washing. • Despite stating in 2.5.1 of the PPWEMP that water quality monitoring will be undertaken, no information about this is provided in Table 3-4. It currently states "Temporary drainage will be monitored throughout any PPW." However, the monitoring methods, locations, frequency and parameters are unknown. This should be made more consistent with the 'Surface Water Monitoring' section of Table 7 in the oCEMP. • Table 3-4 in the PPWEMP also does not secure that "Temporary		

			Construction Compounds will be sited outside Source Protection Zone 1, where possible" which is included in the oCEMP.		
12-5	EA49	Requirement 13 – Construction Environmental Management Plan	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that we were not listed to be consulted on the 13. Construction environmental management plan. We have reviewed the 3.1.1 draft Development Consent Order (Tracked) [REP1005], and can confirm we have been listed to be consulted on the requirement.	The Applicant agrees with the Environment Agency's request and has updated the **draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]** to reflect this.	Agreed
12-6	EA50	Requirement 14 – Operational Environmental Management Plan	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that we were not listed to be consulted on the 14. Operational environmental management plan. We have reviewed the 3.1.1 draft Development Consent Order (Tracked) [REP1-005], and can confirm we have been listed to be consulted on the requirement.	The Applicant agrees with the Environment Agency's request and has updated the **draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]** to reflect this.	Agreed
12-7	EA51	Dedicated Contaminated Water Tanks	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved.	**ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [AS-053]** states as follows: "*12.4.38 Based on recommendations in NFPA 855 Standard for the Installation of*	Agreed

			We were concerned that the commitment "to include dedicated contaminated water tank(s) in a closed system for the BESS and substations sized to accommodate 228m3 plus the 1% AEP event. This is secured through a requirement of the draft DCO" wasn't specifically mentioned in the draft DCO. The Applicant has now updated the 5.8.1 Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments (Tracked) [REP1-017] and 7.8.1 outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP1-055] to refer to the capacity of the contaminated water tanks.	*Stationary Energy Storage Systems and NFCC – Grid Scale Battery Energy Storage System planning – Guidance for FRS, a burn time of 2 hours and a requirement of 1,900l/min of fire suppression water has been used to calculate the volume of fire suppressant water required to be stored onsite in the event of a container fire.* *12.4.39 This equates to 228m3 of storage.* *12.4.40 The SuDS structures serving the BESS compound will be sized to accommodate the 1% AEP +40% CC and an additional 228m3, and this will be sufficient for storing the full fire suppressant volume during an extreme rainfall event.*" The figure of 228m3 is, as stated, based on current guidance – the relevant text in the FRA was updated at Deadline 1 to reflect the fact that this figure is subject to change based on guidance at the time of detailed design of the Scheme. Further, the Applicant notes that the **Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.1]** commit, for the Customer Substation (Table 3-3) and the National Grid Substation (Table 3-4), that the related compounds will be served by a SuDS network designed to the 1% AEP event plus 40% climate change allowance. The Applicant acknowledges that a corresponding commitment is not in place for the BESS and therefore updated this document	

				(specifically Table 3-2) at Deadline 1 to include a commitment to storing the 1% AEP event plus an appropriate volume for firefighting water, based on guidance at the time of the detailed design of the Scheme. As such, the Applicant considers that the relevant commitment is appropriately secured.	

Table 4.13 - Traffic and Transport

Reference	EA Issue Reference	Topic	Consultee's Position	Applicant's Position	Status
13-1	Appendix B - Informatives	Tankering Water	Given the initial estimates of volumes calculated, estimates of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) numbers required should be factored into traffic management plans to ensure local authorities are satisfied with the increases this would mean to HGVs on local road networks. Given the heavy reliance on this source of supply, it is important that this does not pose a blocker pre-commencement.	The total anticipated water demand over the construction phase is set out within Table 12.18 (Total water demand for construction phase) of **ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061]**. Total HGV requirements for water tankering has been updated to be included within **ES Chapter 9: Transport and Access [APP/6.2.1]** and the **outline CTMP [APP/7.7.1]**.	

5 Signatories

5.1 Overview

5.1.0 The above SoCG is agreed between The Droves Solar Farm Limited (the Applicant) and the Environment Agency, as specified below.

5.1.1 Duly authorised for and on behalf of **The Droves Solar Farm Limited**.

Name:	[redacted]
Job Title:	
Date:	
Signature:	[redacted]

5.1.2 Duly authorised for and on behalf of **the Environment Agency**.

Name:	[redacted]
Job Title:	Planning Specialist
Date:	30/10/2026
Signature:	[redacted]

6 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WORK PACKAGE TRACKER

Subject	Work package	Scope	Method and Assumptions	Results of Assessment (i.e Impact)	Mitigation / Enhancements Agreed	Requirement	RR ID
Ecology	Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy	Green	Green	Green	Green		
	Ecological Assessment	Green	Green	Green	Green		
	Water Environment Regulations Compliance	Green	Green	Green	Green		
Water Resources	Water Supply Strategy	Green	Green	Green	Green		
Flood Risk	Flood Risk Assessment	Green	Green	Green	**Red**		EA46
	Hydraulic Model	Green	Green	Green	Green		
Surface Water Quality	Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan	Green	Green	Green	**Green**	**13**	
	Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan	Green	Green	Green	**Green**	**14**	
	Outline Decommissioning Strategy	Green	Green	Green	**Green**		
	Outline Battery Safety Management Plan	Green	**Green**	**Green**	**Green**		
	Water Environment Regulations Compliance	Green	**Green**	Green	**Green**		
	Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments	Green	Green	Green	**Amber**		EA52
Groundwater Protection	Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan	Green	Green	Green	**Amber**	**13**	EA48
	Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan	Green	Green	Green	**Green**	**14**	EA36
	Outline Decommissioning Strategy	Green	**Green**	**Green**	**Green**		
	Outline Battery Safety Management Plan	Green	**Green**	**Green**	**Green**		
	Water Environment Regulations Compliance	Green	**Green**	Green	**Green**		
	Hydrogeological Model and Assessment of Impacts	**Green**	**Green**	**Green**	**Green**		
	Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments	Green	Green	Green	**Amber**		EA52
Waste	Waste Management Strategy	**Green**	**Green**	**Green**	**Green**		
DCO	DCO	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		EA47

THE DROVES
SOLAR FARM

5.13.4 Statement of Common Ground with Environment Agency (Clean)

Final Audit Report 2026-10-30

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