Date: 26 October 2026
Our ref: 557117
Your ref: TR050008
IP Ref: [redacted]

Submitted via ‘Have your say’ portal

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

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Sir/Madam,

NSIP Reference: TR050008

The Examining Authority’s first written questions and requests for information (ExQ1). Examining Authority’s submission deadline: 26 October 2026

Natural England is pleased to provide our answers to the Examining Authority’s First Written Questions within the annex appended to this letter.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Please note that Natural England have used **no artificial intelligence** tools to develop any of our advice or to assist with any document review.

For further advice on this consultation please contact the case officer Jonathan Shavelar [redacted]@naturalengland.org.uk and copy to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

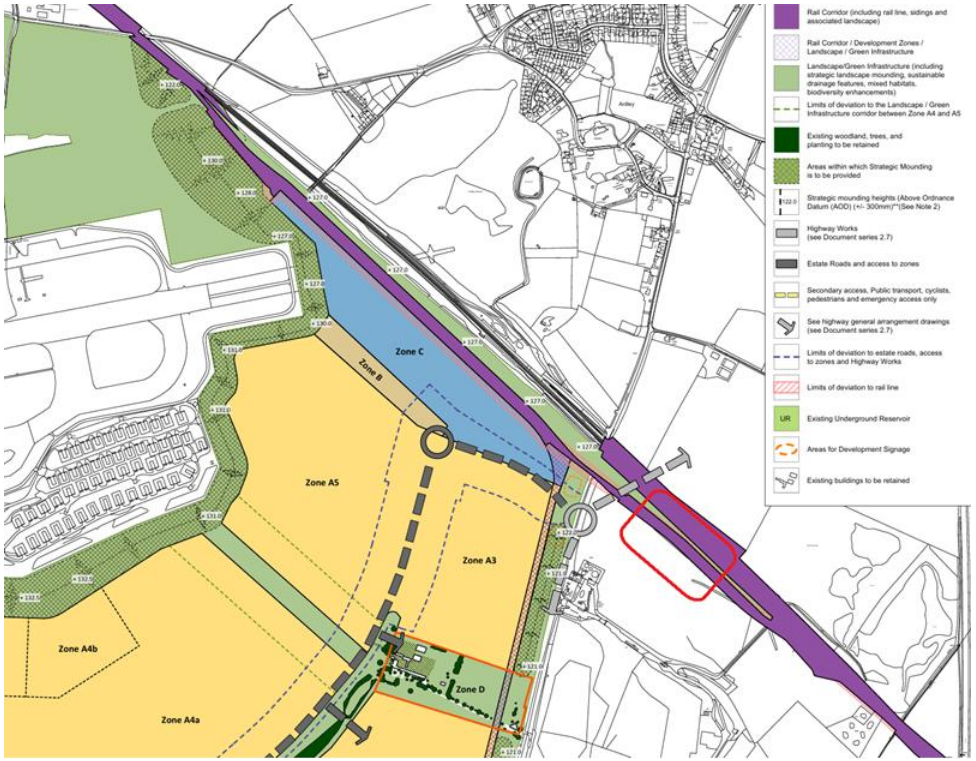
Yours faithfully

[redacted]
Senior Officer
Thames Solent Area Team
Natural England

Annex 1: Natural England's response to the Examining Authority's (ExA's) first written questions (ExQ1)

ExQ1	Question to:	Question and Answer:
8. Geology and Ground Conditions		
Q1.8.2	The applicant Natural England (NE)	**Clarification: rock exposure strategy** In paragraph 11.2.7 of the ES chapter 11 (Ground Conditions) [APP-179], NE is quoted as saying that it encourages a strategy which maintains integrity and enables re-exposure of stratigraphy if required; also that "*The strategy may include works which could … create new exposures in the rock face...*". However, in paragraph 11.2.8 of ES chapter 11 the applicant notes that the areas mentioned by NE are not within the designated SSSI and are not publicly accessible, being within a railway cutting. **To the applicant:** Please confirm that "within a railway cutting" should read "within an operational railway cutting" as distinct from, for example, a disused railway cutting. **To NE:** Noting that the Unit 3 areas you refer to are not within the SSSI, and noting from our USI that the existing rock faces are within an operational railway cutting, please give examples of circumstances when re-exposure might be required in the future. For example, was the exposure only created when the railway was built? and is there any loss of amenity if exposures are not publicly accessible?
		The Unit 3 that Natural England refers to is the SSSI unit. Unit 3 comprises two relatively small rectangular-shaped areas along the existing railway line between the B430 and M40 roads. *Ardley Cutting and Quarry SSSI - SOUTH EAST (003)* comprises a total area of 0.81ha. It consists of two disused quarries that were originally part of Field Farms Quarry, next to the railway line, and contain exposures of Jurassic rocks. However, the 'Unit 3' referred to by the applicant in paragraph 11.2.8 of Chapter 11 of the Environmental Statement [APP-179] appears to relate to Zones A1a and B, and Area A2 of the Parameters Plan, [APP-040] which are located to the west of the B430.

ExQ1	Question to:	Question and Answer:
		In the below image capture from MAGIC maps, Unit 3 are the two polygons which can be seen on the southwestern side of the main rail corridor. The part we are concerned about is the northwestern block of unit 3, highlighted in red. It appears that the southern block is avoided.  *Figure 1. Highlighted northern area of SSSI Unit 3*

ExQ1	Question to:	Question and Answer:
		This area (Unit 3) does not correspond with any of the labelled zones in the parameter plan. It is impacted by the proposed new rail corridor. The Parameters Plan [APP-040] shows the rail corridor in purple, and we have sketched out the approximate location of the impacted part of the SSSI below.  *Figure 2. Highlighted section of Parameters Plan showing approximate location of impacted Unit 3.* Unit 3 of the SSSI is considered within ES Appendix 11.10 [APP-295] (figure 3, page 4) (although the figure is not oriented northwards, which may cause confusion). We have provided detailed comments on ES Appendix 11.10 in our relevant representations [RR-101]. We hope this is a useful clarification.

ExQ1	Question to:	Question and Answer:
9. Habitats Regulations Assessment		
Q1.9.1	The applicant Natural England (NE)	**Conclusions** Annex I of this document summarises the ExA's understanding of the conclusions of the applicant's HRA screening exercise (from [AS 074]) and the level of agreement with Natural England (as per [RR-101]). Can both parties review the ExA's position summary table and confirm this is an accurate representation or make any amendment through tracked changes to the word version provided (see page 2 for link to word version).
		Natural England **confirm** that the ExA's understanding of the conclusions of the applicant's HRA screening exercise and NE's position is accurate.