

Date: 28 April 2020
Our ref: n/a
Your ref: EN010085



Gareth Leigh
Head of Energy Infrastructure Planning
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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Mr Leigh

Planning Act 2008 and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

Application by Cleve Hill Solar Park Limited (“the Applicant”) for an Order granting Development Consent for the proposed Cleve Hill Solar Park and associated infrastructure (“the proposed Development”)

Apologies for missing the deadline set out in your request for information, dated 3 April 2020. Natural England does not appear to have received the consultation letter. I hope these comments are, nevertheless, helpful.

The letter requested the Cleve Hill Solar Park Ltd’s (the Applicant’s) view on whether limiting the compulsory acquisition powers sought over plot 5/03 to Works 1 and 4 in any DCO that might be issued is appropriate.

Natural England would like to make comments on the part of plot 5/03 that is proposed as the ‘lowland grassland meadow habitat management area’ (LGM HMA). We can confirm that the LGM HMA is not required as mitigation land to avoid an adverse effect on the integrity of The Swale Special Protection Area (SPA). Natural England’s advice regarding mitigation land has focused on the arable reversion habitat management area and the management of the reedbed and ditch habitat within and around the proposed solar array, as key habitats for wintering waterbirds and marsh harriers, respectively. However, we note paragraph 25 of the Applicant’s written representation on marsh harriers [REP17-013] states that ‘arable land will be converted to grassland in the AR HMA and LGM HMA and other lowland meadow grassland areas, which will benefit foraging marsh harriers, but is not the specific aim of the management of those areas’.

However, the LGM HMA is important in contributing to the net gain in biodiversity provided by the proposal. Therefore it is an important part of the proposal as a whole.

If you would like any further information, please get in touch on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

Alison Giacomelli
Sussex and Kent Area Team