

Date: 31 August 2021
Our ref: 351228
Your ref: EN010101



Planning Inspectorate case team:
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BY EMAIL ONLY

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Dear Planning Inspectorate case team:

Planning consultation: Application by INGR Solar (Little Crow) Limited for Little Crow Solar Park
The Examining Authority's written questions and requests for information (ExQ3) Issued on 16 August 2021

Thank you for consulting Natural England.

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.

EXQ3 Part 5 3.5.1

a) Advise whether Natural England agrees or disagrees with the Applicant's view that the Proposed Development would be unlikely to have a significant effect on the interest features of the SPA either alone or in-combination with other plans and/or projects?

As set out in Table 31 of the Statement of Common Ground with Natural England (REP4-013) and para 3.3.1 of Natural England's Relevant Representation (RR-010) Natural England agrees with the Applicant's view that the Proposed Development would be unlikely to have a significant effect on the interest features of the SPA either alone or in-combination with other plans and/or projects.

b) Advise on how species identified as being subject to an assemblage qualification for the SPA should be considered for the purposes of undertaking a Habitat Regulations Assessment under the provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

As regards the waterbird assemblage feature of the Humber Estuary SPA, Natural England focuses its statutory advice on those species that are an important component of an SPA assemblage. Important component species are defined as all species listed on the citation as well as those, which might not be listed on the citation, occurring at the site at a level of 1% or more of the national population (or where more than 2000 individuals are present). These species are considered to be particularly important components of the Humber Estuary SPA assemblage due to their more important contribution to the overall assemblage composition and abundance.

It is important to note that we do not assess the assemblage as a whole, that is to say we do not consider that it is only significant if the numbers of birds present is over 1% of the assemblage population as a whole (for example 1% of 150,000 would be 1500 birds). If 1% of the estuary population for an individual assemblage species is identified then the site could be significant for this species and an Appropriate Assessment should be carried out and mitigation measures may be required.

Note that 1% is a guideline threshold for the majority of assemblage species. Where species are demonstrating critical declines at a site level exceptions to the 1% threshold are made. For example Curlew are in critical decline on the Humber Estuary SPA and require further assessment if this species occurs on functionally-linked land.

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter please contact Merlin Ash on 02080 266382. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours faithfully

Merlin Ash
Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Team
Natural England