

The applicant's comments on Relevant Representations with regard to the the potential impacts of the scheme on ecology and biodiversity don't address all points raised in the Relevant Representations. In many cases, the applicant gives assurances that they predict no significant effects on the ecology. Their position is often inconsistent with opinions expressed by other experts and IPs with extensive local knowledge, and with the Environmental Statement included in the DCO application.

For example, with specific reference to 8 local bat species (protected by UK law), Application Document Ref: EN010118/APP/6.2 - Planning Inspectorate Scheme Ref: EN010118 states that 'There was a range of activity (including foraging, commuting and social calling) with multiple bats often recorded.' (5.1.8) within the boundary of the scheme. Toppinghoehall Wood was one area of high activity (5.1.9). The habitat is assessed as of County/District Importance for Barbastelle (a Red List Near Threatened and classed as a 'rarest' species) (5.1.13). Effects from lighting have the potential to affect roosting bats within and close to the Scheme and bats commuting to and from foraging areas during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases (5.2.5). 'There will be some temporary or permanent loss of habitats resulting in adverse effects to foraging/ commuting bats' (5.2.6). The impacts include disturbance to and loss of habitat. These are significant effects and there is no effective mitigation.