



06 October 2022

By email only

**Verbal Comments for the Longfield Solar farm NSIP Examination - Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) - Thursday 29 September 2022**

Comments provided by Hamish Jackson – Senior Ecological Consultant for Place Services, representing Braintree District Council and Chelmsford City Council.

**Ecology / Biodiversity discussion point:**

Hamish Jackson raised the point that 'Volume 1: Chapter 8 Ecology' [EN010118/APP/6.1] contains inconsistencies in terms of hedgerow and woodland removal. This is because the document initially states that no hedgerows or woodland will be impacted as part of the assessment and then highlights that a total of 450.6m of native hedgerow will be removed in 'Table 8-10 Determination of relevant ecological features - habitats and species' of the report, which has also been reflected within the Figure 10 – 15 (Vegetation Removal Plan). Furthermore, it was highlighted that the Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010118/APP/6.5] indicates that 6.35 units of Lowland mixed Deciduous Woodland (high distinctiveness) will be lost to development, when 'Table 8-10 Determination of relevant ecological features - habitats and species' outlines that no woodland will be required to be removed across the Order limit.

As a result, further clarification was requested by the applicant's ecologist to ensure the confidence of the assessments, particularly to confirm impacts upon protected species, as impacts upon roosting bats and Hazel Dormouse had been scoped out within the assessments carried out.

The inspector asked appropriate questions in regard to Bats, Hazel Dormouse and Great Crested Newt, as well as the impacts upon Lowland mixed Deciduous Woodland Priority habitat. This confirmed that the applicant's ecologist intends or has completed surveys for Bats and Hazel Dormouse within the area of woodland to be impacted and the assessments will be updated accordingly. In addition, it was confirmed that the Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010118/APP/6.5] will be updated accordingly to ensure that the trading rules will be satisfied. Therefore, it is agreed that appropriate measures are being implemented and that there is confidence in the assessments carried out to date.

The inspector also queried whether the reasonable avoidance measures for amphibians outlined within the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010118/APP/7.10] was acceptable to address any concerns regarding this protected species. Hamish Jackson confirmed that this would be the case and indicated that it would be beneficial to have an ecological protection zone outlined on a map for Great Crested Newt, highlighting where works will need to avoid and where an Ecological Clerk of Works would be required.

Please contact me with any further queries.

Yours sincerely,

**Hamish Jackson ACIEEM BSc (Hons)**  
Senior Ecological Consultant





**Place Services provide ecological advice on behalf of Braintree District Council and Chelmsford City Council**

Please note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular