

# West Burton Solar Project

## Statement of Common Ground With Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

Prepared by: Clarkson & Woods  
October 2023

PINS reference: EN010132  
Document reference: EX1/WB8.3.10

Planning Act 2008  
Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010



## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1	PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT	3
1.2	PARTIES TO THIS STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND	3
1.3	TERMINOLOGY	3
<b>2</b>	<b>RECORD OF ENGAGEMENT</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1	SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION	4
<b>3</b>	<b>MATTERS AGREED</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>MATTERS UNDER DISCUSSION</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>MATTERS NOT AGREED</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>SIGNATORIES</b>	<b>11</b>
6.1	OVERVIEW	11

## Issue Sheet

Report Prepared for: West Burton Solar Project Ltd.  
Pre-Examination

### Statement of Common Ground Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

**Prepared by:**

Name: Harry Fox

Title: Principal Ecologist

**Approved by:**

Signature: [insert no more than 2.2cm high]

Name: [name]

Title: [title]

Revision	Date	Prepared by:	Approved by:
0	05/10/23	Harry Fox	

## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Purpose of the Document**

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared as part of the proposed West Burton Solar Project Development Consent Order (the Application) made by West Burton Solar Project Ltd (The Applicant) to the Secretary of State for Energy Security & Net Zero (the Secretary of State) pursuant to the Planning Act 2008 (PA 2008).
- 1.1.2 This SoCG does not seek to replicate information which is available elsewhere within the Application documents. All documents are available in the deposit locations and/or the Planning Inspectorate website.
- 1.1.3 This SoCG has been produced to confirm to the Examining Authority (ExA) where agreement has been reached between the parties, and where agreement has not (yet) been reached. SoCGs are an established means in the planning process of allowing all parties to identify and focus on specific issues that may need to be addressed during the examination.

### **1.2 Parties to this Statement of Common Ground**

- 1.2.1 This SoCG has been prepared by (1) West Burton Solar Project Ltd. as the Applicant and (2) Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust.
- 1.2.2 Collectively, West Burton Solar Project Ltd. and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust are referred to as 'the parties'.

### **1.3 Terminology**

- 1.3.1 In the tables in **Sections 3 - 5** of this SoCG:
- "Agreed" indicates where the issue has been resolved.
  - "Not Agreed" indicates a final position, and
  - "Under discussion" indicates where these points will be the subject of ongoing discussion wherever possible to resolve, or refine, the extent of disagreement between the parties.

## 2 Record of Engagement

### 2.1 Summary of Consultation

2.1.1 The parties have been engaged in consultation since the beginning of the proposed development. A summary of the meetings and correspondence that has taken place between West Burton Solar Project and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust in relation to the Application is outlined in **Table 2.1**.

**Table 2.1: Record of Engagement**

Date & Form of Correspondence	Summary of Comment/Issues Raised	Summary of Action or outcome
<p>Pre-application advice received from Senior Conservation Officer dated 29/10/21.</p>	<p>NWT provided high-level advice on the expectations for avoidance and mitigation of impact and assessment of baseline conditions. Advice based on Preliminary Ecological Appraisals (PEAs) and generic design information. This document formed part of the consultation package submitted to PINS during the EIA scoping process.</p>	<p>Impacts on Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) relevant to Nottinghamshire have been avoided through sensitive siting of development and access routes, with further mitigation proposed in paragraphs 9.7.16-9.7.19 and 9.7.26 of <b>6.2.9 Environmental Statement - Chapter 9 Ecology and Biodiversity [APP-047]</b>.</p> <p>Protective buffer zones from important habitats are discussed in paragraph 9.6.9 of <b>6.2.9 Environmental Statement - Chapter 9 Ecology and Biodiversity [APP-047]</b> and are shown within <b>6.3.9.11 Environmental Statement - Appendix 9.11 Schedule of Protective Ecological Buffers [APP-087]</b>.</p> <p>Impacts on hedgerows have been largely avoided through careful access design and buffering, with mitigation put forward where needed as set out in paragraphs 9.7.45-9.7.48 of <b>6.2.9 Environmental Statement - Chapter 9 Ecology and Biodiversity [APP-047]</b>.</p>
<p>Applicant ecologist contacted Senior Conservation Officer on 14/04/22 to request meeting to discuss progress on Scheme and</p>	<p>NWT acknowledged all documents provided on the layout of cable routes and detailed proposed approach to ecological survey</p>	<p>All advice noted and has been incorporated into <b>7.17 Outline Ecological Protection and Mitigation Strategy [APP-326]</b> and <b>7.3 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [APP-311]</b> as</p>

<b>Date &amp; Form of Correspondence</b>	<b>Summary of Comment/Issues Raised</b>	<b>Summary of Action or outcome</b>
<p>approach to baseline assessment of the cable routes. Meeting took place 21/04/22. Written response received 22/04/22.</p>	<p>scope. NWT was satisfied with all provided information in relation to survey scope. NWT recommended cabling operations to be undertaken via a Precautionary Method of Working/Ecological Clerk of Works arrangement. NWT recommended stronger wording in relation to the avoidance of impacts on Local Wildlife Sites, including opportunities for their enhancement.</p>	<p>necessary, as well as the design of the Scheme.</p>

2.1.2 It is agreed that this is an accurate record of the key meetings and consultation undertaken between (1) West Burton Solar Project Ltd. and (2) Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust in relation to the issues addressed in this SoCG.

### 3 Matters Agreed

3.1.1 **Table 3.1** below details the matters agreed with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

**Table 3.1**

Sub-topic	Stakeholder Comment	Applicant Response
Cable Route	<p>NWT confirm that the survey scope and methodologies carried out for the West Burton cable route are acceptable.</p> <p>NWT note that the West Burton cable route will avoid Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). NWT would expect that the solar arrays, storage units and cable routes to not only avoid SSSIs but also there should be a presumption against development of sites of local biodiversity value, that is, Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). Where this is not possible then it may be justifiable that impacts proceed if accompanied by sufficient mitigation, compensation and aftercare. NWT are of the opinion that the mitigation hierarchy should be applied.</p> <p>Cabling operations should be carried out according to a PMW or Ecological Method Statement in the presence of an Ecological Clerk of Works to supervise and advise during the process to avoid direct impacts on protected and notable species.</p>	<p>This is considered common ground as the process of finalising the Cable Route Corridor has meant that none of the LWSs will be directly affected by the cable installation. This is ensured by avoiding crossing/making incursions into the LWSs when siting either the trench(es), access routes, compounds or jointing bays and adopting a suitably wide buffer (e.g. &gt;30m) where there is a lack of physical barriers (hedgerows or roads).</p> <p>The ecological avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures determined to be necessary for cable route installation are set out within <b>7.17 Outline Ecological Protection and Mitigation Strategy [APP-326]</b>.</p>
Biodiversity Net Gain	<p>All new development should make provision for a minimum 10% net biodiversity gain on site, or where it can be demonstrated that for design reasons this is not practicable, off site through a financial contribution.</p>	<p>This is considered common ground as the proposals have been calculated as providing a net increase of 86.80% in Habitat Units, 54.71% of Hedgerow Units and 33.25% of River Units. The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment</p>

Sub-topic	Stakeholder Comment	Applicant Response
		can be found in <b>6.3.9.12 Environmental Statement - Appendix 9.12 Biodiversity Net Gain Report [APP-088]</b> .
Hedgerows and Trees	NWT recommended retention of landscape features such as hedgerows and mature trees. If removal of a section of hedge is essential, the loss should be mitigated elsewhere on the site.	<p>This is considered common ground as the potential for loss of hedgerows and trees to the construction of the array Sites is very limited as the design process has continuously sought to refine down the number of new crossings or gaps required in existing field boundaries. The schedule of new gaps required for the array construction and ongoing maintenance is given in Section 9.6 of <b>6.2.9 Environmental Statement - Chapter 9_Ecology and Biodiversity [APP-047]</b>, and totals 7 new hedgerow gaps, with a total of 9 ditch crossings. These gaps will measure between 3-6.5m wide. In the context of the Scheme’s hedgerow network which comprises approximately 45km within the Sites, such losses are proportionately extremely small.</p> <p>The loss of small sections of hedgerow will be mitigated through significant enhancement of hedgerows including planting of new trees (approximately 13.7ha) and hedgerows at boundaries (as can be seen within <b>7.3 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [APP-311]</b>). This planting will focus on the gapping up of currently defunct hedgerows, creation of new hedgerows (approximately 7.1km) at boundaries where none exist, planting around Public Rights of Way and where landscape and visual impact mitigation is required. In addition, limited opportunities for the replanting of old,</p>



Sub-topic	Stakeholder Comment	Applicant Response
		removed field boundaries where appropriate have been pursued.
Habitat Creation	<p>NWT recommend that biodiversity gains are possible where intensively cultivated arable or grassland is converted to extensive grassland and/or wildflower meadows between and/or beneath solar panels and in field margins. The best results are likely to come from sites that contain both wildflower meadows and areas of tussocky un-cropped grassland.</p> <p>NWT suggest planting wild bird seed or nectar mixes could benefit birds and insects. Pollen and nectar strips provide food for pollinating insects through the summer period, and wild bird seed mixes provide food for wild birds through the winter.</p> <p>NWT recommend that bare cultivated strips for rare arable plants and invertebrates and rough grassland margins could also be beneficial.</p> <p>NWT suggest a variety of artificial structures can be built to provide hibernacula for reptiles and amphibians, log piles for invertebrates, and nesting or roosting boxes for birds and bats. Built structures such as control buildings can be designed to provide access to loft spaces.</p> <p>Biodiversity enhancements should be appropriate for the scale of the site and should link with existing habitats on and around the site.</p>	<p>This is considered common ground. Habitat creation and ongoing management of retained, enhanced and newly created habitats have been discussed in <b>7.3 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [APP-311]</b> to maximise diversity.</p>

## **4 Matters Under Discussion**

4.1.1 There are no matters “under discussion” with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust.

## **5 Matters Not Agreed**


5.1.1 There are no matters “not agreed” with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust.

## 6 Signatories

### 6.1 Overview

6.1.1 The above SoCG is agreed between West Burton Solar Project Ltd. (the Applicant) and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust as specified below.

Duly authorised for and on behalf of **West Burton Solar Project Ltd.**

Name:	Eve Browning
Job Title:	Senior Project Development Manager
Date:	10/10/2023
Signature:	

Duly authorised for and on behalf of **Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust**

Name:	Mark Speck
Job Title:	Senior Nature Recovery Officer
Date:	10/10/2023
Signature:	