
Sperberry Hill Solar

on behalf of Brockwell Battery and Storage Limited

**Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP):
Biodiversity**



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This Construction Environmental Management Plan: Biodiversity (CEMP:B) has been prepared to discharge Condition 4 of the granted planning permission (North Hertfordshire Council Reference: 24/02455/FP) for a solar farm with associated battery storage and ancillary infrastructure (hereafter the 'Consented Development').

1.1.1 The Consented Development is located on land opposite Wymondley national grid substation and to the south of Sperberry Hill, St. Ippolyts, hereafter referred to as the 'Site'.

1.1.2 Condition 4 states:

No development approved by this planning permission shall take place (including ground works or vegetation clearance) until a construction environmental management plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP (Biodiversity) should be informed by the 2024 Ecological Assessment and a pre-construction badger survey and include the following

a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.

b) Identification of "biodiversity protection zones".

c) Practical measures to avoid or reduce impacts during construction.

d) The location and timing of sensitive works to harm to biodiversity features.

e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.

f) Responsible persons and lines of communication.

g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECow) or similarly competent person.

h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs

1.1.3 This document provides the management framework required for the planning and implementation of construction activities in accordance with the biodiversity commitments which have been identified at planning.

1.1.4 The purpose of this CEMP:B is to set out suitable measures to avoid the risk of adverse impacts on sensitive ecological receptors, identify biodiversity protection zones and ensure legal compliance in relation to protected habitats and species. It describes the checks and monitoring that will be implemented to ensure works are being undertaken in accordance with these requirements, together with measures to ensure that appropriate corrective actions or mitigation measures are taken where necessary.

1.1.5 This document forms part of a suite of CEMP documents together with Condition 15, which relates to an overarching CEMP.

1.1.6 The Site Manager and all site personnel will be responsible for the implementation of the CEMP:B. They will comply with all conditions of the consent and the relevant provisions contained in the reports submitted in accordance with those conditions. The CEMP:B will be monitored regularly throughout the works.

2 CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT & RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 This section details the responsibilities of the various roles involved in the construction of the Consented Development relevant to Condition 4. All those involved have responsibility for ensuring compliance with the CEMP:B.

2.2 Developer

- 2.2.1 Brockwell Storage and Solar Limited (BSSL) will appoint a Principal Contractor to undertake relevant environmental tasks as detailed within this document prior to, during and upon completion of the construction works.
- 2.2.2 BSSL will be responsible for obtaining all necessary consents, licences and permissions for their activities as required by current legislation governing the protection of the environment.

2.3 Contractor

- 2.3.1 The appointed Contractor will consider all of the mitigation measures and best practice construction methods detailed within this CEMP:B in their design and in any detailed environmental plans as required by the Contractor.

2.4 Site Manager

- 2.4.1 The Principal Contractor will appoint a Site Manager. The Site Manager will manage and co-ordinate onsite environmental activities and act as a point of contact for local residents to ensure that any concerns are resolved quickly and efficiently. The Site Manager will be responsible for inductions and briefing all staff and visitors; meeting environmental and ecological obligations; resolving, reporting and monitoring any environmental incidents; and ensuring waste management procedures are followed.
- 2.4.2 The requirements of the CEMP:B and other environmental responsibilities will be communicated to employees and sub-contractors by:
- Site induction;
 - Risk assessment & method statements for works likely to pose environmental issues;
 - Toolbox talks; and,
 - Environmental monitoring and reporting (by Site team).
- 2.4.3 The Site induction will include the basic responses to an environmental spill, and the Site Manager will ensure that all Site offices and Site vehicles have an environmental spill kit, which are to be easily accessible.
- 2.4.4 All environmental incidents will be reported and recorded, and a full investigation will be completed where appropriate, and corrective action applied. Records will be kept for all environmental occurrences including but not restricted to potential hazards, near misses, incidents and complaints.

2.5 Ecological Clerk of Works

- 2.5.1 A suitably experienced Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW), or similarly competent person, will be appointed to provide ecological and environmental advice during construction. The ECoW will monitor construction to ensure compliance with the CEMP:B and help to reduce risks and delays. Any breaches of the CEMP:B will be reported to the Site Manager with the authority to stop construction/decommissioning works.

3 CONSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN: BIODIVERSITY

3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 This section details the required measures to ensure adequate protection, mitigation and compensation for protected species, priority species and priority habitats.
- 3.1.2 Measures summarised below shall be followed to protect wildlife and biodiversity to ensure that construction activities do not harm protected species or their habitats, and to ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, the 'Habitat Regulations' (Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulation 2017 (as amended) and Conservation of Habitats and Species Amendment (EU Exit) Regulations 2019).

3.2 Good Practice to be Employed

- 3.2.1 Site staff will be briefed during a Site induction on the requirements regarding the environmental good practice on the Site, including the protection of retained vegetation. Briefings and training will be repeated as required for new starters on the Site and/or refreshed through toolbox talks or similar when onsite conditions or special measures are changed or updated.
- 3.2.2 The Site perimeter should be demarcated with boundary fencing (Heras or similar) in order to prevent accidental encroachment beyond the Site boundary.
- 3.2.3 Standard measures to ensure runoff control and pollution prevention will be implemented; these measures will safeguard habitats and species within and adjacent to the Site.
- 3.2.4 Detailed measures will be outlined within the overarching CEMP prepared to discharge Condition 15 of the approved permission. General mitigation measures for pollution events to be implemented include:
- Vehicles to be fully washed and sprayed down with an effective but water safe spray offsite before coming into the working area;
 - An experienced ECoW will be able to offer advice throughout the project;
 - Fencing should be erected to establish a 5m buffer adjacent to any ditches on Site as to prevent machinery and vehicles passing close to them whilst largely maintaining wildlife corridors throughout the development. The position and arrangement of will be established prior to works with input from an ecologist;
 - Waste materials including soil will be regularly removed from the Site as to prevent siltation of waterways that pass through and border the Site;
 - Refuelling: All refuelling will be carried out away from waterbodies and watercourses/ditches on Site, preferably off site at official fuelling stations. There will be a designated refuelling point on Site, a spill kit will be available, an absorbent spill blanket will be laid out whilst refuelling takes place. Fuel will be contained within its own compound; all fuel drums will be sited onto a bund that has a capacity of 110% of their contents and at the end of each day the fuel compound will be secured within the compound;
 - All plant will be parked in the compound overnight so that there are no potential pollution incidents while staff are not on site;

- Each vehicle used will carry a spill kit to deal with any issues immediately should they occur; and,
- There will be a number of pollution prevention measures in place that will be applied at all times (e.g. provision of a spill kit and inspection of all plant and equipment prior to use).

3.3 Designated Sites and Habitats

Statutory designated sites

- 3.3.1 The Site does not form part of any statutory designated site for nature conservation, with all such sites sufficiently distanced that no direct or indirect impacts are likely to occur.

Non-statutory designated sites

- 3.3.2 The Site does not form part of any non-statutory designated site for nature conservation, however Wymondley Transforming Station Local Wildlife Site is located 10m north of the Site boundary and Sperberry Hill House Meadow 30m west of the Site. A further 13 non-statutory designated sites are located within 2km.
- 3.3.3 Biodiversity protection zones should be demarcated to ensure suitable buffers are being maintained from sensitive habitats, including watercourses and waterbodies not being impacted by the works which may have connectivity to nearby designated sites. Biodiversity protection zones will be demarcated with fencing to prevent accidental encroachment and are further detailed within **Section 3.6**.
- 3.3.4 In addition to biodiversity protection zones, implementation of best practice runoff control and pollution prevention measures (as outlined in the overarching CEMP prepared to discharge Condition 15) be used to prevent pollution to the watercourses and waterbodies as a result of the Consented Development.

Habitats

- 3.3.5 Habitats of ecological value such as hedgerows and ditches will be retained and protected during works.
- 3.3.6 Habitats of ecological value will be protected through the use of stand-off buffers which will be clearly marked out with fencing. Awareness of these will be included within the Site induction.
- 3.3.7 Trees and hedges will be retained and protected on the Site, with a minimum buffer of 5m or in line with the Tree and Hedge Protection Plan required by Condition 17 (North Hertfordshire Council Reference: 25/03251/DOC), whichever is greater.
- 3.3.8 There will be clear delineation of working areas and access routes for vehicles entering the Site and instructions on these will be given to all Site construction staff, delivery drivers and subcontractors.
- 3.3.9 Standard measures to ensure runoff control and pollution prevention will be implemented Site-wide in line with the overarching CEMP prepared to discharge Condition 15; these measures will safeguard boundary habitats as well as offsite land and associated habitats..

3.4 Protected Species

Birds

- 3.4.1 Retained field boundary habitats, including hedgerows, watercourses/ditches and trees will be protected throughout works, through implemented biodiversity protection zones, see **Section 3.6**.

Breeding birds

- 3.4.2 Site clearance works will be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season, so far as reasonably practical. The breeding bird season is generally considered to be 1st March to 31st August, inclusive. Where this cannot be avoided, the appointed ECoW will undertake a pre-commencement clearance survey to identify the presence of any wild bird nests being built or in use (including those of ground nesting birds such as skylark). Only once the ECoW is satisfied that an offence under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) will not occur, may works proceed.
- 3.4.3 If a nesting species is identified, a suitable work exclusion zone will be established around the nest site where required, until it is no longer active, in line with best practice guidance and in consultation with the ECoW.

Bats

- 3.4.4 No tree removal and minimal hedgerow removal is proposed at the Site. Protection of retained trees and hedgerows in line with Condition 17 will safeguard potential roost sites and maintain foraging and commuting opportunities.
- 3.4.5 Should any trees later be identified for removal (e.g., due to health and safety concerns), the ECoW should be notified, and the trees should first be subjected to a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) to determine if they have features suitable for use by roosting bats. If potential features for roosting bats are present, further surveys may be required.
- 3.4.6 Works will be undertaken during daylight hours, negating the requirement for any artificial lighting.
- 3.4.7 Although not anticipated, if any artificial lighting is found to be required during the construction or operation of the Consented Development, it will be employed in a sensitive manner and directed away from field boundary habitats to maintain bat foraging and commuting routes as dark corridors. This will be detailed within a lighting plan and achieved in line with Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidance (2023) *Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night*¹.

Badger

- 3.4.8 No evidence of badger was recorded onsite during the baseline surveys; however habitats were considered suitable for this species. Due to the mobility of the species and the known presence of the species within the wider area, a pre-commencement badger survey, see **Table 4.1**, will be undertaken to check for any changes in the status of badger at the Site or within the surrounding 30m of the Site.
- 3.4.9 Should any setts be found, appropriate buffers of 30m from all sett entrances, will be maintained around setts. Buffer zones should be marked with suitable fencing including signage. If appropriate buffers cannot be incorporated into the design of the Consented Development, a development licence will first be obtained Natural England prior to any works that may affect the sett.

¹<https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/> – Accessed June 2026.

- 3.4.10 A precautionary approach will be adopted during construction with measures implemented to safeguard any badger that may be active outside normal construction hours, including covering of excavations and/or fitting of suitable escape ramps, safe storage of chemicals and reporting to the Site Manager/ECOW any new setts or suspected new setts.
- 3.4.11 Standard measures to ensure runoff control and pollution prevention will be implemented Site-wide; these measures will safeguard retained and created habitats which may be utilised by badger.
- 3.4.12 Once constructed, areas of habitat enhancement at the Site may provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat for badger within the Site, with connectivity to the wider environment. To enable continued connectivity between the Site and the wider environment, perimeter fencing shall incorporate badger gates at intervals of approximately every 200m.

Amphibians

- 3.4.13 No ponds are located within the Site, however seven ponds are located within 250m of the Site that were identified as having the potential to support amphibian species. Desk study records identified the presence of GCN within the wider area (2km around the Site).
- 3.4.14 Standard measures to ensure runoff control and pollution prevention will be implemented in line with the overarching CEMP prepared to discharge Condition 15; these measures will safeguard retained and created habitats which may be utilised by common amphibian species.
- 3.4.15 As a precautionary approach, Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) should be implemented at the Site, with small scale removal of any habitats suitable to support amphibians subject to a visual inspection and fingertip search by the ECoW prior to removal (see **Appendix 1**). The RAMs will include measures to avoid impacts on individual amphibians (and other wildlife) potentially present.

Reptiles

- 3.4.16 Limited and generally isolated habitats suitable to support reptiles were present across the Site. No evidence of reptiles was recorded onsite during surveys, and no records of reptiles were returned from the Site or immediately surrounding area.
- 3.4.17 As a precautionary approach, RAMs should be implemented at the Site, with removal of any habitats suitable to support reptiles subject to a visual inspection and fingertip search by the ECoW prior to removal (see **Appendix 1**). The RAMs will include measures to avoid impacts on individual reptiles (and other wildlife) potentially present.

Other species

- 3.4.18 The implementation of RAMs (see **Appendix 1**), as detailed for amphibians and reptiles above, will also protect any notable species, such as hedgehog, if present.
- 3.4.19 The retention of field boundary features including ditches and hedgerows at the Site will likely provide suitable habitats for a variety of invertebrate species.
- 3.4.20 The cessation of agricultural chemical spraying will enhance the Site's potential to support a diverse invertebrate assemblage.

Invasive flora species

- 3.4.21 No invasive non-native species (INNS) was identified within the Site, during baseline surveys. A pre-construction check will be undertaken across the Site, including terrestrial and aquatic habitats, prior

to the commencement of construction to check for any newly established INNS, which may need to be considered during construction works.

3.4.22 The Site induction will include the identification of common INNS that may be encountered.

3.4.23 In the event INNS are identified the ECoW will be contacted and a suitable exclusion zone implemented with signage to inform site staff of the presence of INNS. Work within the exclusion zone will only be allowed to resume following successful treatment of the species by a suitably experienced and where necessary licensed invasive species treatment specialist contractor.

3.5 Pre-construction Surveys

3.5.1 This section details the surveys that will be conducted prior to the start of construction. These surveys will inform the requirement for mitigation and licencing, if required, to be implemented during construction.

3.5.2 The pre-construction surveys to be undertaken are described in detail in the relevant sections above and are summarised in **Table 4.1** below.

3.5.3 Prior to any minor or advanced construction works, the specific area (and associated survey areas, as detailed within **Table 4.1**) subject to the works would be inspected, rather than a Site wide survey, unless required.

Table 4.1: Pre-construction Surveys

Ecological Feature	Timing	Survey Area	Rationale
Nesting birds	March to August inclusive (within 48hrs of vegetation clearance)	Site	A survey for nesting birds (including ground nesting species such as skylark) should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist within 48 hours of any vegetation clearance. This includes open ground to identify ground nesting species such as skylark.
Badger setts	Prior to construction (within four weeks)	Site +30m buffer	An update survey to assess the presence of badger and to identify any potential newly excavated setts should be undertaken no more than one month prior to construction. Results of surveys should be used to inform scheme design, licencing, if required, and protection zones to be implemented.
Amphibians and reptiles	March to October inclusive (immediately prior to vegetation removal)	Site	Prior to the removal of vegetation suitable to support amphibians or reptiles, a pre-commencement visual check and fingertip search should be completed immediately prior to vegetation clearance. Any areas of vegetation suitable to support hibernating amphibians or reptiles should not be impacted outside of the amphibian/reptile active season (typically March – November, inclusive). This includes the removal of hedgerow features below ground level between December and February inclusive).

Invasive flora Species	April to September inclusive (up to three months prior)	Site	A general survey for invasive non-native plant species should be undertaken within three months of works commencing. The survey should include both terrestrial and aquatic habitats on-Site.
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3.6 Biodiversity Protection Zones

- 3.6.1 **Table 4.2** below identifies biodiversity protection zones to be enforced around known ecological constraints, or to be implemented if an ecological constraint is identified during construction. Biodiversity protection zones should be clearly marked through use of temporary fencing and signage.
- 3.6.2 Biodiversity protection zones must only be reduced or removed following agreement with the ECoW that the constraint is no longer active, or safe working practices have been agreed, with regards to relevant legislation and good practice guidance.

Table 4.2: Biodiversity Protection Zones

Target Habitat / Species	Protection Zone	Notes
Hedgerows and Trees	5m buffer or in line with Condition 17 Tree and Hedge Protection Plan (whichever is greater)	Site fencing at min 5m distance to be installed as soon as practicable in the works programme to provide a barrier for subsequent work phases. This will have appropriate signage to prevent accidental encroachment, habitat damage or degradation and prohibit the storage of any equipment, machinery or earthworks in these areas.
Nesting birds	Species dependent; to be advised by the ECoW.	During the nesting bird season, typically March to August, inclusive. Nesting bird checks should be undertaken during the nesting bird season, within the 48 hours prior to any vegetation clearance.
Bats	See Condition 17 Tree and Hedge Protection Plan.	Should any trees requiring removal later be identified, a GLTA should first be undertaken to assess the suitability of the tree for roosting bats.
Badger sett	30m from a sett, the 30m buffer should extend from each sett entrance.	To be adhered to if any setts are located within the Site. Zone may be reduced for certain low impact works with agreement from the ECoW.
Invasive flora species	Minimum 10m from any invasive flora.	If any INNS are identified, the protection zone to remain in place until treatment has been successfully completed. Exact buffer will depend on the species present.

Appendix 1: Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) Method Statement

The following Method Statement outlines suitable measures to be implemented during construction works associated with the Consented Development to avoid the disturbance, injury or killing of individual animals including bats, badgers, common amphibian species, common reptile species and other mammals (e.g., European hedgehog and brown hare).

Pre-commencement surveys, as detailed within **Table 4.1** of the CEMP: B, should be undertaken at the Site prior to the commencement of works. The surveys will determine that the Site conditions have not changed since the baseline surveys were undertaken, and search for evidence of protected and invasive species on-Site.

Habitats on-Site are suitable to support a range of nesting birds, including ground nesting species. Any vegetation clearance will be preceded by a nesting bird check during the nesting bird season (March – August, inclusive).

Habitats present are suitable to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats, although suitable habitats will largely be retained. Should any trees later be identified that require removal, they should first be subject to a GLTA and dependent on the results, further surveys and a licence may be required. Artificial lighting is not anticipated to be required during the construction or operation of the Consented Development. If any artificial lighting is required during construction, a lighting plan will first be produced to ensure there is no light-spill on boundary features suitable for foraging and commuting bats.

No evidence of badger was found during the habitat survey, although the species is known to be present within the locale. Habitat on Site and adjacent to the Site is suitable and the pre-commencement survey will include a search for any newly created setts.

The vast majority of the Site is comprised of arable farmland which is of low ecological for amphibians and reptiles, although areas of habitat are present that are considered suitable to support amphibians and reptiles.

The Site and surrounding area may potentially support mammals including brown hare and European hedgehog. The habitats on Site are typical of habitats in the wider environment, and therefore the loss of arable and pastoral farmland foraging habitat as a result of the proposed development is not considered to negatively impact local populations.

Measures to ensure the favourable conservation status of the species during the proposed development must reflect legislation and guidance application at the time and the construction phase will be undertaken following PWMS under the supervision of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) as required to provide advice.

These RAMs relate to small scale removal of habitats on-site including removal, of small areas of grassland and arable land, and should not be employed for larger scale or extensive habitat removal including impacts to ditches and/or watercourses.

Minor or short term destructive or disturbance works will also follow this Method Statement to ensure legal compliance and to ensure the objectives are achieved.

Method Statement

The following measures will be adopted throughout the construction period of the Consented Development:

- Site operatives will be informed by 'tool box' talk of the potential for protected species to occur on-Site, what to look out for and what to do in the event that animal is found. If any protected species, or evidence of protected species are found on-Site, an ecologist should be contacted immediately.

- Pre-commencement surveys, as detailed within **Table 4.1**, will be undertaken prior to the commencement of works onsite to check for any changes in baseline conditions and search for the presence of protected species, including newly created badger setts.
- Biodiversity Protection Zones, as detailed within **Table 4.2**, will be demarcated with suitable fencing and signage, where appropriate, prior to the commencement of works onsite. Any biodiversity protection zones will be left in-situ until the construction works are complete.
- If any vegetation clearance works are undertaken during the nesting bird season (March – August, inclusive), a nesting bird check will be undertaken by the ECoW within the 48-hours prior to the works commencing. If an active birds nest is found, the ECoW will advise on a suitable (species-specific) buffer. The buffer will be demarcated onsite with suitable signage and left in-situ until the nesting attempt is complete.
- Vegetation clearance works (e.g. short sections of hedgerow and other dense vegetation or tall grassland) should only commence after a careful visual inspection and finger-tip search by an ECoW, and it has been determined that no animals are present. Vegetation should be reduced (by hand trimmer) to a height of c. 150 mm and left for a minimum of 24 hours to allow any animals present to disperse. Following a second visual inspection and finger-tip search by an ECoW, vegetation can then be reduced to ground level.
- The proposed timing of the removal of any feature potentially offering shelter or refuge should avoid the hibernation period (November to February inclusive or when the overnight temperature is consistently below five degrees Celsius) in order to prevent disturbance to hibernating animals.
- Trenches and excavations should include an escape route for animals that might enter the trench, especially if left open overnight. Ramps should be no greater than 45 degrees in angle and can include wooden planks or ramped earth. Ideally, any excavations open for a prolonged period should be covered.
- All excavations left open overnight or longer should be checked for animals daily and prior to the continuation of works or infilling. Any stored soil should be compacted at the end of each days work to discourage animals from sheltering within spoil mounds.
- Any excavated material stored overnight should be fenced off and covered to prevent any burrowing into spoil piles. Any excavated materials should be searched prior to being used as infill.
- Site specific management practices will be set out within the CEMP:B and must be adhered to during construction to ensure the protection of habitats and species within the Site.

Should any protected or other notable species (or signs of) be found at any point during construction, works within suitable habitat and/or potentially disturbing works in close proximity to the animal must cease immediately and the ECoW will advise on the appropriate actions, including applying for a licence, if required.