

Flaxlands Solar Farm Planning Responses: Local Planning Authority

Project name Flaxlands Solar Farm	Project number 60727989	Client Ampyr Solar Europe	Date June 2026
Planning Reference PL/2025/05830			

Wiltshire Council have provided an updated Planning Consultation Response regarding ecology in relation to the Flaxlands Solar Farm planning submission to Wiltshire Council (the 'LPA') (ref PL/2025/05830).

The Planning Consultation Response from Wiltshire Council was originally received on 11 November 2025 with a clarification response provided by AECOM/the applicant in February 2026¹. A meeting was then held with Natural England and the LPA on 17th March to discuss the outstanding areas of concern. A post meeting clarification email then set out areas where additional information was required by the LPA².

A meeting was held with Wiltshire Council Ecologist on 2nd April 2026 to discuss any outstanding issues and provide additional information. In the meeting it was discussed that the outstanding ecology elements were the provision of an overview skylark mitigation strategy (since submitted and agreed), an updated BNG metric, a figure outlining the ecology buffer zones and the signed Great Crested Newt District Level Licensing Scheme IACPC. No other outstanding issues were identified and it was considered elements such as the status of the grasslands on and adjacent to the Site had been resolved. Following submission of additional documents by the Applicant (including the Skylark Mitigation Strategy) on the 23 April 2026, the council on the 27 May 2026 have provided an updated Planning Consultation Response including raising request for further information beyond what has already been discussed and agreed.

The issues raised by Wiltshire Council in the updated Planning Consultation Response which are highlighted as not satisfactorily addressed are set out below in **Table 1** along with AECOM/the applicants response.

Provided along this note are the following documents

- Ecological Buffer Figure
- Counter Signed IACPC DLL form
- Updated BNG report – Showing matched baseline numbers to that provided at submission
- Condition assessment sheets for Linear and Area habitats
- AECOM/ the Applicant's previous consultation response (dated February 2026¹) for reference with respect to grassland status.

Table 1. Wiltshire Council Planning Comment Response

Wiltshire Council Comment	Response and Action
<u>Bat Species</u> <i>The Outline Landscape Masterplan (Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (Outline LEMP). April 2026. AECOM. Project No. 60727989) does not clearly demonstrate the extent of the proposed ecological buffer zones, including the 30 m buffer from ancient woodland, the 15 m buffer from existing woodland and tree groups, and the 10 to 15 m buffers associated with key bat habitats as identified within the Bat Activity Report. As a result, it is not currently possible to identify the required protection measures. The plans must be revised to show all proposed buffer zones.</i>	A plan is provided along with this note (separate attachment) showing the ecological buffer zones for the Proposed Development including the ponds, watercourses, ancient woodland, woodland/tree groups and key bat habitat. Any further buffer zones requested should be included as part of the condition and can be incorporated into an updated LEMP as is standard planning practice.
<u>Great Crested Newt (GCN)</u> <i>"The applicant has indicated that they have applied to the Great Crested Newt District Level Licensing Scheme for this proposal. However, the application to the LPA does not include the signed and countersigned Impact Assessment Conservation Payment Certificate (IACPC), nor ANNEX 3 of this document including the location plan of the development. We are therefore unable to verify that the location to be licensed corresponds with the red line boundary of the application or that Natural England has</i>	A signed and countersigned Impact Assessment Conservation Payment Certificate (IACPC) is provided by separate attachment with this note.

¹ AECOM (February 2026): Flaxlands Solar Farm Planning Responses: Natural England and Local Planning Authority.

² Email dated 19th March, from Jessica Cracknell: Flaxlands Solar Farm - Post Meeting Clarification.

Wiltshire Council Comment	Response and Action
<i>confirmed that the proposal meets the initial criteria necessary to be included in the scheme. This information is required prior to determination of this application"</i>	
<u>Biodiversity Net Gain</u> <i>The updated Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (23 April 2026. AECOM. Project No. 60727989. Rev. 2) shows a baseline area habitat value of 428.73 units, this is lower than the 429.32 area habitat units in the provided statutory metric calculation (07 May 2025. Iteration. 1) submitted with the application. The baseline habitat value should not have changed since the application was submitted and justification for the new value is required.</i>	There have been no changes to the baseline since the application was submitted,= and the change in the BNG baseline since the application was submitted was an error. In reviewing the document post submission an incorrect strategic significance score was allocated to individual trees (input as low in the update, previously captured as medium). This had a very minor effect on the baseline total. This has now been corrected in the metric and the updated BNG Report provided as an attachment, with the baseline habitat now 429.32 units.
<i>The species list provided supports classification as UKHab g3a Lowland Meadow, and therefore the current UKHab mapping is inconsistent with both the NVC findings and the recorded botanical data.</i>	AECOM on behalf of the applicant in the planning response (dated February 2026) provided additional habitat descriptions, botanical data and photos with regards to Fields 3, 4 and 5 (labelling consistent with NVC reporting and figure on consultation response). This concluded that Field 3 is supportive of Lowland Meadow priority habitat, and the field has since been excluded from the development. Field 4 was dominated by perennial rye grass and white clover and was recorded to be regularly mown and managed for agriculture purposes. Field 5 supported a greater diversity of species, though was not considered to be sympathetically managed. The UKHab definition of lowland meadow requires that a grassland meets at least three criteria for species present: >15 species/m2 including grasses and excluding bryophytes, >30% cover of broadleaved herbs and sedges excluding white clover and creeping buttercup, and <10% cover of rye grasses and white clover AND at least three indicator species must be present. Given that the grassland within the proposed development does not meet any of the three criteria and ragged robin was the only recorded indicator species, Field 5 is not considered to be of lowland meadow classification according to the UKHab definition. In line with UKHab definition and based on the botanical surveys completed there is no lowland meadow habitat within the development boundary. It was considered the status of grassland was resolved as an outstanding issue following AECOM/the Applicants February 2026 consultation response and meeting with the LPA ecologist on 2nd April 2026.
<i>Where the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been updated, the baseline habitat map, condition assessments and the statutory biodiversity metric must also be updated to reflect any changes. All submitted documentation must align, with the same recorded baseline habitat area reflected across all documentation.</i>	Any disparities have been addressed in the attached BNG document and summarised in the previous comment regarding the baseline; all elements of the BNG assessment aligns.
<i>"The condition assessment sheets for the baseline habitats have not been submitted. This information is a minimum requirement set out in Article 7 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and must therefore be submitted for review by the ecology team prior to determination"</i>	The condition assessment sheets for linear and area habitats for the Site are provided as attachments.