TETRA TECH

Our Ref: 784-B072252

Your Ref: 4/25/2180/0F1

FAO: Heather Morrison

09 July 2025

Dear Heather,

784-B072252 WOODEND AND MOOR ROW, EGREMONT 4/25/2180/0F1

The project is located to the east of Dazell Street between the villages of Bigrigg, Cleator and Moor Row. The Proposed Development is for a 30MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated ancillary structures. Planning application reference is FUL/4/25/2180/0F1.

The applicant has provided the following ecological documents:

- Ecological Impact Assessment: BESS Egremont, Futures Ecology May 2025;
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Statutory Metric; and
- Biodiversity Impact Assessment: BESS Egremont, Futures Ecology May 2025.

Comments on Biodiversity Impact Assessment and Metric

1. The condition assessment for G1 (southern field) contradicts the submitted condition sheet in Appendix C. It is noted that there are less than 6 species per 1m^2 and so fails criteria 1, which in turn places it in 'Poor' condition. The report and supporting Metric state the grassland is in 'Good' condition. This should be rectified in either the appended Condition Sheet, or in the report body and supporting Biodiversity Metric. The quadrat data would side with the latter.
2. Hedgerows are Habitats of Principal Importance. As such the strategic significance for Hedgerows should be included as 'Medium' as per the included methodology of Section 2.16 and the West Moorland and Furnace guidance document. Consequently, the Biodiversity Metric will need to be amended alongside Section 3.5 of the report.
3. The ditch has been included as a feature of the hedgerow and not as a separate watercourse feature. As it is unlikely to hold water for extended periods of the year and is not a conveyancing feature, this assessment is accurate.

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Comments Ecological Impact Assessment

Designated sites

The proposed development site does not lie within any international / European designated sites but does lie within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for River Ehen (Ennerdale Water to Keekle Confluence) SSSI. The nearest international / European site is the River Ehen List Special Area of Conservation 110 m southeast of the site, and the River Ehen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is the nearest National statutory designated site. The proposed development does not lie within any Local Nature Reserves. Longlands Lake is the closest Local Wildlife Site 20 m east of the site. A Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) has not been completed for the application. A Stage 1 and Stage 2 Assessment is required.

A Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required due to likely significant effects to River Ehen SAC / SSSI during construction phase.

The EcIA recommends potential significant adverse effects on River Ehen Ponds LWS and Longlands Lake LWS during are prevented / minimised by the production and implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

Habitats

Habitat surveys were conducted initially in February 2025 which is outside the optimum survey period. Follow up surveys were conducted in April 2025 at the beginning of the optimum survey window.

Habitats recorded included Broadleaved trees, Ditch, Offsite woodland (Broadleaved and Mixed Woodland), Poor semi-improved grassland and Hardstanding. The EcIA concluded there would be permanent significant adverse effects on several habitats through direct damage or indirect impacts from noise and dust during construction and that a CEMP should be produced to protect habitats.

Protected species

The EcIA states all surveys conducted to most recent standard guidance. It is not clear if the site, in its entirety including the 30 m buffer for badgers, was fully accessible for survey. No figure indicating survey extent, or the presence or extent of inaccessible areas, included.

The impact of the proposed development on red squirrel and otter could not be determined from the information in the EcIA and further information is required. The red squirrel survey examined habitat suitability but did not indicate whether a survey for field evidence was included. 44 records of red squirrel were noted in the desk survey, the closest 117 m from the site and a red squirrel survey should be conducted to determine presence / likely absence on site. The EcIA states that the ditch on site is unsuitable for otter and therefore otter was not considered further in the impact assessment. The desk study returned six records of otter, the closest 125 m southeast. There are no obvious barriers to movement between the site and the River Keekle to

the east. Natal dens can be some distance from riverine habitat and the potential impact of the proposed development on breeding otter was not considered.

The EcIA states that specific mitigation is required for grass snake to prevent a permanent not significant adverse effect at a Local level and a breach of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). Adverse impacts to other protected species are to be prevented / minimised by implementation of the CEMP.

Comments Winter Bird Survey Report

Wintering bird surveys were undertaken in 2024/25, by ecologists with relevant ornithological survey experience, following a Wetland Bird Survey methodology based on the Bird Survey Guidelines. 8 no. surveys undertaken between December 2024 and March 2025. There were no significant survey limitations.

22 species of conservation concern were recorded, 5 of which were found to utilise the onsite habitats. The wintering bird assemblage was assessed as of importance at up to a Local level.

Light and noise during the construction phase could result in temporary displacement of birds from the site. The proposals will result in the loss of poor semi-improved grassland and a temporary reduction in suitable foraging and roosting habitat, temporarily displacing the bird species using the site. Once compensatory habitats are established the site will continue to support the existing wintering bird assemblage.

Conclusion

A full review of the Biodiversity Impact Assessment could be completed, and the document meets the legal minimum nation information requirements (subsequently adopted by West Moorland and Furnace Council). We request that the condition assessment of G1 is reviewed, and the appropriate amends made. We also request the strategic significance of the hedgerow component is altered to Medium and the associated changes made.

A HRA including a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required due to likely significant effects to River Ehen SAC / SSSI. This element should be completed and reviewed before the application is further considered.

In line with the recommendations of the EcIA, the following measures to protect important ecological features during the construction phase should be conditioned:

- A CEMP outlining how direct damage or indirect impacts from noise and dust will be prevented / minimised and including standard good practice construction measures to prevent injury to wildlife.
- A Rapid Response Protocol referencing pollution prevention guidelines and advice from Environment Agency.
- A surface water management plan.
- The use of bio-oils as far as practical during construction.

- A sensitive lighting scheme for bats and other nocturnal wildlife, in line with Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines.
- The implementation of Root Protection Zones for retained trees.
- Tool Book Talk (TBT) for bats, red squirrel, reptiles nesting birds and hedgehogs.
- Appointment of an ECoW to provide site supervision and advice.
- Landscape Plan.
- Ecological Management Plan.

In addition to the species specific TBTs outlined above, we recommend including a general introduction to wildlife TBT to include good practice construction methods outlined in the CEMP, and procedures to follow should any wildlife be discovered on site.

A landscape plan illustrating the location of enhancements including the number and position of nest boxes and insect towers should be produced along with an Ecological Management Plan for the site post construction.

The impact of the proposed development on red squirrel and otter could not be determined from the information in the EcIA and further information is required.

Yours sincerely

Rob Gavan BSc MSc MCIEEM

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For and on behalf of Tetra Tech Limited

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Director

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