

Appendix F.3

Outline Ecological Construction Method Statement





Bodelwyddan Solar and Energy Storage

Outline Ecological Construction Method Statement

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On behalf of:
**Bodelwyddan Solar and Energy
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Section 1

Introduction

- 1.1 The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) has been commissioned by Bodelwyddan Solar and Energy Storage Limited to prepare an Outline Ecological Construction Method Statement (oECMS) in relation to the Proposed Development at Bodelwyddan (hereafter referred to as 'the Site').
- 1.2 This oECMS sits alongside an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) and should be read in conjunction with this document. The oCEMP covers general environmental protection and management measures, whilst this oECMS covers more specific measures for the protection and management of ecological features including protected and notable species and habitats.
- 1.3 EDP is an independent environmental planning consultancy with offices in Cirencester, Cheltenham and Cardiff. The practice provides advice to private and public sector clients throughout the UK in the fields of landscape, ecology, archaeology, cultural heritage, arboriculture, rights of way and masterplanning. Details of the practice can be obtained at our website (www.edp-uk.co.uk).

SITE CONTEXT

- 1.4 The Site comprises three components, namely:
 - The Solar Site (location of proposed solar panel arrays), measuring c.168.95 hectares (ha) and centred approximately at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference (OSGR) SH 98274 77362. This component is located c.0.6 km north of Bodelwyddan and comprises intensively managed farmland (sheep and cattle pasture and arable) enclosed by hedgerows and field ditches, and is bisected by the A547 (Rhuddlan Road);
 - The Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Site, measuring c.6.52 ha centred approximately OSGR SJ 01308 73447. This component is located c.1 km south-east of Bodelwyddan, just to the south of St Asaph Business Park and comprises intensively managed farmland (sheep pasture) enclosed by hedgerows; and
 - A Cable Corridor, c.8 km in length and 10 m in width and totalling approximately 8.29 ha, linking up the Solar Site and BESS Site. The corridor initially runs southward from the south-west corner of the Solar Site, passing through farmland and under the A55. It then runs east- and south-eastward through Kinmel Park and Bodelwyddan Park, utilising existing roads and tracks where available to pass through a mix of farmland, plantation woodland and open parkland habitats, before running along the Glascoed Road (B5831).

PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THIS OECMS

- 1.5 The purpose of this oECMS is to provide guidance for the protection of existing ecological features within (and adjacent to) the Site during construction activities. The oECMS also outlines method statements for individual species protection and enhancements within the Site. It does not provide details of habitat creation nor management, which will be set out within a separate document (the Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP), informed by the Outline LEMP (oLEMP) accompanying the planning application). Measures to protect trees, woodlands and hedgerows are outlined in this document, however, these will be set out in full within an Arboricultural Method Statement submitted separately.
- 1.6 This oECMS will be updated and confirmed by the Developer and their appointed Principal Contractor ahead of construction and will inform the preparation of a full Ecological Construction Method Statement (ECMS) to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for approval under a planning condition to be secured on the planning permission for the Proposed Development.
- 1.7 The remainder of this document is structured as follows:
- **Section 2** outlines the roles and responsibilities of personnel identified within this oECMS;
 - **Section 3** summarises the findings of the ecological surveys and identifies the pertinent ecological features requiring protection during construction;
 - **Section 4** outlines the ecological avoidance and mitigation measures for protected and notable habitats and species required during construction; and
 - **Section 5** outlines a timetable of works.

Section 2

Roles and Responsibilities

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE ECMS

- 2.1 The full ECMS will set out the parties responsible for implementing the ECMS and the following roles.

The Developer and Principal Contractor

- 2.2 The Developer and their appointed Principal Contractor will be responsible for:
- Compliance with legal requirements of nature conservation legislation, policy and any protected species licenses;
 - Compliance with planning conditions relating to nature conservation;
 - Appointing a Site Manager to represent them on the Site throughout the construction and to communicate with the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) and the Developer/Principal Contractor as required;
 - Appointing a suitably experienced ecologist to act as an ECoW;
 - Compliance with instructions and guidance provided by the ECoW;
 - Installation of physical protection measures during construction;
 - Implementation of sensitive working practices during construction; and
 - Regular inspection and maintenance of physical protection measures and monitoring of working practices during construction.

Ecological Clerk of Works

- 2.3 The appointed ECoW will be responsible for:
- Assisting the Developer and/or their Principal Contractor to be compliant with nature legislation, policy and any protected species licences;
 - The provision of site briefings and information to the Principal Contractor, and all relevant sub-contractors and site personnel, on all potential ecological receptors and constraints associated with the land area comprising the development footprint, including all species-specific control measures to be adhered to during the construction phase;
 - The ECoW will also supervise relevant pre-construction works as required, including vegetation/site clearance, in addition to undertaking any necessary pre-commencement surveys for protected species, to avoid any harm to legally protected species;

- Working with the Principal Contractor to achieve compliance with the methods in this report; and
- Conduct hand searching, capture and translocation of animals (where appropriate) from working areas.

Section 3

Baseline Ecology

- 3.1 Detailed ecological assessments of the Site were undertaken by EDP between 2024 and 2025, as described within the following reports submitted as part of the planning application:
- Ecological Baseline Report (report reference: edp8841_r003);
 - Ecological Impact Assessment of the Proposed Development (Chapter 10: Biodiversity of the Environmental Statement); and
 - Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (sHRA, report reference edp8841_r009).
- 3.2 This oECMS has been written to reflect mitigation recommendations stated within these documents.
- 3.3 **Table EDP 3.1** sets out a summary of the important ecological features associated with the Site that were identified as having possible impacts during construction of the proposals and that would therefore require detailed mitigation to address these impacts.

Table EDP 3.1: Summary of Ecological Features and Any Potential Impacts

Feature	Key Attributes	Possible Construction Stage Impacts in the Absence of Mitigation
Designated Sites		
Coedydd ac Ogofau Elwy a Meirchion Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	1.4 km south of the BESS Site. Woodland and caves with roosting bats.	Loss and/or fragmentation of habitat supporting bat species roosting at this SSSI.
The Dee Estuary Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar Site	10.1 km north-east of the Solar Site. Estuarine habitats with important wintering bird assemblages.	Loss and/or fragmentation of functionally linked land for the designated bird species teal and disturbance of this species (within functionally linked land) from construction noise/vibration/lighting.
Abergele Grazing Marsh Wildlife Site (Candidate) and Morfa Rhuddlan Wildlife Site (Candidate)	Within the northern section of the Solar Site. Grazing marsh habitats.	Habitat loss, fragmentation, severance, degradation or damage. Pollution of surface water.
Coed Parc Kinmel (Candidate) Wildlife Site	Within Cable Corridor. Coniferous woodland habitat.	Habitat loss, fragmentation, severance, degradation or damage.
Habitats		
Priority Habitat: Coastal floodplain and grazing marsh	Covers the northern section of the Solar Site.	Habitat loss, fragmentation, severance, degradation or damage. Pollution of surface water.
Priority Habitat: Wood-pasture and parkland	Present along parts of the proposed Cable Corridor	Habitat loss, fragmentation, severance, degradation or damage.
Ancient Woodland	Parcel adjacent to southern Solar Site and parcel adjacent to Cable Corridor	Habitat degradation or damage. Disturbance to species from noise and light. Pollution of surface water.
Priority Habitat: native hedgerows and mature trees	Across the Site	Habitat loss, fragmentation, severance, degradation or damage.
Wet Ditches	Across the Solar Site	Habitat loss, fragmentation, severance, degradation or damage. Pollution of surface water.
Priority Habitat: pond (standing water)	Single pond within the Solar Site boundary.	Habitat loss, fragmentation, severance, degradation or damage. Pollution of surface water.

Feature	Key Attributes	Possible Construction Stage Impacts in the Absence of Mitigation
Species		
Breeding Birds	Relatively diverse breeding assemblage present across the Site, with ground nesting skylark within the Solar Site of particular note.	Habitat loss, fragmentation, severance, degradation or damage. Destruction of nests. Disturbance to species from noise and light.
Wintering Birds	Diverse assemblage present across the Solar Site with overwintering teal of particular note.	Habitat loss, fragmentation, severance, degradation or damage. Disturbance to species from noise and light.
Bats (roosting)	Numerous trees with Potential Roost Features present across the Site.	Habitat loss, fragmentation, severance, degradation or damage. Disturbance to species from noise and light.
Bats (foraging and commuting)	Potentially present across the Site at night.	Habitat loss, fragmentation, severance, degradation or damage. Disturbance to species from noise and light.
Badger (<i>Meles meles</i>)	Potentially present across the Site, no setts currently recorded.	Habitat loss, fragmentation, severance, degradation or damage. Disturbance to species from noise and light.
Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)	Potentially present across the Solar Site, using wet ditches.	Habitat loss, fragmentation, severance, degradation or damage. Pollution of surface water. Disturbance to species from noise and light.
Water Vole (<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>)	Potentially present across the Solar Site, using wet ditches.	Habitat loss, fragmentation, severance, degradation or damage. Pollution of surface water. Disturbance to species from noise and light.
Great Crested Newt (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>)	Potentially present across the Site, within 250 m of off-site waterbodies.	Habitat loss, fragmentation, severance, degradation or damage. Pollution of surface water.
Reptiles	Potentially present across the Site within scrub and field margin habitats.	Habitat loss, fragmentation, severance, degradation or damage. Disturbance to species from noise and light.

Section 4

Construction Phase Mitigation

- 4.1 This section provides an outline of the habitat and species protection measures to be detailed within the full ECMS and implemented on-site prior to and during the construction phase.

PRE-COMMENCEMENT SURVEYS

- 4.2 Between three and six months prior to any works commencing within the Site, pre-commencement surveys will be undertaken by an experienced ECoW to identify any likely change in notable or protected species or habitats within the Site. This will include an entire site walkover (or specific area walkover - if works are likely to occur over multiple years).
- 4.3 Should a new protected or notable species or habitat be found, or it is apparent that the range of a species or habitat has changed, then the ECoW will advise on how best to proceed, and works may not be permitted to commence until the requirement for further mitigation has been determined.

SITE CLEARANCE STRATEGY

- 4.4 Works to any suitable habitats within 250 m of the off-site waterbodies that were either confirmed as supporting great crested newts, or could not be surveyed and therefore presence is precautionarily assumed, must be undertaken under an appropriate Non-Licensed Method Statement or licence.
- 4.5 Works to any suitable tree that may disturb a roosting bat or damage or destroy its roost must be undertaken under an appropriate licence.

TOOLBOX TALKS/CONTRACTOR'S BRIEFING

- 4.6 All construction personnel will be fully briefed on the features of ecological importance (including their relevant legal protection) to be retained within the Site and protected during construction works. The toolbox talk is to be provided by the ECoW prior to the commencement of works on-site and is to involve all site workers, operatives and contractors. Any new contractors or site-based staff arriving on the Site will need to be fully inducted on ecological matters by way of a toolbox talk.

ECOLOGICAL PROTECTION ZONES

- 4.7 All retained ecologically sensitive habitats within and adjacent to the Solar Site and BESS Site must be protected during construction activities within Ecological Protection Zones (EPZs). This will include the retention and appropriate buffers of each habitat.

- 4.8 The EPZs will also include sensitive arboricultural areas (retained trees, hedgerows and woodland) as set out in the Arboricultural Method Statement.
- 4.9 In relation to the Cable Corridor, standard buffers may not be achievable where it is required to pass in closer proximity to hedgerows, mature trees and woodland blocks, and minor crown lift works are potentially required in places. Works within the Cable Corridor must follow the Arboricultural Method Statement which will set out working methods to avoid damage to the habitats nor any associated root protection areas.

POLLUTION PREVENTION MEASURES

- 4.10 Measures to prevent pollution incidents are outlined in the oCEMP, also submitted with the planning application, and will be detailed within the full Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

WORKS WITHIN 200 M OF BODORYN CUT

- 4.11 Due to the presence of a notable number of teal using the Bodoryn Cut (the drainage ditch along the northern boundary of the Solar Site) during the winter, and this being a species for which the nearby Dee Estuary SPA/Ramsar Site is designated, measures must be taken to avoid disturbance of this species during construction works.
- 4.12 A buffer of 200 m has been chosen as an appropriate distance to avoid disturbance impacts on teal based on the Waterbird Disturbance and Mitigation Toolkit¹ (developed by the European Union project named 'TIDE Tidal River Development') using mallard as a comparator species given that teal is not specifically described, and also recommended disturbance buffers set out by NatureScot² using mallard, gadwall and shoveler as comparator species given that teal is again not specifically listed.
- 4.13 No works are to be undertaken within 200 m of Bodoryn Cut during the main migratory and winter months of October to February inclusive.
- 4.14 As works within this 200 m buffer must be undertaken between March and September inclusive and, unless undertaken in September, they must be immediately preceded by a pre-commencement check for active ground nesting bird nests undertaken by the ECoW, as outlined in the following sections.
- 4.15 Works within the 200 m buffer that are also within 250m of a waterbody must be undertaken under an appropriate great crested newt Non-Licensed Method Statement or licence.

¹ Available at <https://tide-toolbox.eu/> [accessed July 2025]

² Available at <https://www.nature.scot/doc/disturbance-distances-selected-scottish-bird-species-naturescot-guidance> [accessed July 2025]

WOODY VEGETATION WORKS

- 4.16 Only minor hedgerow loss and pruning works are currently anticipated within woody vegetation habitats (scrub and hedgerow within the Site and woodland or individual trees adjacent to the Site). However, these habitats have the potential to support breeding birds, roosting bats, and refuging reptiles and amphibians.
- 4.17 Any arboricultural (pruning) works to mature trees, or removal of poor condition trees on health and safety grounds, are to be preceded by an update Ground Level Roosting Assessment (GLTA) and any necessary further assessment to determine presence or absence of bat roosts that may be impacted.
- 4.18 Any works to hedgerows, trees and scrub should be undertaken in two stages as follows:
- Any arboreal works (to vegetation over 150 mm tall) should be scheduled to avoid the bird breeding season: March to August inclusive. If works to woody vegetation have to be undertaken between March and August (inclusive) then these can only be undertaken after an inspection for breeding birds by the ECoW. If any nesting birds are discovered, then the nest must be retained with a suitable buffer to protect the nest (which the ECoW will identify) until the nest is no longer active; and
 - Any works to the bases of the woody vegetation should be undertaken during the active reptile and amphibian season (March to October inclusive, works can be undertaken in February and November depending on the prevailing weather conditions (i.e. if nighttime temperatures are consistently above 5°C)) and under an appropriate great crested newt Non-Licensed Method Statement or licence for any works within 250 m of a waterbody.

WORKS WITHIN GRASSLAND (EXCLUDING 200 M BUFFER FROM BODORYN CUT)

- 4.19 This section applies to works within grassland across the majority of the Solar Site, located more than 200 m from Bodoryn Cut, in addition to works in parts of the Cable Corridor and the BESS Site.
- 4.20 Works within grassland that is within 250 m of a waterbody must be undertaken under an appropriate great crested newt Non-Licensed Method Statement or licence.
- 4.21 To prevent reptiles entering the currently unsuitable grassland fields across the Solar Site prior to works, all grassland must be maintained as currently until works commence, through continuation of the existing grazing regime.
- 4.22 Regarding any areas of grassland, low scrub or tall ruderal along the Cable Corridor that may be suitable for reptiles, a phased cut will be implemented during the reptile active season of March to October inclusive prior to works commencing.
- 4.23 The grassland fields are known to support the ground nesting species skylark and lapwing. Therefore, the following measures must be adopted during works within grassland fields:

- Clearance of open grassland or works within it should be undertaken between the months of September and February inclusive, to avoid nest destruction/disturbance during the ground nesting bird breeding season; and
- Where clearance is not possible outside of the breeding season, a pre-commencement check for active bird nests will be undertaken by the ECoW immediately prior to the commencement of works, with no works will be permitted in the area surrounding any identified nests until all young have fledged.

WORKS WITHIN ARABLE FIELDS

4.24 Several arable fields are present primarily across the south of the Solar Site. In addition, the Cable Corridor crosses several arable fields. These areas are of very low suitability for great crested newt, reptiles and other species due to their heavily disturbed nature, which removes any hibernacula or refugia; alongside the use of pesticides which reduce prey availability. However, some ground nesting birds are known to be present in these areas. Therefore, the following measures must be adopted during works within arable fields:

- All arable fields must be kept under production until works commence. If this is not possible, then following the final harvest prior to commencement, the arable fields must be retained as bare ground through frequent ploughing. This will stop the establishment of more suitable habitat;
- All site clearance/commencement works within the arable fields must commence between September and February inclusive to avoid the breeding bird season; and
- In addition, all site clearance works within 250 m of a waterbody must be undertaken under an appropriate great crested newt Non-Licensed Method Statement or licence.

LIGHTING STRATEGY

4.25 To allow nocturnal species, particularly bats, to continue to use the retained habitats across the Site, any temporary lighting required during construction will avoid light spill upon the retained habitats within the EPZs and will be in accordance with best practice measures set out in the ILP's 'Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night'³.

4.26 This is particularly important at the BESS Site, where the retained boundary hedgerows support a more diverse bat commuting/foraging assemblage.

BADGER MITIGATION STRATEGY

4.27 The pre-commencement site surveys will confirm if any new setts or sett entrances have been created in proximity to, or within, the construction areas. If new setts have been

³ BCT and ILP (2023). Guidance Note GN08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night.

created that will likely be damaged or disturbed through the construction works, then sett closure may be required under licence.

- 4.28 Any trenches or holes should be filled or covered overnight during construction to prevent badgers and/or small mammals falling in. If this cannot be achieved, then at least one side of the trench or hole should have a sloping side (45 degrees) to allow easy exit for wildlife.

WATER VOLE MITIGATION STRATEGY

- 4.29 The pre-commencement site surveys will include an update search for evidence of this species along all wet ditches across the Solar Site. Where evidence of a burrow is identified, the ECoW will determine if any additional sensitive methodologies are necessary to avoid damage or disturbance to the burrow, including the establishment of additional buffers.
- 4.30 Where such impacts cannot be avoided, and given the protection afforded to this species, a mitigation licence may be required prior to construction progressing.

CABLE CORRIDOR HABITAT

- 4.31 Whilst utilising bare ground tracks and existing roads as far as possible, there are some sections where the Cable Corridor passes through grassland and wood pasture habitats.
- 4.32 Following installation of the cable ducting and backfilling of the trench (approximately 750 mm) within areas of grassland and wood pasture habitats, the ground will be made good and an appropriate seed mix used to aid the quick re-establishment of habitat over the working area.

Section 5 Timetable of Works

5.1 **Table EDP 5.1** provides a summary timetable for the timings to undertake tasks anticipated in relation to the proposed development.

Table EDP 5.1: Optimal Timings to Undertake Tasks Anticipated in Relation to the Proposed Development

Task	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pre-commencement surveys												
Installation of EPZ Fencing PRIOR TO ANY OTHER WORKS COMMENCING												
Works within 200 m of Bodoryn Cut												
Woody vegetation works to arboreal (over 150 mm) vegetation *												
Woody vegetation works to bases of vegetation (under 150 mm) *												

Task	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Grassland – clearance of longer areas suitable for reptile or amphibians (grassland or tall ruderal vegetation) *												
Grassland – works within open fields suitable for ground nesting birds *												
Arable – works within open fields suitable for ground nesting birds *												

*Once clear, all vegetation should be maintained as short as possible (a maximum of 50 mm should be aimed for), preferably as bare ground until ground works or cable installation complete.

5.2 All timescales for habitat creation and management to be detailed in the LEMP.



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