

Precautionary Working Method Statement (V2 including vegetation clearance)
Proposed installation of Solar PV at Woolgreaves Hall, South Lane Cawthorne, S75 4EF

Overview:

As part of the planning application a preliminary ecological appraisal was carried out that. Based on the selected locations being away from existing habitats and away from areas subject to actual or possible nesting and away from the presence of tree roots the finding of this report identified limited ecological concerns.

Identified Risks:

The risks identified with this scheme and associated construction risks can be summarised as:

- No night working shall be undertaken as the introduction of additional lighting may cause unnecessary disturbance to any bats present in the local area
- Any excavations shall be covered at night to mitigate the risk of small mammals or badgers entering the excavations and being trapped.

Planning process feedback:

In pursuit of the connected planning application the Conservation officer has identified the requirement for the working method statement to specifically address the removal of vegetation and the impact in such works being in close proximity to existing hedgerows.

Proposed steps for Vegetation clearance:

The clearance of vegetation will be limited to the two locations within the site identified on the plans and no clearance of any vegetation outside of the area is required

The aim of the works is to make the site unsuitable for nesting birds by removing all woody vegetation which has the potential to provide nesting habitat and to allow the areas to be capable of visual inspection before groundworks so as to allow a visual on any mammals that may be moving in the area, although none noted from inspections to date.

Clearance will be achieved by the sensitive clearance of above ground vegetation to a height of 200mm while minimising ground disturbance. By minimising ground disturbance disruption of existing features will be kept to a minimum. This will a further clearance to 80mm before groundworks commence.

All works must be completed by 28th February 2023 in order to ensure they are complete prior to nesting commencing or any mammals emerging from hibernation. This constraint will limit the potential of injury/death occurring to individual mammals that may if present forage within the grassland and plantation areas when active.

All vegetation within the proposed working area shall be reduced using hand tools only (brush cutters are acceptable) to a height of 200mm above ground level, in order to avoid potential for disturbance of any small mammals.

The works fall within 5m of existing hedgerows and as such to mitigate any disturbance to any nesting such works will take place between October and February to avoid any nesting activity.

For the avoidance of doubt there is no need to undertake any works to hedgerows other than usual periodic maintenance as a part of wider agricultural land management plan. No activity is planned in the next six months.

All vehicles associated with the clearance works are to be wheeled and for the clearance shall be limited to a small compact tractor and 1.5tonne trailer to remove any vegetation cut down for composting.

A visual inspection indicates there is no vegetation with a diameter or more than 20mm as such all can be subject to removal and composting.

Proposed steps for groundworks and installation:

By way of approach parties involved will be limited to the applicant and existing grounds staff for the provision of any excavation required for cable containment and footings for solar panel brackets.

The individuals are familiar with the site and the current location of many habitats etc present on site.

Works shall be completed for the scheme to the West before commencing works for the scheme to the East reducing the overall impact and disruption.

Solar PV installer will attach the panels and connect cables and their access will be limited to the site of the panels and existing buildings

Work shall take place between 8am and 4pm and there will be no need for additional lighting, save for the use of a small excavator already used on site tools and machinery will be limited to hand tools and removed from site each day.

Where practical any excavations shall be filled as dug save for circa 150mm of depth requiring concreting for brackets and this area shall be fully boarded with exit ramps to minimise the risk to mammals.

Fast setting materials will be used for concreting and works shall take place early in daylight hours so that there is no risk of trapping any mammals with exposed or non dry materials at night.

Conclusion:

Risks attached to this project are minimal and the steps above provide a materially enhanced approach to conservation and ecology in this area than the farming practices that have taken place on this land in prior years.