

CONSULTATION TEMPLATE RESPONSE FROM LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL:

ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

Please be aware that this advice is provided prior to the submission of a planning application and any associated ecological and protected species survey information.

Advice regarding likely ecological impacts has been provided in this limited context. In some circumstances, where information submitted to support a planning application identifies further ecological constraints, this advice may either change or include additional recommendations.

COUNTY, DISTRICT OR BOROUGH	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council	
APPLICATION NUMBER	25/00960/EAS	
ADDRESS	North Of Roecliffe Road Hallgates To Elm Farm	
DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	Request for a screening opinion for the installation of a 9.4km below ground water pipeline Hallgate to Elm Farm	
PLANNING CASE OFFICER	Sullivan Archer	
DEPARTMENT	Ecology	
PLANNING ECOLOGY OFFICER	Sue Hooton	
DATE OF COMMENTS	3 December 2025	
ADVICE SUMMARY:		
Protected species potential impact		Yes
Protected habitat potential impact		Yes
Statutory BNG likely applicable		Yes
PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE: EIA SCREENING OPINION		
Baseline Information: - The desktop assessment of the three routes for this pipeline project has been prepared in consultation with the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre and these records inform the survey requirements. Protected and Priority species have been considered adequately. Records from new or updated surveys undertaken should be shared with the records centre. Potential Impacts: - This proposed project has potential to impact on designated sites both statutory (SSSIs and LNRs) and non-statutory (LWS and candidate /potential LWS). - We note Natural England's comments (ref 528923, dated 8 October 2025) on likely impacts on SSSIs and the Ecology Technical Note : EIA Screening Opinion Addendum (TEP, Nov 2025). As Natural England have confirmed that based on DAS prior engagement, they		

are satisfied that the potential impacts on the designated sites identified in the response letter (namely potential water quality changes/siltation during pressure testing of the pipelines (which will discharge to Buddon Wood and Swithland Reservoir SSSI), direct damage to sites where construction vehicles accidentally encroach into them, and dust deposition) can be mitigated through the production and implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

- We are satisfied that any indirect impacts on LWS and candidate /potential LWS could be also mitigated via a CEMP Biodiversity if within or adjacent to the pipeline corridor.
- The majority of the project passes through arable farmland with a large number of species-rich hedgerows. The project has been planned to avoid impacts on watercourses by horizontal directional drilling and buffer zones. Hedgerows which have been confirmed as Priority habitat and identified Important Hedgerows will require reasonable mitigation measures for the construction process which could also include horizontal directional drilling and buffer zones and this will need to be secured by a condition of consent.
- Up to date ecological surveys and assessment have been provided to support the EIA screening opinion in relation to protected species. The submitted ecological assessment (TEP, Sept 2025) has considered the potential impacts on all the relevant protected and priority species and identified effective mitigation measures for all predicted impacts on species. It is unlikely that the development, with mitigation in place, would result in any significant ecological effects on any European Protected Species and other protected species. This is necessary for the Local Planning authority to demonstrate they have met their s40 biodiversity duty. Survey and assessment should meet the requirements of Government Standing Advice. However, we advise that seasonal automated static bat surveys to inform any modelling of likely impacts on connectivity across the landscape are undertaken in Spring 2026 to complete the assessment and inform appropriate mitigation impacts, regardless of the EIA screening outcome.
- However, as impacts on waxcaps indicating potential ancient grassland and/or wood pasture and parkland (potentially irreplaceable habitat) cannot be established at this stage so it is unknown if any could be avoided as mitigation is not considered to be effective and may not be deliverable.

Conclusion:

- We consider that given its location, this type of development does as mitigation is unknown, have the potential to result in significant ecological impacts.
- We therefore recommend that ecology is screened in in relation to EIA screening of this development or screened in for further assessment under EIA Regulations
- In addition to the EIA report, it will be necessary to also provide sufficient information on non-significant impacts on protected and Priority species and habitats at submission either in a non EIA chapter or separate documentation. This is necessary in order that the LPA has certainty of all likely impacts, not just significant ones, from the development and can issue a lawful decision with any mitigation and compensation measures needed to make the development acceptable, secured by condition.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (BNG) specific advice:

We note that BNG will be limited to land that the applicant has control over and the pipeline route will have temporary losses (less than 2 years of the initial impact) as stated in Page 35 of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric - User Guide.
AMENDMENTS RECOMMENDED:

Note for applicants: Please be aware that this advice is provided to the Local Planning Authority through a Service Level Agreement between the Local Planning Authority and Leicestershire County Council Ecology Team. Its purpose is to discharge the legal duties under The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) Regulations (2000), Regulations 4.

If you have any queries about the content, please correspond directly with the Planning Officer assigned to the planning application or discharge of condition application. We are unable to respond directly to applicant enquiries regarding the advice that we have provided to the determining authority.

The following legislation is used to assist in the assessment of planning applications:

Legislation source	Reference
NPPF Dec 2023	Paras 8, 180, 181, 185, 186, 187, 188
Environment Act 2021	Mandatory Net Gain Biodiversity Duty Local Nature Recovery Strategy
District or Borough Local Plan and supporting SPD's	Local Plan policy reference:
ODPM circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation	Requirement for species survey work and mitigation recommendations to be carried out prior to the determination of a planning application. Paras. 98 and 99
NERC Act 2006	Biodiversity Duty (see also Environment Act 2021) Section 41, habitats and species of Principal Importance (previously BAP)
Various International, European and National laws in relation to the protection of species and habitats	International and national site protection: Ramsar sites (from Ramsar Convention), Habitat and Birds Directives (Natura 2000 sites include SAC's and SPA's), SSSI's, National Nature Reserves, Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves. Habitats and Species protection: Habitat and Species Regulations (protected sites and species). Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended including special Schedule 1), Natural England Standing Advice. Badger Act.