

Ecology response for F/25/99979 High Wood Reservoir, Allington Lane, Southampton, SO30 3HQ

Construction of a standalone container to house batteries associated with storing the solar energy from the solar panels

Gregg Chapman

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This site is surrounded by the Itchen Valley Country Park SINC. It is also in an amber impact risk zone for great crested newts. There are records of bats, grass snakes, slow worms, yellow necked mice, Eurasian water shrews, and harvest mice, near the site. Areas of ancient woodland are located close to the west of the site but this proposal would be located on the southeastern corner of the reservoir, so not near the ancient woodland boundary.

The container is proposed to be sited on the existing hard standing / gravel base adjacent to the reservoir. The planning statement states that to minimise impact, screw foundations can be used.

A precautionary working method will be required to avoid harm to wildlife. This can be conditioned in a CEMP.

This proposal is not likely to affect any on site habitat so the de minimis exemption from 10% biodiversity net gain is applicable in this case. However, as with all planning applications some biodiversity net gain will be required in accord with Local Plan policy DM 11 and NPPF (December 2024) paragraphs 187d and 192 b. It is not clear what sorts of biodiversity enhancements would be appropriate in this area, the applicants need to research this and submit a proposal which we can review.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist