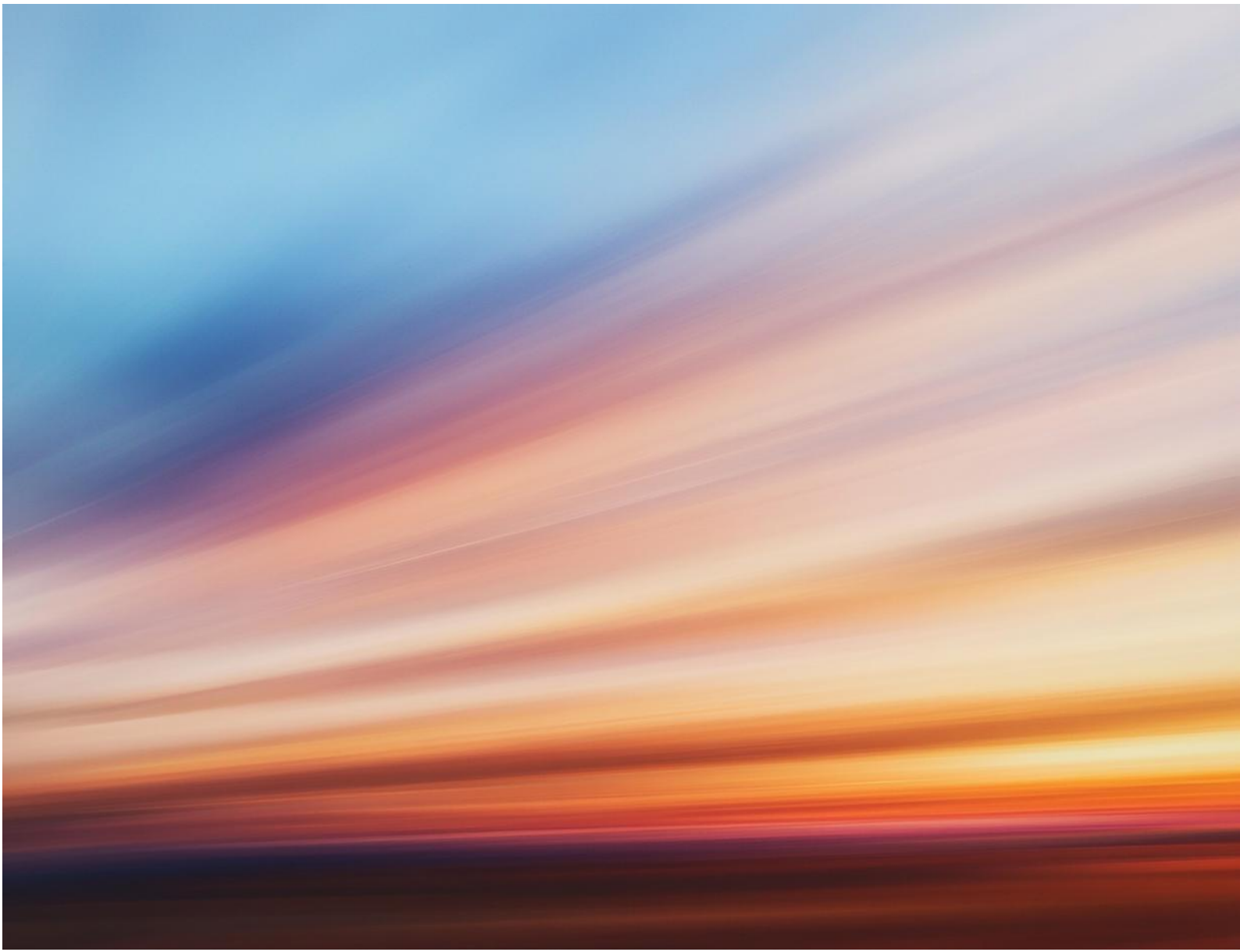


Mysten Leah Solar Farm

Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) Volume 3

Appendix 7.2: Non-Confidential Badger Survey Report (Solar PV Development Area)

April 2026



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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1.1 RSK Biocensus was commissioned by Statkraft UK Ltd to undertake a badger survey. The purpose of the badger survey was to provide baseline survey data to inform the Environmental Statement (ES) chapter on biodiversity, in respect of the proposed Mylen Leah Solar Farm project Development Consent Order (DCO). Mylen Leah Solar Farm comprises the construction, operation and decommissioning of solar photovoltaic (PV) generating station and grid connection infrastructure to allow export to the National Grid Thornton Substation. The approximate grid reference of the centre of the Site is SE 7539141654 (British National Grid), hereafter referred to as the 'Site'.
- 1.1.2 The Site is located between Allerthorpe and Foggathorpe East Yorkshire, within the administrative area of East Riding of Yorkshire Council.
- 1.1.3 A Scoping Report has been produced for Mylen Leah Solar Farm and was submitted to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero on 8 January 2025. A Scoping Opinion was adopted by the Secretary of State on 18 February 2025.¹
- 1.1.4 This report presents the baseline information regarding badgers on the 'Site'. The survey area is shown in **Figure 1**.
- 1.1.5 An initial constraints walkover carried out by RSK Biocensus in May and June 2024 identified badger paths, badger hair, latrines, dung pits and potential setts on-site. Therefore, further surveys were undertaken in November 2024 and summarised within this report.

1.2 Landscape context

- 1.2.1 The Site extends south from Melbourne to Foggathorpe and east from Ellerton to Seaton Ross.
- 1.2.2 The Site is predominantly agricultural land (grassland and cropland) with hedgerows, watercourses and parcels of woodland.
- 1.2.3 The surrounding landscape is similar to the landscape present on the Site, although there are some small villages, and other buildings, and the River Derwent runs north to east of the Site.

1.3 Background information

- 1.3.1 The following ecological information has been reviewed as part of this report:
- A baseline data search from North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre included a search for protected species records within 2km of the draft Order Limits. The data included records of badger within 2km of the Site; and,
 - An ecological constraints walkover survey of the Site was undertaken in May and June 2024, which was followed by a more detailed badger survey of the Site in November 2024. This included an assessment of

the Site for badgers and a search for badger paths, badger hair, dung pits?, latrines and potential badger setts.

1.4 Mylen Leah Solar Farm

1.4.1 Mylen Leah Solar Farm comprises the construction, operation and decommissioning of solar PV generating station and grid connection infrastructure to allow export to National Grid Thornton Substation.

1.5 Scope of the survey

1.5.1 The badger survey aimed to record all signs of badger activity within the Site, with a particular focus on the identification of badger setts which may be impacted by Mylen Leah Solar Farm. The survey results will be used to evaluate the baseline value of the Site for badgers. This information will be used within the ES and other documentation submitted in support of the DCO application.

1.6 Legislation

1.6.1 Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992², and Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981³. The potential offences in relation to construction include:

- wilfully kill, injure, take, possess, or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or to attempt to do so;
- interfere with a sett by damaging or destroying it;
- to obstruct access to, or any entrance of, a badger sett; or,
- to disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett.

1.6.2 Badgers are also protected under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996⁴, which states it is an offence to knowingly crush any wild mammal.

1.7 Survey validity

1.7.1 Badgers are mobile species and can dig new sett entrances overnight. Any potential disturbance of a sett (e.g. pre-commencement works, such as excavations) would require additional assessment and appropriate mitigation measures.

1.7.2 For the purposes of planning and design works, the status of specific entrances are likely to change over time (with individual entrances becoming disused, or well used, or new entrances dug). However, the locations of badger setts are generally re-used by badgers.

1.7.3 For the purposes of this assessment, the importance of the habitats for badgers using the Site are unlikely to change (i.e., it is unlikely that badgers will no longer be present on the Site). The results of the survey can be relied on for up to 12 months, beyond which, assumptions would need to be made regarding the status of badgers on site.

2. Methods

2.1 Survey area

2.1.1 The survey area is shown on **Figure 1**. The survey area covers the solar PV development area within the draft Order Limits. The survey area included the boundaries of the solar PV development area, as observed from within the solar PV development area, which provide sufficient visibility to make an assessment of the baseline value of the habitats within the survey area on the Site.

2.2 Background data search

2.2.1 To provide supplementary data on badgers known to be present in the area, existing badger records from within the draft Order Limits and within 2km of the draft Order Limits were obtained from the North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre in December 2025.

2.3 Ecological constraints walkover

2.3.1 The ecological constraints walkover was undertaken in May and June 2024 by suitably qualified and experienced RSK Biocensus (RSK) ecologists. This walkover aimed to assess the Site for its suitability to support protected or otherwise notable species of plants and animals including badgers, taking into account the geographic location of the Site and its connectivity to other natural habitats in the wider landscape. The results of this were used to determine the need for further, species specific surveys.

2.4 Badger survey

2.4.1 The badger survey was undertaken in accordance with best practice guidelines including Harris *et al.* (1989).⁵ The report has been written in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidelines on ecological report writing (CIEEM 2017).⁶

2.4.2 The badger survey was undertaken between 18 and 26 November 2024 by ecologists experienced in identifying badger field signs and carrying out badger surveys. The lead surveyors were RSK Biocensus (RSK) principal ecologists RF33, LW37 and BL18, all of which are full members of CIEEM.

2.4.3 The survey involved systematically searching for badger setts and field signs following methodologies described in Harris *et al.* (1989).⁷ All signs of badger activity were mapped using digital recording software. Where possible, setts were classified as main or other that encompasses, annexe, subsidiary and outlier, following the definitions set out in Harris *et al.* (1989), see **Appendix A** for definitions. Where the classification of setts was not distinct at the time of the survey, two classifications may have been assigned. Mapping will show the “highest” category that a sett has been assigned.

2.4.4 Target notes were used to record relevant features associated with the badger survey, that were not specifically setts or entrances. The list of target notes and associated photographs are included in **Appendix B**.

2.4.5 Under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, a badger sett is any structure or place which displays signs indicating ‘current use’ by badger. This is

sometimes referred to as an 'active' sett in the licence documents. Setts that have been recorded as well used and partially used fit the descriptions of setts that are in 'current use', or 'active'. Disused setts are excluded from this definition.

- 2.4.6 An assessment based on combined findings of the ecological walkover, badger survey and aerial imagery of the Site has been undertaken to identify the availability of foraging resource for badger.

2.5 Foraging habitat Assessment

- 2.5.1 Badger foraging habitat is habitat which contains suitable food resources for badger, typically invertebrates, such as earthworms. Alternative resources include crops, nuts, fruit, small mammals and birds (Palphramand *et al* 2007).⁸
- 2.5.2 The density of food resource impacts the number of badgers in a social group and the size of a group's territory is impacted by the distribution of key food resources. Therefore, there is a need to maintain both food resource as well as access to food resources.
- 2.5.3 Earthworms, a key food resource, are found in higher density in areas of improved grassland and deciduous woodland. Where this food resource may be limited (i.e., in times of drought or frost), alternative food resources may be sought, such as root crops and grain. These may be present in cropland, woodland, scrub and rough ungrazed grassland.
- 2.5.4 An assessment based on findings of the site walkover and aerial imagery of the Site has been undertaken to identify the availability of foraging resource for badger.

2.6 Ecological Impact Assessment

- 2.6.1 The importance of the baseline habitats on site for Badger have been assessed following the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (CIEEM, 2018)⁹. The value of the site for badger has been assessed, within a defined geographical context.

2.7 Limitations

- 2.7.1 A comprehensive survey for badger was carried out to identify areas that might be used by badger for commuting, foraging or sett building within the survey extent of the Site. The woodland margins were searched for evidence of badgers. However, the woodlands on the Site were not exhaustively searched as part of this survey. Assumptions as to the use of the woodlands by badger are made in this report.
- 2.7.2 Fields 7h, 7i and 7j and part of Field 12h were added to the solar PV development area after the badger surveys had been undertaken and therefore were not surveyed as part of this assessment. Areas of the draft Order Limits that fall outside the solar PV development area have also not been surveyed to date.
- 2.7.3 Two fields were not fully surveyed due to: the absence of an access gate into a field, which would otherwise require crossing land not part of the site, and

livestock blocking/limiting access. Assumptions regarding the use of these fields are made in this report.

- 2.7.4 The underground grid connection corridor has not been surveyed to-date and is excluded from all current survey information

3. Results

3.1 Background data search

- 3.1.1 The desk study returned one record of badger within 2km of the draft Order Limits. The closest record being an observation recorded during 2017, approximately 400m from the draft Order Limits.

3.2 Field surveys

- 3.2.1 Across the ecological walkover survey and the badger survey, six badger setts were identified; one of which was classified as an active main sett, three as active outlier setts, and two as disused/inactive outlier setts. Their descriptions are provided in **Table 1** below. Photographs can be found in **Appendix C**.

Table 1: Recorded badger setts

Sett reference	Classification	Description
1	Outlier – Disused	1x disused sett entrance. Entrance under dense vegetation and fallen deadwood.
2	Outlier – Partially used	2x partially used sett entrances Location is within hedgerow.
3	Outlier – Well used/ Partially used	2x sett entrances (1 well used, 1 partially used).
4	Main – Well used	4x well used sett entrances. Location is next to a drain. One entrance goes underneath the bridge foundations. Large spoil heaps and well-worn paths link the sett entrances. Numerous latrines are located outside the sett entrances.
5	Outlier – Well used	1x well used sett entrance. Located within edge of woodland.
6	Outlier – Disused	Earth bank along outside (east) of woodland with occasional rabbit holes and evidence of historic excavator disturbance. Possible disused outlier (collapsed badger) to west.

- 3.2.2 All setts were recorded on field boundary features such as hedgerows, or on the edge of woodland. No setts were recorded away from these field boundary features, such as within cultivated land.
- 3.2.3 Badgers are considered to make use of the entire Site for foraging, as suitable habitat is found throughout.

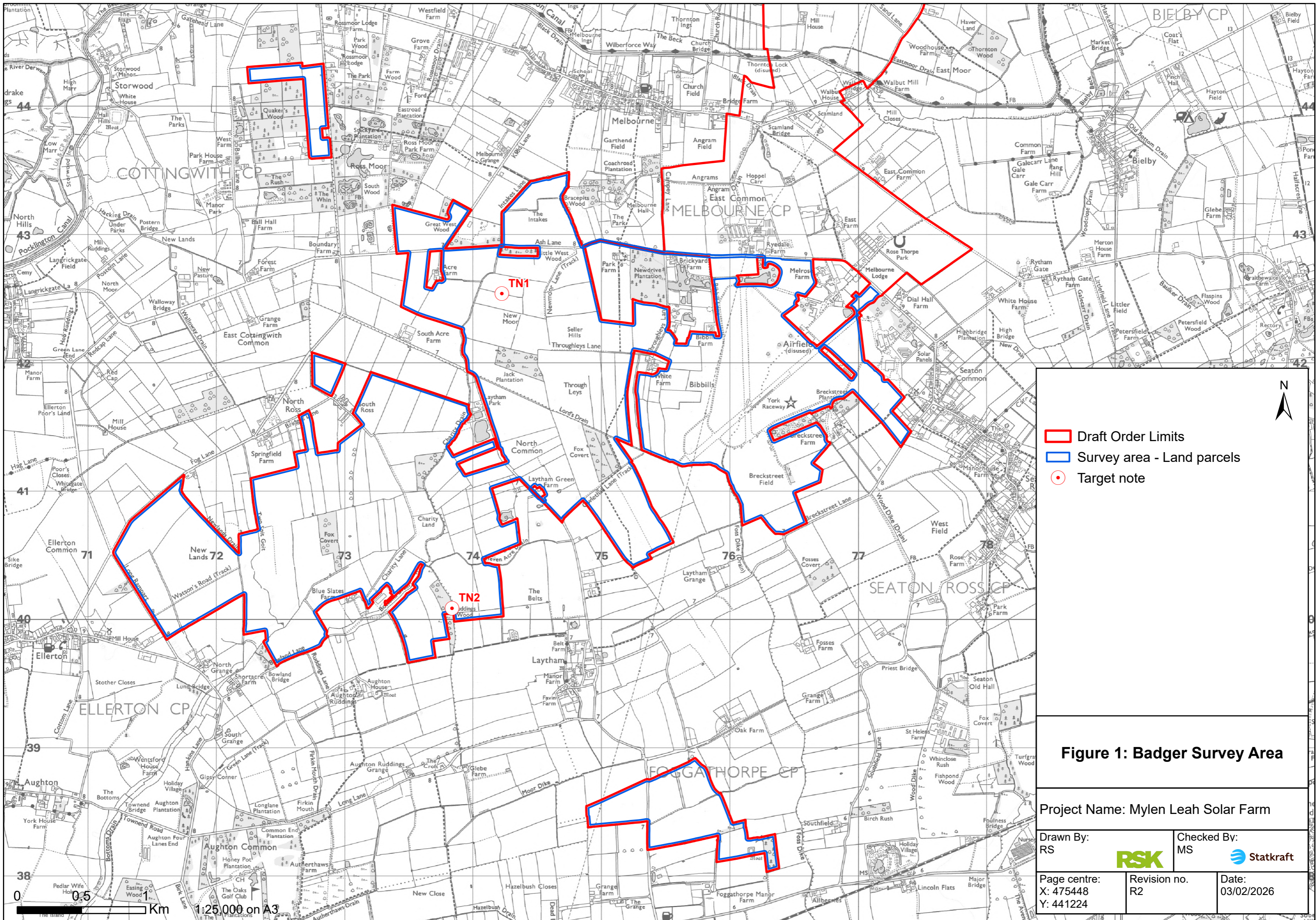
4. Conclusion

4.1 Survey results

- 4.1.1 The survey area provides suitable sett building, foraging and general commuting habitat for badgers, although the majority of badger setts and field signs were identified along hedgerows, field margins or woodland edges. Badger setts and badger field signs were identified throughout the solar PV development area therefore it is likely badgers are present throughout the Site and typically use the less disturbed habitat within the agricultural landscape, such as the field boundary habitats and woodlands.

Figures

Figure 1: Badger Survey Area



- ▭ Draft Order Limits
- ▭ Survey area - Land parcels
- Target note



Figure 1: Badger Survey Area

Project Name: Mylen Leah Solar Farm

Drawn By:
RS

Checked By:
MS

Page centre:
X: 475448
Y: 441224

Revision no.
R2

Date:
03/02/2026

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Appendix A: Sett Types and Activity Levels

Table 2: Definitions and Criteria for Identifying Badger Sett Type, Status and Determining Levels of Activity (Harris *et al.*, 1989).

Sett status Level of use by badgers at each entrance hole	
Main	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In continuous use– often over many years. – Well-worn network of paths leading to the sett and linking entrances. – Greater number of entrances (but can be just one or two). – Large(r) spoil heaps. – Normally the breeding sett, so there may be signs of social activity such as a flattened ‘play area’.
Annexe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Close to main sett (<150m). – Linked to main sett by obvious paths. – Usually comprise several entrances. – May not be in continuous use.
Subsidiary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Usually comprise several entrances (typically 4-5) but with smaller spoil heaps. – No obvious paths connecting to another sett (although, if in use, there may be paths). – Usually >50m from a main sett (closer and it is likely to be linked by a path = annexe). – May be seasonally used in an area of particularly good foraging.
Outlier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Small number of entrances (usually no more than 1 or 2) – No obvious paths connecting to another sett – Small spoil heaps
Sett activity	
In current use	– Any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger.
Inactive	– Not in use by badgers, with absence of field signs for a considerable period of time/presence of debris in entrances/collapsed entrances.
Level of use by badgers at each entrance hole	
Well used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Obviously in regular use. – Clear of debris or vegetation (although cobwebs may be present). – Sides may have become smoothed by badger traffic. – May or may not have been excavated recently.
Partially used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Not in regular use. – Some light debris or vegetation covering entrance or in tunnel.

Mylen Leah Solar Farm

	– Minimal amount of clearance required to re-open.
Disused	– Not used by badgers for some time. – Partially or completely blocked. – Considerable amount of clearance required to re-open.

Appendix B: Target notes with photos



Target Note 1. Potential badger path.





Target Note 2. Field signs of foraging found at multiple locations within woodland.

Appendix C: Badger sett photos

Table 3: Badger setts classification and photos

Sett reference	Classification	Photograph
1	Outlier – Disused	
2	Outlier – Partially used	
3	Outlier – Well used/ Partially used	
4	Main – Well used	no photo available

Sett reference	Classification	Photograph
5	Outlier – Well used	
6	Outlier – Disused	

¹ Scoping Opinion Adopted by the Secretary of State on 18 February 2025. Available online: [EN0110002-000035-Secretary of State Scoping Opinion - Proposed Mylen Leah Solar Farm 18 February 2025.pdf](#)

² Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Available online: [Protection of Badgers Act 1992](#)

³ Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. Available online: [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#)

⁴ Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996. Available online: [Wild Mammals \(Protection\) Act 1996](#)

⁵ Harris S., Cresswell, P. & Jeffries, D.J. (1989). Surveying badgers. The Mammal Society, London.

⁶ Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Available online: [Ecological-Report-Writing-Dec2017.pdf](#)

⁷ Harris S., Cresswell, P. & Jeffries, D.J. (1989). Surveying badgers. The Mammal Society, London.

⁸ Palphramand, K.L., Newton-Cross, G. & White, P.C.L. (2007) Spatial organization and behaviour of badgers (*Meles meles*) in a moderate-density population. Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology 61, 401–413 (2007).

⁹ Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.3. Available online: [Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment \(EclA\) | CIEEM](#)