

Dear Katie,

I am the Chairman of the Essex Badger Protection Group and I am writing to you with regards to the planned solar photovoltaic array at Southend Airport. I have spoken recently with one of your officers, Claire Buckley, and was told to raise any concerns and/or objections relating to this proposed plan before your development meeting, which is to be held on the 21st May 2015.

We do have records of badger setts and badger activity next to the proposed site. As the land at the site is fenced off and is located airside to the airport we have not been able to enter the area of the site itself to see what the full level of badger activity is in the area. Viewing through the fence we can see that badgers have been using the land for foraging as there are many tracks and snuffle holes where they have been digging for worms and grubs. It would be very useful if we were able to gain access onto the land to see the full extent of badger activity.

Assuming there are no badger setts on the site itself we do not see any particular problems with having a solar photovoltaic array there. However we do have two main concerns.

The first concern would be during the construction cycle. We understand this would involve the laying of some sort of foundations and possibly pilings into the ground which could cause disturbance to nearby badgers.

Our second concern is with regards to water levels. We understand that the site itself forms part of a floodplain and has a ditch running alongside it to take the water away. This ditch runs next to where a badger sett is. If the construction of the array was to block any natural underground drainage or cause displacement of any floodwater there is a possibility that water levels could rise sufficient enough to cause the ditch to overflow into the badger sett. There could also be a problem caused by water run-off from the solar panels themselves causing water to be directed directly into the ditch rather than slowly soaked away evenly into the ground as it is currently.

We have read the Badger Survey Report provided to you by Chris Blandford Associates. It will be important that the criteria regarding the use of heavy machinery is adhered to as set out in the reports conclusions. It is also very important that any deep holes that are dug during the construction process are fully covered over at night and other times when nobody is working on site to prevent badgers from falling into them. Any areas closer than 20 metres to a badger sett need to be taped off to stop people wandering into them.

If you are able to arrange for me to visit the site or need further advice please contact me by email or by phone on 07768 310510.

Regards,

Chris Teeder

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Chris Teeder

Chairman

Essex Badger Protection Group

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