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By email only: agilruth@moorlandassociation.org

From Paul Kissack
Permanent Secretary

RE: NE/DEFRA letter about NEER155 and EIR2026/00223 / EIR2025/01669

Dear Andrew Gilruth,

Thank you for your letter of 18 February regarding Natural England's evidence review update on the effects of managed burning on upland peatland biodiversity, carbon and water; NEER155 and for your subsequent letter of 10 April, concerning Natural England's internal review response dated 9 April 2026 in relation to EIR2026/00223 / EIR2025/01669.

In response to your letter of 18 February:

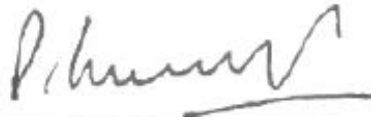
NEER155 was produced using Natural England's established evidence-review methodology and informed by an External Expert Review Group comprising leading independent specialists in peatland ecology, carbon cycling, ecohydrology, biogeochemistry and wildfire science. Their expert input shaped revisions to the report.

The review also underwent extensive internal technical scrutiny, followed by Natural England's full publication and governance checks, including Director-level sign-off. This combined assurance—external expert review, internal technical review and formal approval—meets Natural England's rigorous quality-control standards.

NEER155 represents a robust assessment of the best available evidence, drawing on a comprehensive literature search and building on the 2013 review. Taken together, the methodology, independent expertise and governance provide a sound basis for confidence in the quality and reliability of the review.

In response to your letter of 10 April:

Defra acknowledges receipt of your letter of 10 April and will not be entering into further correspondence about NEER155. Matters relating to EIR2026/00223 / EIR2025/01669 are for Natural England, and they will respond separately to your detailed information requests.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Kissack', with a horizontal line underneath.

PAUL KISSACK
Permanent Secretary