

Stonestreet Green Solar

Statement of Commonality (Tracked)

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Version 4

Deadline 4

March 2025

EP Rule 8(1)(b)

Planning Act 2008

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010



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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Statement of Commonality

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Commonality (the Statement) has been prepared to provide the Examining Authority (ExA) with a summary of the latest position regarding the negotiation of Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs) between the Applicant, relevant statutory consultees and other parties in relation to Stonestreet Green Solar (the Project).
- 1.1.2 The Rule 6 Letter [\[PD-004\]](#) dated 22 October 2024 requires the submission of SoCGs to inform the ExA and all other parties on matters where there is agreement and where differences lie at an early stage in the Examination process. The Rule 6 Letter requests that these are accompanied by an Issues Tracker (this Statement) detailing the progression of discussions.
- 1.1.3 Annex D of the Rule 6 Letter identifies the following parties with which the Applicant has sought to develop SoCGs:
- Ashford Borough Council (ABC) [\[RR-018\]](#);
 - Environment Agency (EA) [\[RR-086\]](#);
 - Historic England (HE) [\[RR-099\]](#);
 - Kent County Council (KCC) [\[RR-156\]](#);
 - National Grid Electricity Transmission PLC (NGET) [\[RR-203\]](#).
 - National Highways (NH) [\[RR-205\]](#);
 - Natural England (NE) [\[RR-206\]](#);
 - Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (NR) [\[RR-207\]](#);
- 1.1.4 This Statement is to be treated as an iterative document throughout the Examination and will be updated and submitted at subsequent deadlines to provide an up to date overview of the latest position on the SoCGs.

1.2 Structure of this Statement

- 1.2.1 This Statement is structured as follows:
- Section 2 sets out the status of each SoCG;
 - Section 3 provides a summary of where agreement has been reached with each party;
 - Section 4 provides details of any steps to be taken to progress outstanding matters towards resolution.

2 Status of the SoCGs

2.1 Overview at Deadline 1

2.1.1 This section provides an overview of the progression of each SoCG at Deadline ~~34~~ and will be updated to reflect their current status at each Examination deadline.

2.1.2 Table 2-1 identifies the status of each SoCG, categorised as follows:

- **SoCG in draft** – where a SoCG has been drafted (with matters recorded as agreed, ongoing and not agreed) and is subject to further discussions to resolve any outstanding matters;
- **Final signed SoCG** – where a final position has been reached on all matters, as either agreed or not agreed positions.

Table 2-1: Status of SoCGs at Deadline 1

Party	Status of SoCG at Deadline 1
Ashford Borough Council	SoCG in draft
Kent County Council	SoCG in draft
National Grid	SoCG in draft
Network Rail	SoCG in draft
Environment Agency	<u>Final Signed</u> SoCG in-draft
Historic England	<u>Final Signed</u> SoCG finalised, all matters agreed
Natural England	<u>Final Signed</u> SoCG finalised, all matters agreed
National Highways	Final Signed SoCG

3 Commonality

3.1 Summary

- 3.1.1 This section of this Statement provides a summary of the topics covered in the SoCGs submitted at Deadline 1. It shows where there is commonality in the matters discussed between the Applicant and the various parties, and shows where matters have reached a final agreed position.
- 3.1.2 Table 3-1 lists out the topics covered in each of the SoCGs and the status for each stakeholder, where applicable. Where a topic is not relevant to a particular party the cell has been greyed out.
- 3.1.3 The Rule 6 Letter requests that for areas under discussion, each party flags their estimation as to the likelihood that disagreement will remain by the closure of Examination, as set out below and in each individual SoCG.

Key

	All matters agreed
	Low likelihood that matter will not be resolved
	Medium likelihood that matter will not be resolved
	High likelihood that matter will not be resolved
	Matter not discussed with that party

Table 3-1: Topics Raised by National Grid and Network Rail

Topics	SoCG Party	
	National Grid	Network Rail
Grid connection		
dDCO		
Protective Provisions of assets		
Compulsory acquisition and temporary possession of land		

Table 3-2: Topics Raised by the Environment Agency, National Highways, Historic England and Natural England

Topics		SoCG Party			
		Environment Agency	National Highways	Historic England	Natural England
General	Policy compliance				
	Access to Aldington Flood Storage Area (AFSA)				
	Effects on international and national designated sites				
Water	FRA assessment				
	Outline OSWDS				
	AFSA Risk Assessment				
	Drainage Strategy				
	WFD Assessment				

Biodiversity & Landscape	Environmental permit				
	Outline LEMP and design principles				
	Outline CEMP				
	Impacts on species and woodland				
Air quality	Air Quality Assessment				
Transport	Traffic Assessment				
	Outline CTMP, DTMP, dDCO				
Heritage	Historic Environment Assessment				
	Impact on Designated Heritage Assets				

Table 3-3: Topics Raised by Local Authorities

Topics		SoCG Party	
		Ashford Borough Council	Kent County Council
General	Principle of Development		
	Scale of development		
	Compliance with NPS Policy		
	Consideration of Alternatives		
	Good Design		
	Economic and Social Effects		
	DCO, including Schedule 2 Requirements		
Highway and transportation	Traffic and Assessment		

Topics		SoCG Party	
		Ashford Borough Council	Kent County Council
PRoW	Outline RoWAS		
Landscape	Scope and assessment		
	Landscape Strategy		
	Outline LEMP		
	Outline CEMP, DEMP		
	Cumulative landscape effects		
Water	SuDs		
Cultural Heritage	Built Heritage		
	Archaeology		
Cumulative Assessment	Scope of the assessment, and long list of schemes		

4 Summary of Ongoing Positions

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 This section provides an overview of the matters identified in Table 3-1 that remain unresolved at Deadline 1 with each of the parties and sets out how the Applicant is intending to progress matters with those parties with the intention of reaching a final agreed position before the close of the Examination.

4.2 Ashford Borough Council (Doc Ref. 8.3.1(A))

- 4.2.1 The Applicant has had a Planning Performance Agreement with ABC since May 2023, which has allowed for extensive engagement during the pre-application stage, and continued engagement in the Examination stage.

- 4.2.2 The Applicant has been in active discussions with ABC and the SoCG has been updated a number of times during the post submission stage. Agreement has been reached on a number of matters, with outstanding matters relating to the following topics:

- Need and principle of development (Table 2.1): ABC question the scale and size of the development. The Applicant has responded to these matters and ABC and the Applicant discussed these matters further on the 28 January 2025. It was agreed that ABC would consider the Applicant's response in due course. The Applicant is awaiting a response from ABC on this matter.
- Planning Policy (Table 2.2): ABC considers the Project does not comply with the relevant National Policy Statements (EN-1 and EN-3). The Applicant has responded to these matters and awaits ABC's response.
- Landscape Character and Visual Amenity (Table 2.3): ABC considers that the Project does not minimise impacts on the landscape as the Project is larger than it considers appropriate. The Applicant has responded to these matters and awaits ABC's response.
- Cumulative Landscape Effects (Table 2-3) : ABC contend that different effects should have been identified as compared to those which have been identified in **ES Volume 2, Chapter 8: Landscape and Views (Doc Ref. 5.2(A))** [\[AS-012\]](#) and **ES Volume 2, Chapter 17: Cumulative Assessment (Doc Ref. 5.2)** [\[APP-041\]](#). The Applicant has requested further clarification on this point and await ABC's response.
- Schedule 2: Requirements: the Applicant has responded to the feedback provided by ABC, and all but one matters are now agreed. ABC are considering the updates to 19.(2)(d) (timescales) provided by the Applicant at Deadline 1: (10th December 2024).

- 4.2.3 The Applicant has sought and continues to seek an opportunity to discuss the outstanding matters with ABC. The Applicant looks forward to discussing the outstanding matters with ABC further.

4.3 Environment Agency (Doc Ref. 8.3.2(BC))

- ~~4.3.1 The Applicant Agreement has been in active discussions with the EA reached on all matters and the SoCG has been updated a number of times during the post submission stage. Agreement has been reached on a number of matters, with outstanding matters relating to the following topics:~~

- ~~* Requirement to secure mitigation set out in the FRA and AFSA Risk Assessment: the EA have asked for an additional requirement to secure the measures in the FRA. The Applicant does not consider this necessary, as all mitigation relied on by the **ES Appendix 10.2: Flood Risk Assessment (Doc Ref 5.4(A))** [REP1-036] [REP1-037] and [REP1-038] are secured by either the Design Principles, or the **Outline OSWDS (Doc Ref: 7.14(B))**. This secures all mitigation relied on by the FRA and AFSA. Requirement 11 (Operational surface water drainage) in the **Draft DCO (Doc Ref. 3.1(D))** then secures the commitments made by the **Outline OSWDS (Doc Ref: 7.14(B))** and the detailed design approval of drainage details by ABC, following consultation with the EA. These controls are considered to provide appropriate securing mechanisms for these matters.~~
- ~~* Requirement to secure measures set out in Outline CEMP, Outline BSMP and Outline DEMP: the EA have asked for an additional requirement to secure the measures in these documents. The Applicant has confirmed to the EA that these matters are already controls by Requirement 5) Battery Safety Management Plan), 6 (Construction Environmental Management Plan), 11 (Operational surface water drainage) and 14 (Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan) in the **Draft DCO (Doc Ref. 3.1(D))**. These existing requirements then secures the commitments referred to the EA. The Applicant awaits a response from the EA on these matters.~~

- ~~4.3.24.3.1 The Applicant will continue to discuss these matters with EA and progress will be reported at Deadline 4. was signed on 11 March 2025. A signed version of the SoCG is anticipated to be submitted into has been provided by the ExaminationApplicant at Deadline 4.~~

4.4 Historic England (Doc Ref. 8.3.3(BC))

- ~~4.4.1 The Applicant Agreement has been in active discussions with Historic England reached on all matters and the SoCG now reflects that the Parties have reached an agreed position on all matters. Agreement was reached on 6 January 2025. was signed on 11 March 2025. A signed version of the SoCG is anticipated to be submitted into has been provided by the ExaminationApplicant at Deadline 4.~~

4.5 Kent County Council (Doc Ref. 8.3.4(BC))

- 4.5.1 The Applicant has had a Planning Performance Agreement with KCC since May 2023, which has allowed for extensive engagement during the pre-application stage, and continued engagement in the Examination stage.
- 4.5.2 The Applicant has been in active discussions with KCC and the SoCG has been updated a number of times during the post submission stage. Agreement has been reached on a number of matters, with outstanding matters relating to the following topics:
- Impacts to Public Rights of Way ('PRoW') (Table 2.3): The Parties are making constructive progress in resolving a number of detailed matters. Agreement is anticipated before the end of Examination.
 - Heritage (Table 2.6): The Parties are continuing to discuss archaeological matters and progress will be reported at Deadline ~~45~~.
- 4.5.3 The Applicant will continue to discuss these matters with KCC and progress will be reported at Deadline 4. A signed version of the SoCG is anticipated to be submitted into the Examination at Deadline 4.

4.6 National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (Doc Ref. 8.3.5(B))

- 4.6.1 The Applicant has been in active discussions with National Grid Electricity Transmission plc ('NGET') and the ~~SoCG has been reviewed (see Appendix 1 for further details). The~~ outstanding matters are summarised as follows:
- The **Draft DCO (Doc Ref. 3.1(C))**, including protective provisions: Discussions have been ongoing between the Applicant and NGET regarding the protective provisions since early 2023. The version of the draft protective provisions as at the date of submission of the Application is included in Part 5 of Schedule 13 to the **Draft DCO (Doc Ref. 3.1(D))**.
 - ~~▪ Acquisition of land and rights: The Applicant and UKPN have been engaging with NGET. Discussions relate to the agreement of the protective provisions noted above.~~
- 4.6.2 The Applicant will continue to discuss these matters with NGET and progress will be reported at Deadline ~~35~~.

4.7 National Highways (Doc Ref. 8.3.6(B))

- 4.7.1 ~~The Applicant has been in active discussions with National Highways and the SoCG has been updated a number of times during the post submission stage (see Appendix 1 for further details). Agreement has been reached on all matters. A signed version of the SoCG has been included in the Applicant's~~ was submitted at Deadline 3 ~~submission.~~

4.8 Natural England (Doc Ref. 8.3.7(BC))

- 4.8.1 ~~The Applicant has been in active discussions with Natural England and the SoCG now reflects that the Parties have reached an agreed position~~ Agreement on all

matters. ~~Agreement~~ was reached on ~~10 December 2024, however, the parties are yet to formally sign the SoCG. 11 March 2025.~~ A signed version of the SoCG ~~will be submitted into~~has been provided by the ~~Examination~~Applicant at Deadline 4.

4.9 Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (Doc Ref. 8.3.8(BC))

4.9.1 The Applicant has been in active discussions with Network Rail ('NR') and the SoCG has been reviewed (see Appendix 1 for further details). The outstanding matters are summarised as follows:

- The **Draft DCO (Doc Ref. 3.1 (D))**, including protective provisions: Discussions have been ongoing between the Applicant and NR regarding the protective provisions since early 2023. The version of the draft protective provisions as at the date of submission of the Application is included in Part 7 of Schedule 13 to the **Draft DCO (Doc Ref. 3.1 (D))**.

~~▪ Acquisition of land and rights: The Applicant and UKPN have been engaging with NR's Asset Protection Team. Discussions relate to the agreement of the protective provisions noted above.~~

4.9.2 The Applicant will continue to discuss these matters with NR and progress will be reported at Deadline 45.