



National Infrastructure Planning
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All Interested Parties, Statutory Parties and
any Other Person invited to the Preliminary
meeting

Your Ref:

Our Ref: EN010147

Date: 28 March 2025

Dear Sir/ Madam

**Planning Act 2008 – Section 88 and 89 and The Infrastructure Planning
(Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – Rules 6, 9 and 13**

**Application by Photovolt Development Partners (PVDP) on behalf of SolarFive
Ltd for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Botley West Solar
Farm project**

**Appointment of the Examining Authority, Invitation to the preliminary meeting,
notification of Hearings and other Procedural Decisions**

Following my appointment by the Secretary of State as the lead member of the Examining Authority (ExA) to carry out an Examination of the above application I am writing to introduce myself and the other members of the ExA. My name is David Wallis and the other members of the ExA are Katharine Metcalfe, Mukhtar Shaikh and Helen Cassini. A copy of the appointment notice can be viewed under the [Documents tab](#) on the project webpage of the National Infrastructure Planning website ([project webpage](#)).

We would like to thank those of you who submitted Relevant Representations. These representations have assisted us when considering how we will examine this application.

Matters to reconcile prior to the preliminary meeting

This letter serves as an invitation to the preliminary meeting, after which the Examination will formally commence. The details of the meeting and its procedure are set out further below.



However, the ExA considers certain clarifications from the applicant are necessary at this stage to give confidence that the Examination of the application can be conducted and completed within the statutory timeframe, and that there would not be delays during the process.

The clarification relates to the Environmental Statement (ES) and the worst-case scenario that underpins each chapter of it. The ExA has noted discrepancies between the identified worst-case scenarios (maximum design scenarios) stated for different topics of the ES. Some examples (non-exhaustive) are listed below:

- 1) Table 7.13 in ES Chapter 7 (Historic Environment) and Table 10.25 in ES Chapter 10 (Hydrology and Flood Risk) state there would be 1,600,000 piles as a maximum, whereas Table 9.7.1 (Ecology) states there would be 1,900,000 to 2,500,000. Table 13.23 in ES Chapter 13, where noise impacts are assessed, states there would be between 780,000 to 1,600,000 piles, below that predicted in table 9.7.1.
- 2) Table 9.7.1 does not mention construction of the main project substation or its parameters, and neither does table 8.19.
- 3) Table 8.19 in respect of landscape states the maximum height of the NGET substation is assumed to be 12 to 12.5 metres. However, paragraph 2.9 of the guide to the application and the statement of statutory nuisance both say the height would be 15 metres, excluding connecting tower structures.
- 4) Table 8.19 assesses impacts on the landscape but does not mention the number of panels/ modules being provided whereas 7.13 in respect of the Historic Environment does.
- 5) Table 10.25 provides information on the separation distance between panels, which is equally a landscape consideration, but does not appear in the landscape maximum design scenario table.
- 6) Table 10.25 refers to temporary construction compounds, without reference to the three main compounds being used, whereas Table 9.7.1 does.
- 7) Table 13.23 does not mention construction noise effects from constructing any of the substations across the entire development.

Having regard to paragraph 4.1.3 of ES Chapter 4, the applicant is requested to explain the discrepancies, elaborate on the reasons why the maximum design scenario parameters appear to differ chapter to chapter, and provide reassurance that the absolute worst-case scenario (maximum design scenario) underpins the ES in all respects.

This information is requested to be provided at the earliest possible opportunity and no later than **Procedural Deadline B** which is on 2 May 2025 or, if not, the applicant should provide comprehensive reasons for not doing so. The matter may be raised and discussed at the preliminary meeting, depending on the clarifications provided, and any necessary action (if required) discussed in that forum.

Invitation to the preliminary meeting

As a recipient of this letter, you are invited to the preliminary meeting to discuss **the procedure** for the Examination of the above application.

Date	Start time	Venue and joining details
13 May 2025	Registration and seating available at venue from: 9:00am Virtual Registration Process from: 09:30am Preliminary meeting starts: 10:00am	The Kings Centre, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES and By virtual means using Microsoft Teams Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered

IMPORTANT: The preliminary meeting should be completed before 1:00pm on 13 May 2025. However, a reserve period has been scheduled for 2:00pm on the same day to allow for the meeting to be resumed in exceptional circumstances e.g. to account for a failure of technology. Normally the reserve period will not be required and confirmation of this will be provided by the ExA at the end of the preliminary meeting and subsequently notified on the [project webpage](#).

You must register by completing the [Event Participation Form](#) by 16 April 2025 if you intend to participate in the preliminary meeting and provide all the information requested (see below).

If you simply wish to observe the preliminary meeting, then you do not need to register as you will be able to either:

1. watch a livestream of the event - a link to the livestream will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin; and/or
2. watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished.

Alternatively, you can attend the physical event at the venue to observe the proceedings; however, to ensure there is adequate seating capacity at the venue we request that you register your attendance to **observe only** by **16 April 2025** using the [Event Participation Form](#). Please note that it may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **16 April 2025**.



Purpose of the preliminary meeting

The purpose of the preliminary meeting is to enable views to be put to us about how the application should be examined. The ExA will therefore limit the scope of the preliminary meeting to consideration of **how the application will be examined**. See **Annex B** to this letter and the Planning Inspectorate's Advice for members of the public: [The stages of the NSIP process and how you can have your say](#) for more information.

The preliminary meeting is **not** an opportunity for you to give your views about what you like or don't like about the application. The merits or disadvantages of the application will only be considered once the Examination starts, which is after the preliminary meeting has closed. All relevant and important matters will be taken into account when we make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, who will take the final decision in this case.

The agenda for the meeting is at **Annex A** to this letter. This has been set following our Initial Assessment of Principal Issues arising from our reading of the application documents and the Relevant Representations received. The Initial Assessment of Principal Issues is set out in **Annex C** to this letter.

Written submissions about how the application should be examined

The Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) establishes a principally written process for the Examination of applications for Development Consent Orders and **representations made in writing carry equal weight to oral representations at all stages of the process**.

We are now requesting written submissions from recipients of this letter about how the application should be examined. We particularly wish to hear from you if:

- You consider changes need to be made to the draft Examination Timetable set out at **Annex D** to this letter; and/or
- you wish to comment about the arrangements for future Examination hearings, including the use of virtual methods.

You are invited to make a written submission about how the application is to be examined by **Procedural Deadline A** (Wednesday 16 April) (see **Annex D** to this letter).

We request that all submissions are made using the '[Have your say](#)' page on the project webpage on or before **Procedural Deadline A**. **Annex H** to this letter provides further information about using the Make a submission tab.



Requests to participate at the preliminary meeting

Please note that **you are not required to attend, or make written submissions to, the preliminary meeting in order to participate in the Examination**. If you are an Interested Party you can make a Written Representation and comment on the Written Representations made by other Interested Parties during the Examination. You will also be able to participate in any hearings that are arranged.

If you wish to participate at the preliminary meeting, you are required to notify the ExA in writing on or before **16 April 2025** (see **Procedural Deadline A**).

Any request to participate in the preliminary meeting **must include** the following information:

- name and unique reference number (found at the top of your letter or email from the Planning Inspectorate);
- email address (if available) and contact telephone number;
- name and unique reference number of any person/organisation that you are representing (if applicable);
- for blended events, confirmation of whether you will participate virtually or in-person; and
- the agenda item on which you wish to speak and a list of the points you wish to make.

Requests to participate should be made using the [Event Participation Form](#) on or before **Procedural Deadline A, 16 April 2025**.

Please contact the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter if you require any support or assistance to attend the preliminary meeting, either virtually or in person.

Format of Examination Events – Preliminary meeting and Hearings

The Examination of the application will principally be a written process supplemented where necessary by various types of hearings. See the Planning Inspectorate's Advice for members of the public: [The stages of the NSIP process and how you can have your say](#) for more information.

Both blended (part in-person and part virtual) and fully virtual events form part of the Planning Inspectorate's operating model. We remain flexible and will confirm the format of any hearings to be held during the Examination Stage when we provide formal notification of each hearing at least 21 days in advance of it taking place.

We are providing formal notification that the **preliminary meeting will be a blended event and that the OFH and ISH referred to in Annex E to this letter will also be blended events**.



After the preliminary meeting

After the preliminary meeting we will issue a letter (known as the Rule 8 letter) setting out the finalised Examination Timetable. A note of the meeting will also be published on the [project webpage](#).

Notification of initial hearings

We have made a Procedural Decision to hold the following initial hearings:

- Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1) on 13 May 2025 (Blended event)
- Open Floor Hearing 2 (OFH2) on 14 May 2025 (Blended event)
- Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) into the Development Consent Order and Strategic Matters on 15 May 2025 (Blended event)

Important information about these hearings is contained in **Annex E** to this letter, including what details need to be provided with a request to be heard at a hearing and the procedure that will be followed.

Other Procedural Decisions made by the Examining Authority

We have made some further Procedural Decisions which are set out in detail at **Annex F** to this letter. They are summarised as follows:

- Acceptance of the applicant's change request application.
- Compulsory Acquisition information.
- Local Impact Reports.
- Statements of Common Ground.
- Request for suggested locations for an Accompanied Site Inspection.
- Acceptance of Additional Submissions into the Examination.

Changes to land interests

When the applicant becomes aware that there has been a change in ownership, or a new interest, in relevant land the applicant is requested to make the relevant person aware that they can make a request to the ExA to become an Interested Party under section 102A of the PA2008 by contacting the case team via the project mailbox at BotleyWestSolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk. The Examination Timetable includes various Deadlines for the submission of an updated Land Rights Tracker, Book of Reference and schedule of changes to the Book of Reference, which should include confirmation that relevant persons have been informed of their rights under section 102A.



Managing Examination correspondence

Given the volume and frequency of letters the Planning Inspectorate needs to send to Interested Parties during an Examination, we aim to communicate with people by email as electronic communication is more environmentally friendly and cost effective for the taxpayer.

If you have received a letter but are able to receive communications by email, please inform the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter as soon as possible.

As the Examination process makes substantial use of electronic documents, it will be useful for you to become familiar with the [project webpage](#).

A '[Have your say](#)' page is available on the website which provides a portal through which parties should make written submissions at relevant deadlines during the Examination. Further information about the '[Have your say](#)' page is provided at **Annex H** to this letter.

There is also a function on the right-hand side of the project webpage called 'E-mail updates'. This provides you with an opportunity to register to receive automatic e-mail updates at key stages during the Examination.

Your status in the Examination

You have received this letter because you are a person or organisation who is involved in the NSIP process. See the Planning Inspectorate's Advice for members of the public: [National Infrastructure Projects and the people and organisations involved in the process](#) for further details.

If, having read the advice, you are still unsure about how you are involved in the process please contact the Case Team using the details at the top of this letter.

Awards of costs

All parties will normally be expected to meet their own costs. Costs can be awarded against a party who has acted unreasonably and has caused the party applying for the award of costs to incur unnecessary or wasted expense during the Examination. You should be aware of the relevant costs guidance [Awards of costs: examinations of applications for development consent orders](#).

Management of information

Information, including representations, submitted in respect of this Examination (if accepted by the Examining Authority) and a record of any advice which has been provided by the Planning Inspectorate is published on the [project webpage](#).

Please note that in the interest of facilitating an effective and fair Examination, it is necessary to publish some personal information. To find out how we handle your personal information please view our [Privacy Notice](#).



We look forward to working with all parties in the Examination of this application.

Yours faithfully

David Wallis

Lead Member of the Examining Authority

Annexes

- A** Agenda for the preliminary meeting
- B** Introduction to the preliminary meeting
- C** Initial Assessment of Principal Issues
- D** Draft Examination Timetable
- E** Notification of initial hearings
- F** Other Procedural Decisions made by the Examining Authority
- G** Examination Documents
- H** Information about the 'Have your say' page

This communication does not constitute legal advice.

Please view our [Privacy Notice](#) before sending information to the Planning Inspectorate.

ANNEX A: Agenda for the Preliminary Meeting

You must register **by completing the [Event Participation Form](#)** by **Wednesday 16 April 2025** if you intend to participate in the preliminary meeting and provide all the information requested.

If you simply wish to observe the preliminary meeting, then you do not need to register as you will be able to either:

1. watch a livestream of the event - a link to the livestream will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin; and/or
2. watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished.

Alternatively, you can attend the physical event at the venue to observe the proceedings; however, to ensure there is adequate seating capacity at the venue we request that you register your attendance to **observe only** by **16 April 2025** using the [Event Participation Form](#). Please note that it may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **16 April 2025**.

Date: **Tuesday 13 May 2025**

Registration process: **09:30am**

Meeting start time: **10.00am**

Venue: **Blended event at The Kings Centre, Osney Mead, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX2 0ES and by virtual means using Microsoft Teams**
Full instructions on how to join online or by phone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered

Attendees: **Invited parties who have pre-registered**

Agenda for the preliminary meeting	
09:15	Registration and seating available at venue for in-person attendees
09:30	<p>Virtual registration process</p> <p>Please arrive at 09:30am to enter the virtual lobby. From here you will be admitted to the virtual meeting by the Case Team, greeted and given further instructions.</p> <p>The registration process will commence at 09:30am. This will be hosted by the Case Team and cover the housekeeping</p>

	arrangements for the preliminary meeting and allow for any questions to be asked about how to take part.
10.00am	<p>Preliminary meeting</p> <p>The preliminary meeting will formally open at 10.00am. The Examining Authority will join, welcome participants and lead introductions.</p> <p>A public livestream of the meeting will be made available on the project webpage of the Find a National Infrastructure Project website shortly before the meeting is due to open.</p>
Item 1	Welcome and introductions
Item 2	ExA's Remarks about the Examination process
Item 3	Initial Assessment of Principal Issues
Item 4	Draft Examination Timetable
Item 5	Procedural Decisions
Item 6	Any other matters
Close of the preliminary meeting	

Attendance at the Preliminary Meeting

Any request to participate in the preliminary meeting **must include** the following information and be made on the [Event Participation Form](#):

- name and unique reference number (found at the top your letter or email from the Planning Inspectorate);
- name and unique reference number of any person/organisation that you are representing (if applicable);
- email address (if available) and contact telephone number;
- confirmation of whether you will participate virtually or in-person; and
- the agenda item on which you wish to speak and a list of the points you wish to make.

Observing the Preliminary Meeting

If you wish to observe the preliminary meeting in person and at the physical venue, you are still required to register by **Procedural Deadline A, Wednesday 16 April 2025** via the [Event Participation Form](#).

However, if you wish to observe virtually then you do not need to register. You will be able to either:

1. watch a livestream of the event via a weblink that will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin; and/ or

2. watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished.

Late arrivals

The preliminary meeting will start at **10.00 am** irrespective of any late arrivals (in-person or virtual), for whom access to the event may not be possible. It may take some time to admit participants from the virtual lobby, your patience whilst you are waiting is appreciated.

Changes to the Agenda

The agenda for the preliminary meeting is subject to change at the discretion of the Examining Authority (ExA), although in making changes the ExA will be mindful of the need to provide opportunities for fair involvement to all Invited Parties.

If you are participating using Microsoft Teams, please join the virtual lobby promptly using the instructions that will be sent to you. The event will start at **10.00am** irrespective of any late arrivals, for whom access may not be possible.

It may take some time to admit participants from the virtual lobby, your patience whilst you are waiting is appreciated.

ANNEX B: Introduction to the Preliminary Meeting

Background

The preliminary meeting (PM) will be a blended event with some participants attending in person and some taking part virtually using Microsoft Teams. It will not be possible to send recordings to the blended event.

The Examining Authority (ExA) is conscious of video-conferencing fatigue and will aim to keep the proceedings focussed and as efficient as possible. In that regard, this annex provides advance access to information that would usually be included in the ExA's introductory remarks. Please read this carefully. The ExA will only present a summary of the key points set out here in order to ensure that the time available for participants to speak is maximised.

The Examining Authority and the Case Team

The ExA will introduce themselves at the start of the PM. The ExA will be supported by the Planning Inspectorate Case Team. During the registration process a member of the Case Team will welcome and admit participants from the virtual lobby, and will be available to answer questions by email before and after the PM. The contact email address is: BotleyWestSolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk.

The purpose of the Preliminary Meeting

The PM is being held to discuss the arrangements for the Examination of the application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for Botley West Solar Farm Project, which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), and which will generally be referred to in the PM and Examination as the 'Proposed Development'. The application has been made by Solar Five Limited, who will be referred to as 'the applicant'.

You will find information about the application and, in due course, documents produced for the Examination on the project webpage of the Find National Infrastructure Project website ([project webpage](#)). The project webpage has links to the Examination Timetable, Relevant Representations and Examination documents and Examination procedure.

You are encouraged to look at the [project webpage](#) if you haven't already done so, because it will be used to communicate with you and to provide access to documents throughout the Examination.

The main purpose of the PM is to discuss the arrangements for the Examination of the application. It focuses on the process only, and it will not be looking at the substance of the proposals. Questions, discussions and representations about the merits or disadvantages of the Proposed Development are for the Examination itself which will begin the day after the close of the PM.

The PM will be your opportunity to influence the process that the ExA intends to follow. The agenda for the PM is at **Annex A**. It is important to have the letter and the agenda in front of you and to refer to them during the course of the PM.

Government guidance and policy

The application is a NSIP under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) as a consequence of sections 14(1)(a) and 15(2) of the PA2008 as it includes the construction, operation and maintenance of a solar farm with a generating capacity of over 50MW. The designated National Policy Statements (NPS) 'Overarching NPS for Energy' (NPS EN-1) and 'Renewable Energy Infrastructure' (NPS EN-3) apply to this Examination and to decision-making relating to this application. The National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5) is also relevant.

The ExA will consider the Proposed Development in accordance with the above NPSs and any other applicable policy or considerations the ExA deem to be important and relevant. The PA2008 makes it clear that, in making a decision, the relevant Secretary of State (SoS) "*must decide the application in accordance with any relevant NPS*" (s104(3)), subject to certain provisos. Essentially, the provisos are that the application must not breach legal or treaty obligations, and that any adverse impact of the Proposed Development would not outweigh its benefits.

The SoS is entitled to disregard any representations that relate to the merits of the designated National Policy Statements (NPS). In practice, this means that the ExA will not spend time examining representations that challenge policy set out in NPSs, or the validity of NPSs themselves. The focus will be on the merits or disadvantages of the Proposed Development, tested to the appropriate extent using the tests set out in relevant designated NPSs that are in force.

Other important and relevant planning policies that the ExA may consider include policies in the relevant local authorities' development plans. However, if these conflict with policy in a NPS, then the NPS will take precedence.

In summary, the PM will establish the procedures and timetable for the Examination of the Proposed Development. It will set a framework for the ExA to enable the SoS to consider and decide the application. In doing so, the ExA will have regard to:

- the positions and representations of all Interested Parties (IPs);
- any Local Impact Reports (LIR) prepared and provided by relevant local authorities;
- other prescribed matters; and
- any other matters that appear to be both relevant and important to the relevant SoS's decision.

Preliminary Meeting invitees

The applicant is invited to the PM and is generally given the opportunity to reply to any representations made.

Everyone who has made a valid Relevant Representation has been registered as an Interested Party (IP) and has been invited to the PM. All IPs are entitled to involvement in the Examination.

Each person or organisation with an interest in land or rights that are affected by a Compulsory Acquisition (CA) request in this application is an Affected Person (AP) and has been invited to the PM. In addition to a general entitlement to involvement in the Examination, APs have a right to be heard in relation to any objection about the effects of CA on their interests in land, and a right to be notified of any Compulsory Acquisition Hearing (CAH). All APs are IPs, whether or not they have made a valid Relevant Representation.

Certain bodies are Statutory Parties and they have been invited to the PM. Statutory Parties can elect to become IPs without having made a valid Relevant Representation by notifying the ExA in writing.

The ExA has the power to involve people who are not IPs in the Examination as though they are IPs, including by inviting them to the PM. However, this is only done in exceptional circumstances, for example if it was clear that the application would materially affect a person, they are not automatically an IP or eligible to elect to become an IP and they had been unable to take the necessary action to register as an IP.

The ExA has decided to invite the following Other Persons to the PM:

- National Highways.

Conduct of the Preliminary Meeting

The PM will start promptly at 10:00am on Tuesday 13 May 2025 (**Annex A**), and the ExA estimates that it will take between one and three hours to complete.

During the PM participants may have to make allowances and be patient if there are delays associated with the technology used. In recognition of the fatigue associated with on-screen communication, the ExA will provide breaks during the PM as appropriate.

A digital recording of the PM will be made available on the [project webpage](#) as soon as practicable following the close of the PM. The recording allows any member of the public who is interested in the application and the Examination to find out what has been discussed at the PM. The making and publication of these recordings are a means by which the ExA meets the legal requirement to hold the PM (and any other hearings) in public. In this regard, **anyone speaking at the PM will need to introduce themselves each time they speak**, to ensure that someone listening to the recording after the event is clear who was speaking. A written note of the PM will be produced and published as soon as practicable following the close of the PM.

As the recordings are retained and published, they form a public record that can contain personal information to which the **UK General Data Protection Regulation**

(UK GDPR) applies. Participants must do their best to avoid providing any information which should otherwise be kept private and confidential. If there is a need to refer to such information, it should be in written form. Although this will also be published, personal and private content can be redacted or removed before it is made publicly available. Any person who is unclear on this point should ask the Case Team for guidance before they place personal and private information into the public domain.

The Planning Inspectorate's practice is to publish the recordings and retain them for a period of five years from the SoS's decision on the DCO. If you actively participate in the PM, it is important that you understand that you will be recorded and that the recording will be made available in the public domain. Please see our [Privacy Notice](#) for more information about how we handle your data.

Following the ExA's introductions, each participant who has been registered to speak will be asked to introduce themselves, including any organisations or groups that they represent. The ExA will then conduct the meeting in accordance with the agenda. If you prefer not to have your image recorded, you can switch off your camera at any point.

The Examination Process

The Examination of NSIPs is primarily a written process and Hearings take on an inquisitorial approach. This means that the ExA will probe, test and assess the evidence primarily using written questions. While some Hearings are held to provide supplementary evidence, questions to the applicant or to witnesses will come from the ExA. Questioning or cross-examination of witnesses by other parties will not generally be allowed.

In terms of opportunities to provide evidence in writing, the draft Examination Timetable makes provision for the following written processes:

- Host and Neighbouring, lower and upper tier Local authorities can submit LIRs if they wish. Whilst these are voluntary, the PA2008 provides that if they are provided, they must be considered by the SoS in reaching a decision. Consequently, LIRs are a very important method for local authorities to communicate issues of concern to the ExA, the SoS and their residents.
- IPs can make Written Representations (WRs) and comment on WRs made by other parties.
- IPs can respond to the ExA's written questions (WQ) and comment on responses to these written questions provided by others.
- IPs may be asked to contribute to the making of Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) if it appears that there are matters on which they and the applicant agrees, and if it would be useful for this to be clarified. SoCGs most usefully extend to catalogue matters that are not agreed or are outstanding.

The draft Examination Timetable includes a series of numbered Deadlines for receipt of written submissions. Timely submissions received by the relevant Deadline and

that address its purpose will be accepted. **Documents received after the relevant Deadline are only accepted at the discretion of the ExA and may not be accepted to ensure fairness to all parties.** Circumstances where documents are submitted late without good reason, causing inconvenience or delay to other parties can amount to unreasonable behaviour.

These written processes will be the principal means used by the ExA to gather information, evidence and views about the application. However, the Examination will only be effective if all parties resolve to give timely, full, frank, clear and evidenced written submissions, provide answers to every question that is relevant to their interests, and to engage fully with any other related processes such as the Hearings and Accompanied Site Inspections the ExA decides to hold.

There is no merit in withholding or delaying information, or in failing to co-operate, and should it occur, any unreasonable behaviour that caused another party to incur wasted expenditure could lead to an award of costs against the offending party.

The ExA has discretion to make amendments to the Examination Timetable for the wider benefit of the Examination. If possible, events will be arranged for times when all relevant parties are available, but the ExA is under a duty to complete the Examination by the end of the six-month period beginning with the day after the close of the PM. This requirement is set by legislation, and while the ExA will try to rearrange event dates to accommodate all relevant parties, in practice there will be limited scope to alter dates set out in the draft Examination Timetable.

The statutory time limit for the Examination means that where there are matters that still need to be discussed and agreed between the applicant and IPs, it will be very helpful to the ExA if these could be progressed as early as possible.

Hearings

The draft Examination Timetable includes provision for Hearings, at which the ExA takes oral evidence from the various parties.

Any registered IP may request an **Open Floor Hearing** (OFH) to make oral representations about the application if they believe this to be preferable to relying on their written representation, though both carry equal weight. Oral submissions should be based on representations previously made in writing, but they should not simply repeat matters previously covered in the written submission. Rather, they should focus on specific detail and explanation to help inform the ExA. There should be no new or unexpected material in oral representations. A written summary note with any supporting evidence or references will be requested of each speaker following the hearing.

As with all Examination events, OFHs are subject to the powers of control of the ExA, as set out in the PA2008 and supporting legislation. Participants must register in advance by the Deadline shown in the Examination Timetable and in accordance with the instructions. It is common practice for the ExA to set a time limit for each speaker and speakers with common points are asked to come together to nominate

a spokesperson or representative speakers to cover specific topics, so as to avoid repetition. Speakers representing public authorities, community and membership organisations or multiple IPs are normally provided with an additional time allowance, recognising their representative role.

The applicant's draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) provides for the Compulsory Acquisition of land and rights, and the Temporary Possession (TP) of land. Affected Persons (i.e. those whose land or rights over land are affected) have a right to request and be heard at a **Compulsory Acquisition Hearing** (CAH). If one or more APs request to be heard, then a CAH must be held. Provisional dates for CAHs are included in the draft Examination Timetable along with Deadlines by which requests to be heard must be submitted.

The ExA has the discretion to hold **Issue Specific Hearings** (ISHs) if it would aid in the Examination and there is a specific reason this would be more helpful than reliance on written evidence only. The lack of an ISH on one or more topics does not suggest that that topic is less important than others which are subject to a hearing. Rather, it is an indication that the ExA is satisfied that the issues can be fully considered through written submissions and responses to its written questions and that each party has had a fair opportunity to put its case.

The draft Examination Timetable includes a number of dates reserved for ISHs and IPs may make suggestions for topics to be discussed at an ISH in their written or oral representations to the PM.

It may be necessary for the ExA to hold more than one ISH on the dDCO. This is normal practice, and they are held on a without prejudice basis. Parties can suggest modifications and amendments to the dDCO provided by the applicant with the application, without prejudicing their overall position on the application.

Holding such Hearings does not imply that the ExA has reached any judgements on the merits of the application. Whatever the ultimate recommendation is, the ExA must make sure that the dDCO is fit for purpose if the SoS decides to grant consent, as any consent will be subject to Requirements (ie conditions) set out in the DCO.

At Hearings it will not normally be necessary for parties to make long and detailed submissions that require (for example) PowerPoint presentations. Any supporting detail/information can be provided in writing following the event by the relevant Deadline.

The draft Examination Timetable includes deadlines for participants to notify the ExA that they wish to speak at an OFH or a CAH.

Site inspections

As part of the Examination process the ExA may undertake site inspections that can be either unaccompanied or accompanied. The purpose of these is for the ExA to see features of the proposals within the context of the evidence put forward. Notes of Unaccompanied Site Inspections (USIs) are published on the [project webpage](#).

Accompanied Site Inspections (ASI) will only be necessary to view land to which there is no public right of access, or with no clear view from nearby locations with open public access. The purpose of ASIs is familiarisation only and no discussion of the merits of the Proposed Development will be entertained during an ASI.

The ExA may decide to hold USIs to relevant nominated locations, supported by the submission of additional written, photographic, video or even drone material if this would be preferable to not visiting sites or holding ASIs in circumstances which could make them difficult and unduly time-consuming to conduct (for example if public health restrictions are in place). The ExA may also consider if it would be appropriate to make arrangements for access only to be provided to specific sites such that they could be inspected as part of a USI on an access required basis (ARSI)

The draft Examination Timetable includes a Deadline for IPs to make submissions suggesting sites and locations that the ExA should visit. These will be used to inform further USIs/ ARSIs as well as possible ASIs. **Any nominations for any locations for an ASI must include the reason for the nomination and whether those sites can be seen from public land or whether they need to be seen from private land.**

The ExA undertook Unaccompanied Site Inspections (USI) over 4 days between 24 and 27 February 2025. These are respectively referred to as USI1, USI2, USI3 and USI4 hereafter. A brief record of the USIs to inform the applicant, Interested Parties and other parties of the actions taken by the ExA has been published on the [project webpage](#) with the [Examination Library](#) references [\[EV2-001](#) to [EV2-004\]](#).

ANNEX C: Initial Assessment of Principal Issues

This is the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues prepared as required under section 88(1) of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). It has been prepared by the Examining Authority (ExA) following its reading of:

- the application documents;
- the Relevant Representations received in respect of the application; and
- its consideration of any other important and relevant matters.

This initial assessment has guided the Examining Authority (ExA) in forming a provisional view as to how the application is to be examined. It is not a comprehensive or exclusive list of the issues that will be subject to Examination and inevitably some issues will overlap or interrelate. The ExA will have regard to all important and relevant matters during the Examination and when it writes its Recommendation Report to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero after the Examination has concluded.

The order of the issues listed does not imply any order of prioritisation or importance and is largely listed in alphabetical order.

The policy and consenting requirements and documents associated with the PA2008 are an integral part of the Examination and are therefore not listed as main issues. It should also be noted that whilst the effects of the proposal in relation to human rights and equalities duties are not listed as main issues, the ExA will conduct all aspects of the Examination with these in mind.

Principal Issue	Brief Amplification. To include, but not necessarily limited to:
Assessment of Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development scenarios and the Rochdale Envelope, including the rationale of the preferred route and the discounting other potential routes. • Selection of sites for the above ground installations and blocking valve stations. • The need for this type of infrastructure.
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effects of the Proposed Development on heritage assets (Designated and Non-designated) and their visual and functional settings. • Effects upon the World Heritage Site and its elements of Outstanding Universal Value. • Effects upon known and unknown archaeology.
Flood Risk, Hydrology and Water Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of the accuracy and quality of the presented Flood Risk Assessments.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage Strategy. • Contamination risks during construction, operation and decommissioning and whether there is sufficient information presented to ensure that the risk to the water environment as a result of the Proposed Development is effectively mitigated.
Geology and Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on agricultural land, best and most versatile agricultural land and other land. • Impacts on agricultural businesses and enterprises. • Risks from discovery of contaminated soils/ ground water, including from adjoining sites and former uses, and securing appropriate mitigation.
Landscape and Visual Amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities and constraints in elements of design. • Zone of Theoretical Influence - The impact of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual amenity. • Impacts on the Green Belt, together with the case for very special circumstances. • Impacts on recreational routes and views within the local landscape.

ANNEX D: Draft Examination Timetable

The Examining Authority (ExA) is under a duty by the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) Section (s) 98, to complete the Examination of this application by the end of the six months period, beginning with the day after the close of the preliminary meeting. In the following draft timetable, the ExA has set out the deadlines for the receipt of representations and other information, and dates reserved for Hearings, during the six months Examination period.

Please note:

1. The Examination of the application primarily takes the form of the consideration of written submissions and oral representations made at Hearings.
2. The time for submission of requested documents is **23:59 on the relevant deadline date**, unless instructed otherwise by the ExA.
3. All information received will be published on the project webpage on the National Infrastructure Planning website ([project webpage](#)) as soon as practicable after the deadlines for submissions. See **Annex F** for more information.

Hearing agendas

Please note that for Issue Specific Hearings and Compulsory Acquisition Hearings the ExA will publish a draft agenda on the project webpage on the National Infrastructure Planning website at least five working days in advance of the Hearing date. However, the actual agenda on the day of each Hearing may be subject to change at the discretion of the ExA. Open Floor Hearings may not be supplemented with an agenda until the day of the Hearing.

Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES)

Where an applicant has provided a No Significant Effects Report or a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Report with the application, the ExA may decide to issue a RIES during the Examination. The RIES is a factual account of the information and evidence provided to the ExA on HRA matters during the Examination up to the date of the publication of the RIES, for the purposes of enabling the Secretary of State, as competent authority, to undertake its HRA. It is not the ExA's opinion on HRA matters. Comments on the RIES will be invited by the ExA and any received will be taken into account as part of the ExA's Recommendation to the Secretary of State. The ExA may also raise questions in the RIES to confirm or clarify matters that remain outstanding.

The Secretary of State may rely on the consultation on the RIES to meet its obligations under Regulation 63(3) of The Habitats Regulations 2017 and Regulation 28 of The Offshore Marine Regulations.

Item	Matters	Date
1.	Procedural Deadline A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notification of any wish to speak at the preliminary meeting including the agenda item Notification by Interested Parties of any wish to speak at Issue Specific Hearing 1 Notification by Interested Parties of any wish to speak at Open Floor Hearing 1 or Open Floor Hearing 2 Written submissions on the Examination Procedure, including any submissions about the use of virtual methods or, if required, reasonable adjustments. 	Wednesday 16 April 2025
2.	Procedural Deadline B <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information requested of the applicant at the start of the Rule 6 letter regarding the worst-case scenario used in the Environmental Statement 	Friday 2 May 2025
3.	Preliminary Meeting	Tuesday 13 May 2025 10:00am
4.	Open Floor Hearing 1	Tuesday 13 May 2025 15.00pm
5.	Open Floor Hearing 2	Wednesday 14 May 2025 10:00am
5.	Issue Specific Hearing 1 into the Development Consent Order and Strategic Matters	Thursday 15 May 2025 10.00am
6.	Issue by the Examining Authority of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Examination Timetable 	As soon as practicable following the Preliminary Meeting
7.	Deadline 1 (D1) For receipt by the Examining Authority (ExA) of:	Wednesday 4 June 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written summaries of oral submissions given at the Hearings during the week commencing 12 May 2025. • Any post-hearing submissions requested by the ExA • Responses to Relevant Representations (RR) • Written Representations (WR), including summaries of all WRs exceeding 1500 words • Applicant's Compulsory Acquisition (CA) Schedule and Land Rights Tracker (see Annex F) • Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) as requested by the ExA (see Annex F) • Applicant's Statement of Commonality • Local Impact Reports from relevant Local Authorities (see Annex F) • Notification by any Statutory Parties who have not submitted a RR of their wish to be considered as an Interested Party (IP) • Comments on the applicant's response to the s51 advice issued at Acceptance • Comments on the applicant's change request application. • Notification of any requests for a further Open Floor Hearing (OFH). • Any other information requested by the Examining Authority under Rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules • Requests by Interested Parties to participate in a further Open Floor Hearing <p>Updates from the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide to the Application • Draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) (in clean and tracked versions) • Explanatory Memorandum (in clean and tracked versions) • Schedule of changes to dDCO • Updated Book of Reference (BoR) and Schedule of Changes to the BoR (in clean and tracked versions) (if required). 	
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8.	Issue by the Examining Authority of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examining Authority's First Written Questions (ExQ1) 	Tuesday 10 June 2025
9.	Deadline 2 (D2) For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses to Examining Authority's First Written Questions (ExQ1) Comments on responses to RRs Comments on WRs Comments on the Local Impact Reports Comments on any other information and submissions received at D1 Comments from Affected Persons on applicant's CA Schedule Nominations for any locations for an Accompanied Site Inspection (ASI), including the information requested in Annex B, under 'Site Inspections' Any other information requested by the Examining Authority under Rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules 	Tuesday 1 July 2025
10.	Deadline 3 (D3) For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments on any submissions received at D2 Responses to comments on LIRs Comments on responses to the Examining Authority's First Written Questions (ExQ1) A statement of progress on SoCG that remain outstanding and submission of SoCG completed since D2 (if required) Updated SoCG (clean and tracked change versions) An updated Statement of Commonality of SoCG (if required) Updated CA Schedule and Land Rights Tracker Comments on the suggested locations to be included in any ASI. The applicant's draft itinerary for an ASI. 	Tuesday 22 July 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any further information requested by the Examining Authority under Rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules <p>Updates from the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guide to the Application Draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) (in clean and tracked versions) Explanatory Memorandum (in clean and tracked versions) Schedule of changes to dDCO Updated Book of Reference (BoR) and Schedule of Changes to the BoR (in clean and tracked versions) (if required). 	
11.	Publication by the Examining Authority of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second Written Questions (ExQ2) (if required) 	Wednesday 30 July 2025
12.	Deadline 4 (D4) For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses to Examining Authority's Second Written Questions (ExQ2) Notification by Affected Persons of wish to speak at a Compulsory Acquisition Hearing Comments on the applicant's draft ASI itinerary Comments on any other information and submissions received at D3 Any further information requested by the Examining Authority under Rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules 	Friday 22 August 2025
13.	Deadline 5 (D5) For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments on Responses to Examining Authority's ExQ2 (if required); Comments on any other information and submissions received at D4 Any further information requested by the Examining Authority under Rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules 	Friday 12 September 2025

14.	Publication by the Examining Authority of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES) (if required) • The Examining Authority's proposed schedule of changes to the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) (if required) 	Thursday 18 September 2025
15.	Hearings (week reserved for Hearings and ASI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue Specific Hearing(s) (if required) • Compulsory Acquisition Hearing(s) (if required) • ASI (if required) 	w/c Monday 6 October 2025
16.	Deadline 6 (D6) For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written summaries of oral submissions made at any Hearings held during the week commencing 6 October 2025. • Any post-hearing submissions requested by the ExA • Responses to the RIES (if required) • Comments on the Examining Authority's proposed schedule of changes to the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) • Comments on any other information and submissions received at D5 • Any further information requested by the Examining Authority under Rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules 	Monday 20 October 2025
17.	Deadline 7 (D7) For receipt by the Examining Authority of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on the responses to the RIES (if required). • Comments on responses to the Examining Authority's proposed schedule of changes to the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) • Comments on any other information and submissions received at D6 • Closing Statements from IPs and APs • Closing Statements from Statutory Undertakers, including matters relating to protective provisions 	Monday 10 November 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any further information requested by the Examining Authority under Rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules <p>Final Updates from the applicant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Signed Statements of Common Ground Final Statement of Commonality of SoCG Final Guide to the Application Final draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) in the Statutory Instrument (SI) template with the SI template validation report in both clean and tracked change versions (both in Word and .pdf format). <p>The applicant is to provide the email notification from https://publishing.legislation.gov.uk/validation confirming the document has successfully passed validation, and the PDF version of the SI validation report obtained from the link in the notification email. The applicant should also provide a clean (all tracking removed) standalone MS Word version of the draft DCO, with no header or cover page</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Explanatory Memorandum Final Schedule of changes to dDCO Final Compulsory Acquisition (CA) Schedule and Land Rights Tracker Final updated Book of Reference 	
18.	<p>Deadline 8 (D8)</p> <p>For receipt by the Examining Authority of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any further information requested by the Examining Authority under Rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules (if required) 	Thursday 13 November 2025
19.	<p>Close of Examination by the Examining Authority</p> <p>The ExA is under a duty to complete the examination of the application by the end of the period of six months beginning with the day after the close of the Preliminary Meeting.</p>	Thursday 13 November 2025

ANNEX E: Notification of Initial Hearings

The Examining Authority (ExA) provides notice of the following initial hearings:

Date	Hearing	Start time	Venue and Joining details
Tuesday 13 May 2025	Open Floor Hearing 1	Registration and seating available at venue from: 14:00pm Virtual Registration Process from: 14:30pm Hearing starts: 15:00pm	The Kings Centre, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES and By virtual means using Microsoft Teams Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre- registered
Wednesday 14 May 2025	Open Floor Hearing 2	Registration and seating available at venue from: 09:00am Virtual Registration Process from: 09:30am Hearing starts: 10:00am	The Kings Centre, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES and By virtual means using Microsoft Teams Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre- registered
Thursday 15 May 2025	Issue Specific Hearing 1 into the Development Consent Order and Strategic Matters	Registration and seating available at venue from: 09:00am Virtual Registration Process from: 09:30am	The Kings Centre, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES and By virtual means using Microsoft Teams

Date	Hearing	Start time	Venue and Joining details
		Hearing starts: 10:00am	Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered
<p>NOTE: If any of the above hearings are no longer required then notification that a particular date is no longer required will be published as soon as practicable on the project webpage, providing reasonable notice to Interested Parties of the decision to cancel them.</p>			

You must register by completing the [Event Participation Form](#) by Wednesday 16 April 2025 if you intend to participate in any of the hearings and provide all the information requested (see below).

If you simply wish to observe any of the hearings, then you do not need to register as you will be able to either:

1. watch a livestream of the event - a link to the livestream will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin; and/or
2. watch the recording of the event which will be published on the [project webpage](#) shortly after the event has finished.

Alternatively, you can attend the physical hearing at the venue to observe the proceedings; however, to ensure there is adequate seating capacity at the venue we request that you register your attendance to **observe only** by **16 April 2025** using the [Event Participation Form](#). Please note that it may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **16 April 2025**.

Any request to participate in a hearing **must include** the following information:

- Name and unique reference number (found at the top of any letter or email from the Planning Inspectorate);
- email address (if available) and contact telephone number;
- name and unique reference number of any person/organisation that you are representing (if applicable);
- for blended events, confirmation of whether you will participate virtually or in-person;

- confirmation of the hearing(s) you wish to participate in, the agenda item(s) on which you wish to speak and/or brief details of the topic(s) that you would like to raise;
- for Compulsory Acquisition Hearings, the plot number(s) of the relevant land provided in the [Book of Reference](#) and the [Land Plans](#); and
- the [Examination Library](#) reference number (with paragraph/page number where appropriate) of any documents you wish to refer to.

Requests to participate should be made using the [Event Participation Form](#) on or before **Procedural Deadline A**.

Please contact the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter if you require any support or assistance to attend any of the hearings, either virtually or in person.

Hearing agendas

The Issue Specific Hearing scheduled for 15 May 2025 will be to establish the scope of the draft Development Consent Order and to clarify strategic matters to ensure an agreed position on the Examination to follow. An agenda covering the principal topics will be published at least 5 working days prior to the event, if not earlier.

The ExA will publish a detailed agenda for the Open Floor Hearings, giving notification of the IPs listed to speak on each day, on the [project webpage](#) as soon as practicable following the close of **Procedural Deadline A, 16 April 2025**.

The actual agendas of all Hearings may be subject to change on the day of the Hearing at the discretion of the ExA.

Procedure at hearings

The examination of the application will principally be a written process supplemented where necessary by various types of hearings. See The Planning Inspectorate's [Advice for members of the public: The stages of the NSIP process and how you can have your say](#) for more information.

The Planning Inspectorate's Advice for members of the public provides important information about hearing procedures:

- [What to expect at a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project event](#)
- [Registering to speak at, or attend, a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project event](#)

The procedure to be followed at hearings is set out in rule 14 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010. The ExA is responsible for the oral questioning of a person giving evidence and the process affords very limited scope to allow cross-questioning between parties, only to be permitted at the ExA's discretion.

Hearing livestream and recording

A link to a livestream for each hearing will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before any hearing is due to open. The livestream is available to anybody who wishes to observe a hearing in real time.

All hearings are recorded, and the recordings will be made available on the [project webpage](#) as soon as practicable after the close of the hearing. The recordings allow any member of the public who is interested in the application and the Examination to find out what has been discussed.

ANNEX F: Other Procedural Decisions made by the Examining Authority

The Examining Authority (ExA) has made Procedural Decisions relevant to this application of a Development Consent Order and the Examination thereof. The other Procedural Decisions made by the ExA are explained in greater detail here.

1. Change Request

A Procedural Decision has been taken by the Examining Authority (ExA) following the applicant's request of a formal change request submitted on 20 March 2025 [CR1-001 to CR1-007], which relates to the following elements of the Proposed Development:

- Change 1: Removal of plot 6-17 from the Order limits.
- Change 2: Reducing the area of solar panels by 0.47ha, to be replaced with archaeological management and protection measures.
- Change 3: Removal of references Crown Rights from the draft Development Consent Order.

The applicant has provided updates to all necessary application documents along with a review of the Environmental Statement (ES) [[AS-001](#) to [AS-027](#)]. The applicant has provided its own assessment on the materiality of the proposed change, concluding that the proposed changes would not result in any changes to the overall assessment or conclusions presented in the ES, nor within the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA).

The ExA has concluded that the proposed changes would not constitute a project that would be materially different to the project for which development consent was originally sought. It follows, the ExA considers that the proposed changes are non-material in nature and as such, no formal acceptance, notice, consultation, or related processes are required before the ExA can examine the application as amended. This decision is made on the basis that:

- No additional land outside of the Order Limits would be required, with only a reduction in the Order Limits in one case. All of the proposed changes relate to land already proposed for Compulsory Acquisition or Temporary Possession. The Infrastructure Planning (Compulsory Acquisition) Regulations 2010 (the CA Regulations) would not be engaged.
- No new or different likely significant environmental effects compared to those effects reported in the submitted Environmental Statement would occur.

The ExA has decided to accept for Examination the applicant's proposed changes. This decision by the ExA does not imply acceptance of the planning merits or evidence for the change, the effects of which will be examined with the same rigour as the original application.

The ExA recognises that in considering whether or not to accept both the proposed changes for Examination, it is required to act reasonably and in accordance with the principles of natural justice. Applying the advice in [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Changes to an application after it has been accepted for examination](#), the ExA is content that there will be sufficient

opportunity during the Examination process for all relevant Interested Parties to view the changes, for representations to be made in relation to the changes, and for any representations to be taken into account by the ExA.

2. Compulsory Acquisition Documents

A Procedural Decision has been taken by the ExA to request that the applicant completes and maintains a Compulsory Acquisition (CA) Schedule and Land Rights Tracker; an example is shown in the figure below. In the example, the structure of the Land Rights Tracker would provide a comprehensive account of the status of non-agreed matters with Affected Persons.

The ExA recognises that the figure below is draft only and is not a statutory requirement. However, it is hoped that the applicant and Affected Persons will recognise that the purpose of the Land Rights Tracker is to simplify the whole Examination, recommendation and decision-making process. The ExA requests that all parties therefore positively engage with the process.

Should the applicant consider that the required information for the Land Rights Tracker can be captured in a different and more efficient way or by using different software, it may wish to discuss this with the Case Manager and update the ExA at the Preliminary Meeting. The ExA requests that the Land Rights Tracker is submitted at **Deadline 1** with requests for further updates at each deadline. A final version must be submitted by **Deadline 7**.

The applicant can avoid submitting updates as stated above if there are no changes to the previous version.

[NAME OF PROJECT]: Schedule and Status of Objections to Land Rights including Temporary Possession, Compulsory Acquisition, Statutory Undertakers and Special Land Cases

Notes

1. All interests which are not already acquired at the point of submission should be entered in this tracker and marked as complete when agreement with known interests is reached.

2. Any non-agreement is also counted as an objection by an Affected Person(s) (AP) for the purpose of this tracker.

3. An entry should also be made where the interest (or potential interest) holder is not known, to allow the relevant information to be added following diligent inquiry, negotiation etc.

Special Category Status
Confirm if this interest lies in any special category land

Statutory Undertakers and Operational Land Status
Is the Affected Person a Statutory Undertaker and is the status of the land as operational known as operational, not operational or disputed?

Give current status
Are Protective Provisions required and if yes, are they the applicant's draft, a working draft under discussion or an agreed draft?

[illegible]

[a] Plot no. from the Book of Reference (BoR).

[b] Plan reference number from the BoR and Examination Library (EL) Reference.

[c] Description of land and rights requested from the BoR including restrictive covenants.

[d] A person is within Category 1 if the Applicant, after making diligent inquiry, knows that the person is an owner, lessee, tenant (whatever the tenancy period) or occupier of the land, see section 57 (1) of the 2008 Act.

[e] A person is within Category 2 if the Applicant, after making diligent inquiry knows that the person: interested in the land or has the power to sell or convey the land or to release the land, see Section 57(20) of the 2008 Act.

[f] Person or organisation representing the interests of the AP(s). Enter N/A if the AP(s) are representing themselves.

[g] Reference number assigned to each Interested Party (IP) and Affected Person (AP).

[h] Reference number assigned to each Relevant Representation in the EL.

[i] Reference number assigned to each Written Representation (WR) in the EL.

[j] Reference number assigned to any other document in the EL.

[k] Reference numbers assigned to all of the Applicant's responses in the EL including specific reference to relevant sections within documents

[I] Likely duration of any temporary rights such as Temporary Possession [TP].

[m] Narrative on negotiations to date

3. Local Impact Reports (LIR)

LIRs play an important role in the examination of applications, and we encourage work to be actively progressed on these. Please refer to the Planning Inspectorate's [Advice for Local Authorities](#). LIRs are requested from the Local Authorities, in line with Section (s) 60 and s56A of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) to be submitted by **4 June 2025**, which is Deadline 1 in the draft Examination timetable set out at **Annex D**.

4. Statements of Common Ground (SoCG)

The aim of a SoCG is to agree factual information and to inform the ExA and all other parties by identifying where there is agreement and where the differences lie at an early stage in the Examination process. It should provide a focus and save time by identifying matters which are not in dispute or need not be the subject of further evidence. It can also usefully state where and why there may be disagreement about the interpretation and relevance of the information. Unless otherwise stated or agreed, the SoCG should be agreed between the applicant and the other relevant Interested Party or parties set out in the table below and submitted by the applicant.

In relation to some of the Principal Issues identified in **Annex C** to this letter, the ExA would be assisted by the preparation of SoCGs between the applicant and certain Interested Parties. SoCGs should be submitted by **4 June 2025**, which is Deadline 1 in the draft Examination timetable set out at **Annex D**.

Where a particular SoCG cannot be agreed between the parties by Deadline 1, or if any local authority position needs to be signed off at a higher level, draft versions are requested to be submitted by the applicant at Deadline 1. The position of the relevant Interested Parties should then be confirmed in the course of the Examination. The draft Examination Timetable makes provision for updated SoCGs to be submitted at various Deadlines with final versions by Deadline 7.

SoCGs should cover the following topics, and others as relevant:

- Methodology for environmental assessments;
- Data collection methods;
- Baseline data;
- Data/statistical analysis, approach to modelling and presentation of results;
- Expert judgements, assumptions and worst case scenario;
- Assessment of alternatives;
- Design development;
- Identification and sensitivity of relevant features and receptors;
- Construction and operational effects;
- Embedded and additional mitigation;
- Cumulative effects and mitigation; and

- Relevant wording in the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO).

The suggested content of the SoCG listed above is indicative and does not preclude the inclusion of other matters considered to be important and relevant. All SoCGs should cover the Articles and Requirements in the dDCO. Any Interested Party seeking that an Article or Requirement is reworded should provide the form of words which are being sought, in the SoCG.

The ExA requests SoCGs with the following named parties and any others, though this does not preclude other SoCGs being pursued with other Interested Parties. The SoCGs should cover the following additional topics, and other topics as agreed between the applicant and the parties.

Parties	Additional topics to include but not be limited to:
Environment Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood Risk • Water Framework Directive • Water Quality (including bathing waters) • Waste Management • Management Plans and Mitigation
Natural England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters relating to protected species, protected habitats, European sites and features relevant to HRA, • Effects on Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) • Monitoring, mitigation and enhancement • Water Quality • Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)
Historic England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Heritage Site • Designated heritage assets (DHA) • Non-designated heritage assets • Archaeology • Written Schemes of Investigation
Statutory Undertakers (Network Rail Infrastructure Limited, Cadent Gas Limited, Calor Gas Limited, Anglian Water Services Ltd, National Grid Gas Plc, (and others if relevant))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effects on existing services, apparatus and infrastructure • Protective Provisions contained within the draft DCO • The provisions set out in s127 of the Planning Act 2008, and if the provisions in s138 are invoked
National Grid Electricity Transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The location of the new National Grid substation. • The infrastructure required within the Proposed Development. • Protective Provisions. • Construction timetables.
National Highways Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protective Provisions • Use of, and interference with, the strategic road network

All local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across all topics covered in the ES
Civil Aviation Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety of commercial, passenger and training aircraft • Glint and glare • Thermals
Defence Infrastructure Organisation / Ministry of Defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAF Brize Norton • Military and commercial air flights • National security

5. Accompanied Site Inspection – suggested locations

The draft Examination Timetable at **Annex D** to this letter includes dates reserved for an Accompanied Site Inspection (ASI), during the week commencing 6 October 2025.

The ExA requests that Interested Parties submit suggested locations for the ExA to visit as part of an ASI by **Deadline 2** (Tuesday 1 July 2025). The request must include:

- Sufficient information to identify the location;
- the issues to be observed at the location;
- information on whether the site can be accessed via public land; and
- the reason why the location has been suggested.

Interested Parties should be aware that ASIs are not an opportunity to make any oral representations to the ExA about the Proposed Development.

However, participants may be invited by the ExA to indicate specific features or sites of interest.

The applicant is requested to prepare a draft itinerary for the ASI to be submitted by **Deadline 3**. This should include:

- Relevant locations referred to in the Relevant Representations received;
- any other locations at which the applicant has predicted likely significant environmental effects; and
- the locations suggested by Interested Parties submitted by **Deadline 2**.

Comments by Interested Parties on the applicant's draft itinerary must be submitted by **Deadline 4**.

The ExA will consider each suggested site location, including those provided in the applicant's draft itinerary, to determine if it could be viewed from public land on an unaccompanied basis or if it is necessary to view it on an accompanied basis. The ExA will also consider if it would be appropriate to make arrangements for access only to be provided to specific sites such that they could be inspected as part of an Unaccompanied Site Inspection on an access required basis.

The ExA will publish its final itinerary at least five working days before the date of the ASI.

6. Status of the applicant's examination documents

The ExA requests that the applicant provides, at each deadline, an updated 'Status of the applicant's examination documents' document which provides a list of the most up-to-date status of the documents submitted, including which copies have been superseded in whole or in part. A final version must be submitted before the close of the examination. All examination documents submitted should include a version number and date.

7. Additional Submissions

Aside from the applicant's change request referred to in section 1 of Annex F above, the ExA has exercised its discretion to accept the following Additional Submissions into the Examination since acceptance of the application:

- [\[AS-001 to AS-026\]](#), from the applicant, regarding the applicant's response to the advice provided under section 51 following acceptance.
- [\[AS-027\]](#), from the Mining Remediation Authority (formerly the Coal Authority), providing confirmation that the site is not located within the defined coalfield and that on this basis, they have no specific comments to make.
- [\[AS-028 to AS-030\]](#), from the applicant, regarding updates to the Book of Reference and associated documentation.

ANNEX G: Examination documents

The application documents and relevant representations can be inspected on the [project webpage](#).

How to stay up to date

All further documents submitted in the course of the examination will also be published under the [documents tab](#) of the project webpage.

You can also sign up to get [email updates](#).

If you have any questions about the process, examination events or how to access the documents, you can email BotleyWestSolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk or contact us on 0303 444 5000.

The Examination Library

For ease of navigation, please refer to the [Examination Library](#) (EL) which is accessible by clicking the blue button under the [documents tab](#). The EL is updated regularly throughout the examination.

The EL records and provides a hyperlink to:

- each application document
- each representation made to the examination
- each procedural decision made by the Examining Authority

Each document is given a unique reference which will be fixed for the duration of the examination. **Please quote the unique reference number from the EL when referring to any examination documents in any future submissions that you make.**

ANNEX H: Information about the 'Have Your Say' page

The ['Have your say' page](#) is available on the [project webpage](#).

You will need to enter your unique reference number ('Your ref' found at the top your letter or email from The Planning Inspectorate). If you are making a submission on behalf of another person or organisation, and do not have your own unique reference number, then you should enter the unique reference number of the person or organisation you are representing. If you are not a registered Interested Party then it is at the discretion of the Examining Authority whether or not your submission is accepted.

Submissions will be published on the [project webpage](#) as soon as practicable following the close of the relevant deadline. For further information about publishing submissions please view our [Privacy Notice](#).

You will be able to submit a document (upload file), make a text representation or both. It is possible to upload multiple files for each individual submission item. Electronic attachments should be clearly labelled with the subject title and not exceed 50MB.

Submissions **must not include hyperlinks** to documents/ evidence hosted on a third party website (for example technical reports, media articles and so on). See The Planning Inspectorate's [Advice for members of the public: Advice for submitting representations or comments](#) for important information about making written submissions. All submissions must be made in a format that can be viewed in full on the Find a National Infrastructure Project website. Any submissions that exceed 1500 words should also be accompanied by a summary; this summary should not exceed 10% of the original text.

You should select the relevant deadline for your submission and then, on the next webpage, select the appropriate submission item as described in the examination timetable at **annex D** to this letter. Please ensure you make a separate submission for each submission item and **do not duplicate your submission**. If you consider that your submission does not fit the description of any of the submission items then please select the submission item 'Other' and ensure that it is titled appropriately.

If you experience any issues when using the ['Have your say' page](#) please contact the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter and they will assist.