



National Infrastructure Planning
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To the Applicant and Local Planning
Authorities

Your Ref:

Our Ref: EN010147

Date: 17 June 2025

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**Planning Act 2008 (as amended) (PA2008) – and The Infrastructure Planning
(Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (as amended) – Rule 17**

**Application by Photovolt Development Partners on behalf of Solar Five Limited (the
Applicant) for an order granting development consent for the Botley West Solar
Farm Project**

Request for further information

We are writing under Rule 17 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure)
Rules 2010 (as amended). Specifically, we request the following:

Issue 1: Further review of ES Chapter 8

To the applicant:

1. Throughout the ES, the aspect chapter methodologies determine that effects are deemed significant when concluded as moderate and above. However, ES Chapter 8 applies a different approach where only major adverse effects are significant. Can the applicant explain the reason for applying an alternative approach to this Chapter assessment and why it is appropriate?
2. The Inspectorate notes that construction impacts are termed 'temporary' in ES Chapter 8 which, in line with the Chapter methodology in section 8.5, influences the magnitude of impact and subsequently the conclusions of significant effects. As the alteration of the 'view' would not be reverted back to baseline conditions at the end of the construction period, it is unclear why these impacts have been termed temporary and how they have reduced the magnitude of impacts in the assessment. Can the applicant either explain this discrepancy or else update the assessment and its conclusions to reflect that construction effects would not be temporary?

3. Can the applicant explain how potential likely significant effects from planting mitigation has been assessed in ES Chapter 8? E.g. planting altering baseline views.
4. Can the applicant explain how they have applied the mitigation hierarchy in their assessment of Landscape and Visual effects in ES Chapter 8 as required by paragraph 3.3.63 of the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1).
5. ES Chapter 8, paragraphs 8.9.56 and 8.9.60 and 8.9.66 and 8.9.120 and 8.9.123 state that there would be no appreciation of the construction site as a whole or that depending on the nature of views available and proximity to the solar farm there would be no more than moderate adverse. However, it is unclear, in line with the methodology, how these descriptions reduce potential effects. Can the applicant explain why these justifications reduce the impact magnitude and therefore the significance of effect in line with the methodology in section 8.5?
6. There are a number of uncertainties around how conclusions have been reached in ES Chapter 8, section 8.9 where it is not clear how the methodology has been applied.

This includes:

- not explaining the receptor sensitivity combination with the magnitude of impact (examples include paragraphs 8.9.20, 8.6.47, 8.9.52, 8.9.56 and 8.9.64)
- not clearly explaining the judgement in line with section 8.5 for why a conclusion (e.g. moderate or major effect) has been reached where there is potential for multiple conclusions in line with Table 8.12 (examples include paragraphs 8.9.32, 8.9.45 and 8.9.123)
- where major effects are identified, why they are not considered significant (examples include paragraphs 8.9.121 and 8.9.127)
- Can the applicant either explain these discrepancies or else update the assessment and its conclusions to correct them.

Issue 2: Clarification on position

To the Local Authorities – It is stated in relevant representations, written representations and Local Impact Reports that the applicant's Landscape and Visual assessment in ES Chapter 8 has 'downplayed' the potential effects of the proposed development. Can the local authorities specifically identify which conclusions of the assessment they disagree with and explain why, with reference to relevant guidance and/or evidence?

All of the above material should be submitted by Deadline 2 (1 July 2025).

Should you have any questions about the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact the case team.

Yours faithfully

David Wallis

David Wallis

Lead member of the panel of Examining Inspectors

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