



National Infrastructure
Planning
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol, BS1 6PN

Customer 0303 444 5000
Services:
e-mail: TweenBridge@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

To Henri Scanlon

(By email only)

Your Ref:

Our Ref: EN010148

Date: 15 August 2025

Dear Mr Scanlon

Planning Act 2008 – section 51

Application by RWE Renewables UK Solar and Storage Limited for an order granting development consent for the Tween Bridge Solar Farm project.

Following the Applicant's withdrawal of the application for examination on 15 August 2025, the Planning Inspectorate would make the following observations about the application submitted on 21 July 2025. The applicant may wish to consider these observations should it be minded to re-submit a new application for examination. Some of the following observations are provided on a topic basis, while others concern specific documents.

This letter comprises advice to the Applicant provided under section 51 of the PA2008.

Main observations regarding the application as submitted on 21 July 2025

1. Absence of survey coverage of areas added to the solar development (Parcels A – E) and NGET substation area (Parcel F), and subsequent omission of Parcel F from relevant figures and appendices

Environmental Statement (ES) Figure 6.4.1.2 shows Land Parcel Plan 'Parcel F' as the largest parcel, comprising an area of 606.62 hectares (approximately 25% of the proposed Order Limits). The proposed 400kv underground cable (proposed Work No. 2) would be located somewhere within Parcel F and connect with a proposed substation that is being promoted by National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET). The precise location for the proposed NGET substation is currently unknown. The proposed development includes works for making a connection between the proposed development and NGET's proposed substation (Work No. 6). The transmission of electricity generated by the proposed development would be dependent on the availability of NGET's proposed substation.

A number of documents which present the baseline data, and subsequently on which the environmental impact assessment (EIA) for the proposed development are based, are noted to completely or partially omit parcel F (and may omit some other parcels added to areas A to E). It therefore appears the EIA for the proposed development reported upon in the submitted ES does not fully reflect the project's zone of influence and effects on its potential receptors.

Within ES Appendix 7-6, access to Parcel F appears to have been possible prior to the application's submission, with otter and water vole surveys having been undertaken. As such it is unclear why other surveys within Parcel F have not been completed prior to the application's submission. The exact area covered by the omitted or outstanding surveys has not been specified.

The documents which are noted to omit parcel F (and may omit some other parcels added to areas A to E) include:

- Doc 2.6 Trees and Hedgerows to be Removed or Managed Plan
- Doc 6.2.7 ES chapter 7 notes outstanding water vole and otter surveys, a requirement to update Great crested newt (GCN) surveys, and breeding bird surveys in area previously not covered. These are referred to as being available "autumn 2025"
- Doc 6.3.6.6 ES Appendix 6.6 Arboricultural Impact Assessment - It is presumed that within Parcel F there would be potential for trees and hedgerows needing to be removed in associated with the undertaking of proposed Work Nos. 2 and 6.
- Doc 6.3.7.1 ES Appendix 7.1 Baseline Habitats and Desk Study Report - Figure 1 includes margin hedgerows but none are shown within Parcel F
- Doc 6.3.7.2 ES Appendix 7.2 Breeding Bird Surveys
- Doc 6.3.7.3 ES Appendix 7.3 Non Breeding Bird Surveys
- Doc 6.3.7.4 ES Appendix 7.4 Nightjar Surveys - comprises copies of surveys undertaken on behalf of Natural England. The most recent is July 2022 and does not include the majority of the order limits. Additionally see below for detailed comments on nightjar surveys and assessment
- Doc 6.3.7.5 ES Appendix 7.5 Badger Surveys
- Doc 6.3.7.7 ES Appendix 7.6 GCN surveys
- Doc 6.3.7.10 ES Appendix 7.10 Non breeding bird mitigation
- Doc 6.3.7.11 ES Appendix 7.11 Invertebrates (area not given)
- Doc 6.3.7.12 ES Appendix 7.12 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
- Doc 6.3.8.2 ES Appendix 8.2 Geophysical Survey (the date of the provision of further survey results for these areas does not appear to be given)
- Doc 6.3.8.3 ES Appendix 8.3 Geoarchaeological Assessment - (it is noted that the applicant has submitted separate LIDAR data which does include Parcel F but this is not addressed in Appendix 6.3.8.3). It is noted that this is to be updated September 2025
- Doc 6.3.8.4 ES Appendix 8.4 Trial Trenching Report (the date of the provision of further survey results for these areas does not appear to be given)
- Doc 6.3.8.5 ES Appendix 8.5 Test Pitting Report (the date of the provision of further survey results for these areas does not appear to be given)
- Doc 6.3.9.1 ES Appendix 9.1 Phase 1 Desk Study (utilises a previous version of the boundary)
- Doc 6.3.12.1 ES Appendix 12.1 Transport Statement – this only shows personal injury collision data for part of the site. It is not clear whether any assessment has

been undertaken in relation to Parcel F despite the indicative location of two proposed access points adjoining this parcel.

- Doc 6.3.12.2 ES Appendix 12.2 Traffic Counts
- Doc 6.3.13.1 ES Appendix 13.1 Baseline Noise survey
- Doc 6.3.15.1 ES Appendix 15.1 Agricultural Land Classification (the date of the provision of further survey results for these areas does not appear to be given)
- Doc 6.3.15.2 ES Appendix 15.2 Farm Reports - Whilst the land would likely be restored after construction there would be potential disruption to agricultural activities during the construction phase which should be considered.
- Doc 6.4.6.5 ES Figure 6.5 Residential Receptors – this does not include any details for Parcel F, despite some dwellings appearing to be situated in Parcel F.
- Doc 6.4.13.1 ES Figure 13.1 Noise Receptors - this figure does not appear to show any noise sensitive receptors in Parcel F, despite the presence of various residential properties (along Hagg Lane for example). Note that 400kv HDD crossing (if required) would likely be noisiest form of construction work.
- Doc 6.4.13.3 ES Figure 13.2 Noise Monitoring locations – there are no monitoring locations in or around Parcel F despite the potential for noise during construction (HDD or general construction works associated with the 400kv cable).
- Doc 6.4.13.3 ES Figure 13.3 Daytime Noise Contours
- Doc 6.4.13.4 ES Figure 13.4 Nighttime Noise Contours
- Doc 6.4.15.1 ES Figure 15.1 Agricultural Land Classification
- Doc 6.4.15.2 ES Figure 15.2 Land Ownership - (also appears to contain a different boundary to the current Order Limits)

Additionally, where figures or parameters are given showing the layout of the proposed development during construction and operation, no information is given on the works within Parcel F including:

- Doc 6.4.1.3 ES Figure 1.3 parcel plan
- Doc 6.4.2.1 ES Figure 2.1 construction layout
- Doc 6.4.2.2 ES Figure 2.2 operational layout
- Doc 6.4.2.3 ES Figure 2.3 height parameters
- Doc 6.4.2.4 ES Figure 2.4 Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) crossing – this does not appear to include any HDD crossings in Parcel F, despite Figure 6.4.2.5 (Culvert Crossings) showing no culvert crossings in Parcel F.
- Doc 6.4.2.5 ES Figure 2.5 culverts crossing
- Doc 6.4.6.1 ES Figure 6.1 site context
- Doc 6.4.6.3 ES Figure 6.3 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)
- Doc 6.4.6.6 ES Figure 6.6 ZTV

An example of how the 400kv cable route (Parcel F) has not been considered sufficiently includes the lack of viewpoints in this area, as shown on ES Figure 6.4.6.3. That is despite ES Figure 6.4.3.1 showing the Peatlands Way Long Distance Walk and public right of way (PRoW) bisecting this part of the Order Limits. It is not clear whether temporary closure of this PRoW has been considered.

ES paragraph 6.2.7.1.8 also indicates that the following surveys are yet to be undertaken and submitted:

- bat activity surveys across the Order Limits
- updated water vole surveys across the Order Limits, targeting the location of proposed ditch crossing points

- updated Great Crested Newt (GCN) Surveys, to provide updated data compared to the 2023 surveys; and
- breeding bird surveys of land not previously covered during surveys.

The ES indicates that this is to ensure that the application is kept in line with best practice, with survey data kept up-to-date. The ES also suggests that this relates to small areas of land added to order limits and survey findings are not likely to change. However, submitted ES Figure 6.4.3.2 shows that the additional areas added to the Order Limits are substantial, with Parcel F comprising the largest parcel within the proposed Order Limits.

It is also noted that no bat surveys for any part of the Order Limits have been undertaken in time to be submitted with the application, despite those surveys being noted to be required for the assessment.

Whilst the applicant has submitted that the precise cable route is not known, the EIA should be undertaken on a reasonable worst-case scenario basis. The applicant's need for flexibility is noted but this therefore necessitates the provision of survey information for Parcel F and the application of various assumptions for Work Nos 2 and 6 in each respective EIA topic.

The failure to undertake a full environmental impact assessment for Parcel F, which constitutes approximately 25% of the Order Limits, has resulted in the submission of what is considered to be an incomplete ES. The submitted ES is therefore considered to be of an unsatisfactory standard for the purposes of section 55(3)(f) of the Planning Act 2008, which states that 'The Secretary of State may accept the application only if the Secretary of State concludes ... that the application (including accompaniments) is of a standard that the Secretary of State considers satisfactory'.

The applicant is advised to take into account the absence of the requisite detail in the ES chapters given the omissions in the appendices and figures identified above to ensure that all assessments undertaken in the ES fully reflect all potential receptors or the zone of influence for the proposed development. The applicant is advised that this should be addressed and updates be made, as necessary, to the assessments within the ES and any relevant application documents.

Other matters the applicant is advised to address prior to submission

2. Draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) (Doc 3.1)

Some of the cross referencing to sub-paragraphs in paragraphs in the proposed Articles and Schedules with sub-paragraphs incorrectly refers to 'paragraphs' rather than sub-paragraphs. For example in Article 8 cross references to paragraphs have been made in sub-paragraphs (1) and (3) when the references should be to sub-paragraphs (1) and (3).

The entirety of the dDCO should be reviewed and all erroneous cross references to paragraphs should be changed to sub-paragraphs.

3. Funding Statement (Doc 4.2)

The demonstration of the applicant's financial standing relies on accessing an interim financial statement via a hyperlink rather than a copy of the interim financial statement being included as an Appendix.

The Funding Statement should be amended so that the applicant's interim financial statement is physically appended to it.

4. Report to Inform Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA report) [Doc 5.3]

Assessment of effects for the Thorne and Hatfield Moors SPA - Given the proximity to the Thorne and Hatfield Moors SPA to the Order Limits, a number of entries in the consultation report [Doc 5.2] refer to ongoing discussion about the scope and coverage of the surveys for nightjars. The only qualifying feature for this SPA is the European nightjar (breeding).

Paragraphs 6.2.9 to 6.2.13 of the HRA report [Doc 5.3] summarise the position with respect to the survey effort for nightjars. The applicant predominately relies on historic survey data, including that dating from a 2022 survey report [Doc 6.3.7.4]. The 2022 survey does not appear to include the Order Limits, as it surveys the SPA's compartments. The survey data that has been submitted appears to be at least three years old.

It is not clear from the submitted application documents whether application site specific surveys for nightjars have been undertaken at any time. It appears that the applicant is seeking to rely on the 2022 survey not identifying the presence of nightjars within the Order Limits at that time. The Planning Inspectorate notes that Appendix 1 of the breeding bird survey [Doc 6.3.7.2] refers to nightjars being encountered during the surveys, however that does not appear to be represented on the accompanying figures, nor is an explanation provided as to why nightjars are not represented.

The applicant is advised to clarify the spatial and temporal scope and coverage for the breeding nightjar surveys in the HRA and ES, and explain the position of relevant consultees, in particular Natural England, in any application resubmitted for acceptance.

Search area of 10km - Paragraph 4.2.4 of the HRA refers to the search area for European sites being 10km, however no reference is made to a typical wider search area of up to 30km for sites with mobile qualifying features such as bats. The applicant is advised to consider whether an assessment of any further sites with mobile qualifying features is required and confirm that in the HRA report.

Consistency of the description of the qualifying features - Throughout the HRA report, there are a number of inconsistencies between the presentation of the relevant qualifying features. For example differences between Table 5-2 and Table 6-3, or where sites are considered together such as the Humber Estuary SPA and Ramsar site in Table 5-2, it is not clear which qualifying features relate to each site. Some features of the Ramsar site have been omitted (these are however included in the more detailed Table 6-3). The applicant is advised to review the HRA report to ensure a clear description of all sites and qualifying features screened in.

Consistency of the description of the pathways for Likely Significant Effects (LSE) and Adverse Effects on Integrity (AEoI) - Throughout the HRA report, there are a number of inconsistencies between the presentation of the potential LSE/ AEoI pathways, for example between the written text, Table 6-3 and paragraph 7.2.1. The applicant is advised to review the HRA report to ensure a clear description of all LSE/ AEoI impact pathways screened in, and an explanation of where conclusions differ for overlapping sites (for

example lamprey in the Humber Estuary SAC and Ramsar site). The applicant is also advised that the HRA report would benefit from a final summary/ conclusion table.

Inclusion of additional species which are not listed as qualifying features –

1. Paragraph 6.2.30 and Table 6-1 refer to a “wider survey area” of 600m (later represented on the figures in Appendix 1), and to a number of species that do not appear to be relevant as either individual qualifying features or parts of ornithological assemblages of the relevant SPA sites. An explanation for the inclusion of these is not given.

2. Paragraphs 6.2.35 refers to the survey results which found that the number of species meeting the threshold of 1% of the SPA population to define the surveyed area as functionally linked land was three (SPA features lapwing, mallard and pink footed goose). Paragraphs 6.2.36 and 6.2.40 also gives the reason for inclusion of greylag goose and golden plover. However a higher number of species than these are taken forwards to the assessment of LSE to functionally linked land (including some qualifying features which are not listed as being recorded in Tables 6-1 and 6-2 which show presence of species on site). The reasons for this are not clearly explained.

3. It is also not explained why greylag goose is taken forwards to appropriate assessment despite not being a qualifying feature. It is stated that counts exceed the 1% threshold but as greylag goose is not a qualifying feature it is not clear why this species is in the HRA report.

The applicant is advised to provide clarity as to why additional bird species are included in the HRA report.

Presentation of conservation objectives - Section 5.1 refers to the conservation objectives, however does not use site specific objectives. The HRA report instead provides a series of generic objectives for SPAs (Table 5-3) and SACs (Table 5-4), and general favourable conservation status criteria (Table 7-1). The applicant is advised to provide site specific conservation objectives, or confirm that these are not available for the sites screened in to the assessment.

General requirement for mitigation - There are some inconsistencies in the HRA report in relation to whether mitigation is needed for specific species. For example, paragraph 7.2.20 states that no mitigation is required for curlew, marsh harrier, hen harrier and teal, but these are include in the summary Table 7-2 of mitigation measures. The applicant is advised to clarify which species require mitigation.

Mitigation for breeding birds - A specific mitigation strategy is provided for non-breeding birds (Appendices 2 and 3 of the HRA report), however an equivalent is not provided for breeding birds despite the HRA report suggesting that some mitigation is required for marsh harrier which is specifically screened in as a breeding bird. This may be due to breeding birds requiring generic/ site wide mitigation measures only, with non-breeding birds requiring specific measures but this is not stated. The applicant is advised to provide clarity on this matter in the HRA report.

Phasing of the proposed development - Paragraph 2.1.8 refers to a potential mitigation measure of construction taking place in no more than two land parcels in areas A to E at the same time, with possible simultaneous construction of the two parcels and area F in

the first phase. It is not clear whether this is relied upon as a mitigation measure to avoid AEol. The applicant is advised to provide clarity on this matter in the HRA report.

Reference to mitigation as a beneficial effect - Table 7-2 refers to the mitigation measures proposed to avoid AEol as actually resulting in a major beneficial (significant) effect (likely in terms of EIA as these terms are not commonly used in HRA report). The applicant is advised to consider whether it is an EIA requirement to consider beneficial effects rather than being of relevance to the HRA.

5. Flood Risk Assessment [Doc 6.3.10.1]

Document accessibility - When viewed on a pdf display that allows comments to be viewed, parts 2 and 3 of the FRA appear to have several hundred to over 1000 comments, which appears to contribute to a large file size and slower loading. The applicant is advised to remove comments within submitted documentation.

Appendix C is split across Parts 1 and 2 of the FRA and Appendix I is split across Parts 2 and 3, with no title pages in the 2nd part of each. The applicant is advised to avoid splitting appendices between parts where possible to aid ease of reading.

Flood risk from ordinary watercourses - In relation to fluvial flooding, paragraph 2.5 of the FRA notes that Figure 2.3 and Appendix A3 show Internal Drainage Board maintained watercourses within the order limits only. The applicant is advised to clarify how the baseline flood modelling considers the flood risk from the IDB and other ordinary watercourses (for example under the jurisdiction of the Lead Local Flood Authority) within and adjoining the Order Limits.

Flood risk from reservoirs - The FRA identifies a residual “wet day” risk from reservoir flooding, however the name and location of the relevant reservoir(s) are not given. The applicant is advised to provide these.

Climate change allowances - The FRA utilises published flood mapping and modelling for the Torne and Trent rivers. However, climate change factors used in this modelling is not specified. The applicant is advised to clarify how the FRA has considered climate change allowances in the modelling used.

Mitigation measure of raising infrastructure - The proposed development is stated to require the raising of solar panels and infrastructure above the 1 in 1000 year flood event plus a 100mm freeboard with all infrastructure to be a minimum of 0.5m above ground level. For the solar panels and other infrastructure, technical drawings are given in Appendix C which may be of use to understanding the proposed ground raising methods detailed in the FRA. The applicant is however advised to explain the methods of ground raising for all infrastructure in the text as this is not specified.

The applicant is also advised to clarify how the raising of the panels and equipment by a minimum of 0.5m above ground levels has been taken into account in the maximum height parameters assessed within the ES.

6. Environmental Statement (ES) General comments

Construction phasing - Within the ES and accompanying appendices such as the FRA, it

is stated that the operational lifespan of the proposed development may be longer than the 40 years assessed within the ES due to the potential that early phases of the solar generation and on site substation(s) would be constructed and operational as of 2029, prior to later stages which are complete from 2032. The ES gives the temporal scope as commencement of operations in 2029 and cessation of operation in 2072, giving 43 years, plus a further 2 years decommissioning. The applicant is advised to clearly explain how it has defined the worst case scenario in relation to the length of construction and operation and to ensure that this reflects the maximum time periods for the construction and operational phases for the proposed development.

Management plans and consistency of construction, operation and decommissioning activities - It is noted that there are some inconsistencies between the application documents in relation to the description of the proposed development. An example is that the Outline Soil Management Plan **[Doc 7.8]** infers at paragraph 7.3.1 that below-ground cables would be removed during decommissioning, whereas paragraph 3.2.2 of the Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan **[Doc 7.3]** states that it is assumed that underground cabling would be left in situ. The applicant is advised to undertake a check of all documentation to ensure that a consistent description of the proposed development is provided throughout the ES.

Accuracy of figures and accompanying text for changes to the proposed development - The applicant has submitted figures and ES Chapter 3 to detail the changes between scoping and PEIR, and PEIR and the submission of the application for acceptance using a numbered system. However, ES Figure 3.2 **[Doc 6.4.3.2]** and Table 3-1 of ES Chapter 3 **[Doc 6.1.3]**, and subsequently ES Figure 6.3 **[Doc 6.4.3.3]** and Table 3-2 of ES Chapter 3 **[Doc 6.1.3]** do not fully correspond. The applicant is advised to review these figures and the text entries for consistency.

The applicant is also advised to undertake a check of all application documents to ensure the correct and full Order Limits are shown, including where relevant, full labelling of smaller land parcels.

Cumulative effects long and short list - The future construction of the NGET substation does not appear to be included in the cumulative effects assessment **[Doc 6.2.17]**. The applicant should confirm how the ES has assessed cumulative effects with the proposed NGET substation or provide a justification for why that would not currently be possible.

The Consultation Report **[Doc 5.2]** also refers to an unspecified confidential development which appears to be in the vicinity of the proposed development. The applicant should confirm how the ES has assessed cumulative effects with the unspecified development, or provide a justification for why that would not currently be possible.

7. Compulsory Acquisition

The Consultation Report states that all persons identified under s42(1)(d) were consulted on 20 March 2025. However, the list of persons consulted has not been provided.

8. ES Figures

ES Figure 6.4.8.1: Designated Heritage Assets does not use full Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping and is insufficient to identify the precise locations for the features.

ES Figure 6.4.8.2: Non Designated Heritage Assets does not use full OS mapping and is insufficient to identify the precise locations for the features.

ES Figure 6.4.8.3: Important Hedgerows is insufficiently detailed to identify the locations for affected hedges.

9. Land Plans (Doc 2.2)

The cut lines are not obvious and very short, with a lot of overlap between the sheets. Also, the cut line between sheets 10 and 11 do not match.

Plot 7/15 is identified for permanent acquisition on the Land Plans and rights acquisition in the BoR.

Plot 2/27 has no reference to Moor Edge Road on the Land Plans but referenced in the BoR.

Plot 3/14 does not appear to be part of Medge Hall on the Land Plans but is in the BoR.

Plot 3/34 is away from previous consecutive plots.

The Land Plan sheet legends do not include any mention of where to find the appendix insets. The Appendix sheet legends do not include identification of the corresponding Land Plan sheet.

Inset 2 on Sheet 2 does not contain the acquisition category colours as identified on the main Land Plan sheet. This makes it difficult to determine what rights are sought for plot references 2/2, 2/3 and 2/5. This is contrary to Compulsory Acquisition of Land Guidance Annex C.

There is a small area of land between plot reference 2/1, 2/2 and 2/4 that appears to require a plot reference.

Comparison between Land Plan Sheet 2 Appendix 2 and Appendix sheet 1 of 6 :

Appendix Sheet 2 Plot reference 1/57 straddles the boundary line between what appears to be 1/57 and an identified plot which lies between 1/54 and 1/57

Land Plan Sheet 2 Plot reference 1/57 appears to be below 1/54 and the unidentified plot.

Is hard to identify some elements on Land Plan Sheet 11 of 14 as the text is obscured.

The above mentioned deficiencies should be rectified and the Land Plans and Book of Reference should generally be reviewed for accuracy and consistency and be amended as necessary.

10. Work Plans (Doc 2.3)

There is no key plan for the Land Plans and the identification of some of the works is unclear in instances where one work is overlaid on another one, because of the colours and/or notations used.

11. Street Works, Access and Public Rights of Way Plan (Doc 2.4)

PROW5-A and 5-B are on Sheet 12 of the plans but the dDCO states they are on Sheet 4.

PROW6-C is not shown on the plans and dDCO states it should be on Sheet 12.

STW16.1 is shown on the plans but has not been included in the dDCO.

The previously mentioned inconsistencies should be addressed and the general consistency between the plans and the dDCO should be reviewed and any corrections be made as necessary.

12. Book of Reference (Doc 4.3)

Square meters and meters have been used interchangeably to describe plot areas. All plot areas should be stated in square meters and the Book of Reference should be reviewed and corrected as necessary.

There are multiple organisations present in part 3, but not part 1.

13. Section 46: Duty to notify The Planning Inspectorate of proposed application

The applicant gave notice under s46 on 21 March 2025, which was after the beginning of s42 consultation 20 March 2025.

The applicant should pay close attention to the advice set out in this letter and act on it accordingly.

We trust you find this advice helpful, however if you have any queries on these matters please do not hesitate to contact our office using the contact details at the head of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Gail Boyle
Operations Lead

This communication does not constitute legal advice.

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