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Your ref. EN010148
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12/01/2026

Dear Sarah Norris,

Application by RWE Renewables Solar and Storage Ltd for Tween Bridge Solar Farm (Application Reference: EN010148)

Thank you for your email dated 5th January 2026 proposing a preliminary meeting (PM) date of 10th March 2026 for the examination of the Tween Bridge Solar Farm (the project). The project is a significant one, which proposes to generate up to 800MW of renewable electricity, with a co-located 400MW Battery Energy Storage System, on approximately 2,527 hectares of land, located approximately 10 kilometres to the northeast of Doncaster and 14 kilometres to the west of Scunthorpe. RWE Renewables Solar and Storage Ltd is the Applicant.

The Applicant is writing to formally request a pause in the pre-examination process ahead of the examination for the project. The Applicant requests a deferral of the PM from 10th March until 14th of September 2026, effectively providing a 6 month pause to the start of the examination.

Planning for the project has so far proceeded on the basis that it would connect to the national grid transmission network from 2029. This connection date has informed the financial assumptions that underpin the viability of the project and all preparation for its delivery. However, in December 2025, the National Energy System Operator (NESO) confirmed that as part of the Clean Power 2030 reforms¹, which aim to rationalise and prioritise the allocation of transmission network connections, the project had received a 'Gate 2 Phase 2' grid connection offer, meaning the initial connection date has been delayed. The project has been scheduled to connect to the national grid transmission network between the years of 2031-2035. Further details,

¹ [NESO Connections Reform Results](#): Unlocking investment, connecting Britain.

including the formal grid connection offer comprising the exact connection date and point of connection will not be issued to the Applicant until quarter 3 of 2026.

A connection date in early 2031 may be capable of being accommodated within the current planning assumptions for the project. If a connection date as late as 2035 was to be offered, this could have very significant implications for the viability of the project. The Applicant wishes to achieve the earliest connection offer within the 'Gate 2 Phase 2' range, as close as possible to the start of the period in 2031. Once a commitment to a connection date within that range has been provided by NESO, the Applicant will need to review the effect of the new date for its viability evaluation, within which its decision to proceed to Examination with the project was taken.

The Applicant is therefore requesting a pause to enable the implications of the NESO connection process to be planned for and the viability of the project to be reconfirmed. The Applicant considers that a pause is necessary and reasonable in these exceptional circumstances, which are beyond the control of both the Applicant and PINS. The pause would remove the risk of abortive work and engagement for PINS, key stakeholders, interested parties (IPs) and affected persons (APs), should the final grid connection offer and subsequent viability review result in a requirement to withdraw the application later in the process. Conversely, the pause would provide the greatest achievable certainty that the project can be continued and ensure its contribution to net zero and resilience of the UK's electricity supply can be realised.

The Applicant proposes to maintain regular contact with PINS and key stakeholders during the pause period, to ensure that it maintains the ongoing, open and collaborative relationships that have been established to date.

The Applicant has a high level of confidence that a pause period of the duration proposed will be sufficient to enable firmer timing for a connection offer and a revised viability assessment to be achieved and completed. In circumstances where the viability review was to indicate that the project has become unviable, the Applicant would take steps to withdraw the application as soon as that conclusion was reached.

The Applicant understands that in making a decision to pause, PINS will need to consider the Government's Pre-Application Guidance for NSIP development², setting the Secretary of State's normal expectation that the full pre-examination period should not extend for more than 5 months. This request would add 7 months to that period. It must however be noted that this 5-month expectation is not a statutory period and that the guidance in respect of the duration of pre-examination is not statutory guidance. The guidance is provided for consistency, but a decision-maker

² [Pre-Examination Guidance](#) Paragraph 005, Reference ID 06-005-20240430, Published: 30/04/2024

can take an alternative approach to the setting of a PM date, where there is a justification to do so.

An alternative approach to that suggested in the guidance is particularly capable of being supported in circumstances where to follow the guidance would lead to a manifestly perverse or unreasonable outcome. In this case, the outcome from strict adherence to the guidance would be the loss of any prospect that the application would proceed to Examination or achieve Development Consent. The Applicant advises that if the PM proceeds on the current date of 10th March 2026, before any progress could be made on the NESO 'Gate 2 Phase 2' connection process and before a reassessment of viability can be undertaken, the most likely outcome will be withdrawal and the loss of the prospect of new renewable generating capacity that the application might otherwise provide. In exceptional circumstances such as these, where delay is caused for reasons beyond an Applicant's control, PINS and or Examining Authorities (in their Procedural Decisions) have in previous cases accepted that the pre-examination stage may extend for longer than the period identified in the relevant guidance. The additional period sought by the Applicant in this context is neither unreasonable nor unprecedented. It is appropriate to the circumstances and the Applicant will seek to keep it to the minimum achievable time.

PINS and or the Examining Authority will need to assure themselves that a decision to pause in this case will not encourage other delay in the NSIP examination system more generally. Because of the very particular and exceptional circumstances applicable in this case, the Applicant is clear that a decision to pause here could not be used to justify more general decisions to pause in other cases. This would be a decision taken on its very particular and compelling facts.

PINS and or the Examining Authority would need to be clear that the benefits of a pause would outweigh any possible costs, disbenefits or harms caused by it. In this respect, the key benefit of a pause will be to sustain the potential to deliver 800MW of much needed renewable energy generating capacity, plus 400MW of battery energy storage. NPS EN-1 and NPS EN-3 are clear that there is an established national need for additional renewable generating capacity. A decision to pause in this case will improve the prospect of delivering a material quantity of additional renewable generating capacity to meet that need and the nation's net zero target. A decision conversely to refuse to pause, leading to an unwarranted withdrawal, would remove the potential for additional generating capacity arising from this application, running counter to the need position articulated in the NPS EN suite. This could be deemed to be a perverse and unreasonable outcome. It is certainly one to be avoided.

PINS should also take into account that the Applicant will remain actively engaged to ensure that any disbenefits or costs of delay on the application site and surrounds, and particularly to APs will be monitored and minimized to the extent feasible. The

application includes compulsory acquisition (CA) and temporary possession (TP) proposals. However, as is normal practice in the solar sector, these relate to rural, agricultural land, the existing use, social and economic benefits from which can continue unaffected during a pause. The current status of land and rights negotiations suggests that the great majority of the land and rights requirement for the project will be met by agreement, another indicator that a pause will not add to the concerns of APs. These circumstances ensure that this is a case where a pause will not cause any significant social or economic disruption, harm or blight, which in turn might be argued to weigh against a pause request. The circumstances here can be distinguished from previous circumstances (such as the London Resort case) where decisions have been made to progress to a PM and to deny or curtail a pause. In that case, there were a large range of broadly urban social and economic interests including APs experiencing detriment and harm due to the duration of the pause that had been sought. The Applicant in that case had also sought to further extend what had already been a significant pause. Those facts are not relevant here.

Taking all of this information into account, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examining Authority (by means of a Procedural Decision) to determine that the PM will be set from September 2026, or following the achievement of a clear connection position within the NESO 'Gate 2 Phase 2'.

We would like to thank PINS for cooperation on the project from the inception up to this point and look forward to your consideration of this request.

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of Paul Hunt.

Paul Hunt
Senior Project Manager
RWE Renewables Solar and Storage