



Planning Inspectorate

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Our Ref: EN010148

By email only

Date: 15 January 2026

Dear Mr Hunt

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

I write to you following my appointment as the Examining Authority (ExA) to carry out an examination of the above application.

Thank you for your letter dated 12 January 2026. I note your request for a 'pause' in the examination, with deferral of the Preliminary Meeting until 14 September 2026.

I have carefully considered your request, and I acknowledge the circumstances which have led to it. However, I cannot accept any further extension to the pre-examination period. Our suggestion of 10 March already allows for a pre-examination period of more than five months. As you are aware, the Government's guidance for pre-examination¹ states in part:

"There is no fixed statutory period for the pre-examination stage specified in the [Planning Act](#), which allows for some flexibility in approach in response to the scale and nature of a specific project. However, the expectation in this guidance is that the relevant representations period should be a maximum of 8 weeks, within an overall maximum period for pre-examination of 5 months..."

Whilst this guidance is not statutory, it nonetheless refers to a recommended maximum period. The period requested by the applicant far exceeds this maximum period and would lead to an unacceptable delay to the determination of the application. The suggested date of 10 March 2026 already represents a minor extension beyond this stated maximum.

Furthermore, your letter indicates that there is no guarantee that such an extension would lead to a resolution to the grid connection issues, with the prospect of later withdrawal alluded to.

¹ **Pre-Examination Guidance** Paragraph 005, Reference ID 06-005-20240430, Published: 30/04/2024

Taking these considerations into account, an extension of the duration requested would lead to negative resource implications for the Planning Inspectorate, further potentially abortive work by all parties and uncertainty for interested parties and affected persons.

Furthermore, your letter states in part:

“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.”

The applicant is advised that the proposed delay to the examination and the delay (outlined above) to the grid connection may well have significant implications for the assessment undertaken in the Environmental Statement (ES). For example, surveys and assessments are presumably predicated on an earlier grid connection date and associated construction period.

It is not clear why the applicant could not re-submit the application once the grid connection issues are resolved. Not only would this allow for the assessment in the ES to be amended (if necessary) but it would also enable any revised application to incorporate a grid connection.

The current application lacks a grid connection (as part of the dDCO) and this is one of the principal issues which I have identified for examination. This is particularly important, taking into account the Relevant Representation (RR) received from National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET, published on the Inspectorate’s website: [Relevant Representations | Representation by National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc](#)).

The applicant is reminded that unreasonable behaviour resulting in unnecessary expense or delay may result in an application for an award of costs.

Yours sincerely,

Luke Simpson

Luke Simpson
Examining Authority