



Planning Inspectorate

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: EN010149

Date: 13 May 2025

Dear Sir/ Madam

Planning Act 2008 – Section 89 and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – Rule 8 and 9

Application by Springwell Energy Farm Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Springwell Solar Farm project.

Examination timetable and procedure

This letter (the Rule 8 Letter) provides important information about the examination of this application. The letter includes:

- The examination timetable
- An invitation to submit written representations
- Details of the publication of the Examining Authority's (ExA) written questions
- Other procedural decisions made by the ExA
- Information about hearings and accompanied site inspections
- Information about the availability of examination documents
- Guidance on the use of the 'Have your say' tab on the project webpage

All documentation associated with this examination, including a note of the preliminary meeting and the recording of that meeting, can be viewed under the [documents tab](#) on the project webpage of the Find a National Infrastructure Project website ([project webpage](#)).

The examination timetable

We have made a procedural decision about the way the application will be examined. The final examination timetable is attached at **Annex A** to this letter.

The examination timetable replaces the draft timetable that was included in our [Rule 6 Letter](#). Having considered all of the representations made at the preliminary meeting, we do not consider that any changes need to be made to the timetable.

Please note that the examination timetable contains a number of deadlines for receipt of information by The Planning Inspectorate. All deadlines are at 23:59 on the date specified. Please ensure submissions arrive by the deadline. If you do not make your submissions by the dates specified in the timetable, we may disregard them.

We request that all interested parties make their submissions using the ['Have your say' page](#) on the project webpage on or before the applicable deadline. **Annex E** to this letter provides further information about using the 'Have your say' page.

If we consider it necessary to vary the examination timetable during the examination, notification will be sent to interested parties, statutory parties and other persons invited to the preliminary meeting. The changes will be published on the [project webpage](#).

Written representations

All interested parties are now invited to submit written representations and any comments on the relevant representations already submitted. These should be submitted by **Deadline 1** in the examination timetable.

Written representations can cover any relevant matter and are not restricted to the matters set out in our initial assessment of principle issues or to the content of our written questions (see next heading below).

Any person, other than the applicant, who submits a written representation must identify those parts of the application with which they agree and those parts with which they do not agree, explaining the reasons why. Interested parties should also provide with their written representations any data, methodology and assumptions used to support their submissions to avoid delays in the examination (see paragraph 009 of the [government's guidance on the examination stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects](#) for further information about written representations).

We have requested further types of written submissions at various points in the examination (see **Annex A**).

Any written representations and any further written submissions requested during the examination, that exceed 1500 words, should also be accompanied by a summary which should not exceed 10% of the original text. The summary should set out the key facts of the written submission and must be representative of the submission made.

Representations **must not include hyperlinks** to documents/ evidence hosted on third party websites. See The Planning Inspectorate's [Advice for members of the public: Advice for submitting representations or comments](#) for important information about making written submissions.

Examining Authority's written questions

We issued our draft list of written questions (Draft ExQ1) in our [Rule 6 Letter](#).

We have now finalised our written questions (Final ExQ1) and these are published on the project webpage. They can be accessed at the following link:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/document/EN010149-000399>

Please note that the final version of our written questions **supersedes the draft list of written questions**. The final version removes some questions that were included in the draft list and includes additional and/ or updated questions, following OFH1 and ISH1. Please see the Final ExQ1 document and **Annex B** for details.

Responses to ExQ1 must be provided by **Deadline 1** in the examination timetable.

If you require an editable Microsoft Word version of ExQ1, please contact us using the contact details at the top of this letter.

Other procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority

The ExA has considered the representations made at the preliminary meeting on the Initial Assessment of Principle Issues and has added health and well-being. **Annex B** to this letter contains important details and clarifications about other procedural decisions we made at, or following, the preliminary meeting. These include:

- Changes made to the draft list of written questions in the final list.
- Guidance if any changes to land interests occur.
- Status of the Applicant's examination documents.

Format of examination events

Both blended (part in-person and part virtual) and fully virtual events will form part of the operating model. We remain flexible and will confirm the format of any hearings when we provide formal notification of each hearing in advance of it taking place.

Hearings and site inspections

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 also 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](#)

On this basis the examination timetable at **Annex A** to this letter includes periods of time reserved for any hearings to be held, and we will notify all interested parties of any hearings scheduled as part of the examination in advance of them taking place. That notification will include a deadline for interested parties to inform The Planning Inspectorate if they wish to participate at the notified hearing(s).

We will also undertake site inspections. Where we are able to view the site from public land we are likely to do this unaccompanied and a note of the site inspection will be published on the project webpage. The examination timetable also reserves time for us to undertake an accompanied site inspection (ASI) week commencing 14 July 2025. We will consider each suggested site location, including those provided in the Applicant's draft itinerary at Deadline 1, 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. We 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.

Annex C provides details about what interested parties should include in a request to be heard at a hearing, and the procedure that will be followed at hearings. It also provides important information about the accompanied site inspection and attendance at the inspection.

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 from The Planning Inspectorate 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 E** 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

Jonathan Manning

Lead Member of the Examining Authority

Annexes

- A** Examination timetable
- B** Other procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority
- C** Arrangements for hearings and site visit
- D** Examination documents
- E** Information about the 'Have your say' tab

This communication does not constitute legal advice.
Please view our [Privacy Notice](#) before sending information to The Planning Inspectorate.

Examination Timetable

The Examining Authority (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.

The examination of the application primarily takes the form of the consideration of written submissions. The ExA will also consider any oral representations made at hearings.

Item	Matters	Date
1.	Preliminary Meeting (PM)	Wednesday 7 May 2025 10:00am
2.	Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1)	Wednesday 7 May 2025
3.	Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1)	Thursday 8 May 2025
4.	Issue by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examination Timetable Publication of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ExA's First Written Questions (ExQ1) 	As soon as practicable following the PM
5.	Deadline 1 For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments on Relevant Representations (RRs) Written Representations Summaries of all WR exceeding 1500 words Local Impact Reports (LIRs) Responses to ExQ1 Post-hearing submissions, including written submissions of oral cases Applicant's draft Itinerary for ASI Notification of wish to have future correspondence received electronically Any further information requested by ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	3 June 2025
6.	Deadline 2	17 June 2025

	<p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on Written Representations • Comments on the Local Impact Reports • Comments on responses to ExQ1 • Comments on Applicant's draft Itinerary • Comments on any further information/additional submissions received by Deadline 1 • Any further information requested by ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 <p>Updates from the Applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements of Common Ground • Statement of Commonality • Draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) • Explanatory Memorandum • Schedule of Changes to dDCO • Status of Negotiations / Compulsory Acquisition Schedule 	
7.	<p>ASI and Hearings</p> <p>Dates reserved for ASIs and hearings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further ISHs (if required) • CAH (if required) • Further OFHs (if required) • ASI (if required) 	w/c 14 July 2025
8.	<p>Deadline 3</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-Hearing Submissions, including written summaries of oral submissions and any documents requested by the ExA • Comments on any further information and submissions received at Deadline 2 • Any further information requested by ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 <p>Updates from the Applicant:</p>	12 August 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements of Common Ground • Statement of Commonality • Draft DCO • Explanatory Memorandum • Schedule of Changes to dDCO • Status of Negotiations / Compulsory Acquisition Schedule 	
9.	<p>Publication by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES) and any associated questions (if required) • ExA's commentary on, or schedule of changes to, the dDCO • The ExA's Written Questions (ExQ2) 	2 September 2025
10.	<p>Deadline 4</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to ExQ2 • Comments on any further information and submissions received by Deadline 3 • Comments on ExA's proposed changes to the dDCO • Any further information requested by ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	23 September 2025
11.	<p>Deadline 5</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final DCO Final DCO to be submitted by the Applicant in the SI template. Applicant 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 dDCO, with no header or cover page. • Final updated BoR Final BoR and schedule of changes to BoR • Final Statements of Common Grounds 	7 October 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Explanatory Memorandum • Final Schedule of changes to the dDCO • Final Statements of Commonality • List of matters not agreed where SoCG could not be finalised • Final Navigation Document/Guide to the application • Final Status of Negotiations CA Schedule • Final Status of Negotiations with Statutory Undertakers • Final NPS tracker • Final signed and dated section 106 • Comments on the RIES and responses to any associated questions (if issued) • Comments on responses to ExQ2 • Comments on any further information received Comments on any additional information/submissions received by Deadline 4 • Any further information requested by ExA Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	
12.	The ExA is under a duty to complete the Examination of the application by the end of the period of six months	7 November 2025

Submission times for deadlines

The time for submission of documents at any deadline in the timetable is 23:59 on the relevant deadline date, unless instructed otherwise by the ExA.

Publication dates

All information received will be published on the [project webpage](#) as soon as practicable after the deadlines for submissions.

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/or Regulation 28 of The Offshore Marine Regulations.

Other procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority (ExA)

We have made a number of procedural decisions following the preliminary meeting:

1. Examining Authority's written questions

Our final written questions (Final ExQ1) have been published alongside this Rule 8 Letter. Please note that the final version of our written questions **supersedes the draft list of written questions** issued with the [Rule 6 Letter](#). Whilst most of our written questions are directed at specific parties, no other party should feel inhibited or restricted in responding to any question we ask, even if it is directed elsewhere.

Key changes in the final written questions include:

- The deletion of Questions (reference numbers relate to draft list of written questions): Q1.1.2, Q1.2.4, Q1.3.1, Q1.7.1, Q1.10.1, Q1.10.2, Q1.10.5, Q1.10.13, Q1.12.7, Q1.13.3, Q1.13.6, Q1.13.11, Q1.14.1, Q1.14.3 following the discussions at ISH1.
- The amendment of Questions (reference numbers relate to draft list of written questions): Q1.1.1, Q1.2.1, Q1.3.2, Q1.7.3, Q1.10.5, Q1.10.8, Q1.10.16, Q1.13.1 following the discussions at ISH1.
- The insertion of new Questions (reference numbers relate to final list of written questions): Q1.10.17 to Q1.10.21 and Q1.15.4 following the representations made at OFH1 and the discussions at ISH1.

All relevant statutory parties are requested to check our written questions carefully in order that they may identify and respond to any questions posed to them.

For the avoidance of doubt, statutory parties are defined as the parties listed in schedule 1 to [The Infrastructure Planning \(Interested Parties and Miscellaneous Prescribed Provisions\) Regulations 2015](#). Statutory parties, including relevant local authorities, that have not already registered to become an interested party should consider notifying the ExA of their wish to be considered as an interested party, under Section 89(2A)(b) of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) as soon as possible.

2. 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. They should inform them that information about how to do this can be found in the Planning Inspectorate's advice for members of the public: [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and the people and organisations involved in the process](#).

The examination timetable includes various deadlines for the submission of an updated 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.

3. Status of the Applicant's Examination Documents

We request 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.

Arrangements for hearings

Our examination will be principally undertaken through the exchange of written submissions however the examination timetable reserves periods of time for hearings to be held week commencing 14 July 2025 (if required).

Requests to participate at hearings

Interested parties are required to notify the Examining Authority (ExA) in writing of their wish to take part in an additional open floor hearing (OFH) or compulsory acquisition hearing (CAH) on or before 3 June 2025 (**Deadline 1**).

Any request to participate in a hearing **should 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 CAHs, the plot number(s) of the relevant land provided in the [Book of Reference](#) and the [Land Plans](#)
- The [Examination Library](#) reference number (with paragraph/ page number where appropriate) of any documents you wish to refer to

The ExA will provide reasonable notice of the time, date and place of any hearings to all interested parties.

Requests to participate should be made using an **event participation form** which will be provided with the notification of the hearing.

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

If no written requests to take part in an OFH or CAH are received by the above deadline, I we are not required to hold such a hearing, although we may choose to do so nonetheless.

We may also choose to hold issue specific hearings (ISH) about topics that we think need to be explored orally. The decision to hold an ISH about a particular topic is not connected to how relevant or important we consider an issue or topic to be.

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 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.

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.

Accompanied site inspection (ASI) and requests to attend

Time has been reserved in the examination timetable to undertake an ASI week commencing 14 July 2025.

As requested in **Annex F** of our Rule 6 Letter, suggestions, including justification, for locations to be included in the ASI were submitted by procedural deadline A and have been published on the [project webpage](#).

We now invite the Applicant to provide a draft itinerary by **Deadline 1**. Comments on the Applicant's draft itinerary should be submitted by **Deadline 2**. We will then review the comments received and the draft itinerary and may make changes to it. Our final itinerary for the ASI will be published on the project webpage a suitable time before the ASI.

Please note that for logistical and safety reasons it may be necessary to limit the numbers of persons who accompany us for the whole ASI, however it should be possible for arrangements to be made for interested parties (or their representatives) to join the inspection at specified locations within the itinerary.

Requests by interested parties to attend the ASI should be provided by **Deadline 2** and should include confirmation of whether the request is to attend for the whole inspection or just specific locations. The request must be submitted separately from any other written submission.

Please select the appropriate deadline and submission item under the ['Have your say' page](#). **Annex E** provides further information about the 'Have your say' page.

The interested parties attending the ASI will include representatives of the applicant, Lincolnshire County Council and North Kesteven District Council, together with other

interested parties (or their representatives). Access onto private land is at all times by permission of the person controlling it.

Interested parties should be aware that the ASI is not an opportunity to make any oral representations to us about the proposed development. However, we may invite participants to indicate specific features or sites of interest.

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 ASI.

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 Springwellsolarfarm@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 and submission made to the examination
- each procedural decision made by the Examining Authority

Each document is given a unique reference number 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.**

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 National Infrastructure Planning 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 A** 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.