



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

Customer
Services: 0303 444 5000
email: beaconfen@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

All interested parties, statutory parties, any
other persons

Your Ref:

Our Ref: EN010151

Date: 12 August 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

Planning Act 2008 – section 88 and 89 and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – rules 6, 9 and 13

Application by Beacon Fen Energy Park Limited for an order granting development consent for the Beacon Fen Energy Park Project.

Invitation to the preliminary meeting and notification of hearings and other procedural decisions

Following my appointment by the Secretary of State as the Examining Authority (ExA) to carry out an examination of the above application, I am writing to introduce myself. My name is Andre Pinto. A copy of the appointment notice can be viewed under the [documents tab](#) on the project webpage of the Find a National Infrastructure Project website ([project webpage](#)).

I would like to thank those of you who submitted relevant representations. These representations have assisted me when considering how we will examine this application.

Invitation to the preliminary meeting and how to participate

As a recipient of this letter you are invited to the preliminary meeting to discuss **the procedure** for the examination of the above application.

Date	Start time	Joining details
Tuesday 23 September 2025	Registration process from: 9.30am Preliminary meeting starts:	This preliminary meeting will be held virtually using Microsoft Teams



	10.00am	Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered
<p>IMPORTANT: The preliminary meeting should be completed before 1.00pm on Tuesday, 23 September 2025. However, a reserve period has been scheduled for 2.00pm on the same day to allow for the meeting to be resumed in exceptional circumstances, for example to account for a failure of technology. Normally the reserve period will not be required and confirmation of this will be provided by the ExA at the end of the preliminary meeting and subsequently notified on the project webpage.</p>		

You must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by Tuesday, 16 September 2025 if you intend to participate in the preliminary meeting and provide all the information requested (see below).

If you simply wish to observe the preliminary meeting, then you do not need to register as you will be able to watch a livestream of the event. A link to the livestream will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin. You will also be able to watch the recording of the event which will be published on the [project webpage](#) shortly after the event has finished.

Please note that by attending the event online you are agreeing to be filmed for the purposes of the online livestream of the event and the recording of the event which will get published on the project page of our website. If you do not wish your image to be recorded, you can turn off your camera once you have completed the registration process. However, please note that your voice will still be recorded and transmitted during the meeting. Please contact the case team if you have any queries regarding any of the above. A transcript of the event will also be published on the project page of our website after the event.

Purpose of the preliminary meeting

The purpose of the preliminary meeting is to enable views to be put to me about how the application should be examined. The ExA will therefore limit the scope of the preliminary meeting to consideration of **how the application will be examined**. See **annex B** to this letter and 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 preliminary meeting is **not** an opportunity for you to give your views about what you like or don't like about the application. The merits or disadvantages of the application will only be considered once the examination starts, which is after the preliminary meeting has closed. All relevant and important matters will be taken into



account when I make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, who will take the final decision in this case.

The agenda for the meeting is at **annex A** to this letter. This has been set following my initial assessment of principal issues arising from my reading of the application documents and the relevant representations received. The initial assessment of principal issues is set out in **annex C** to this letter.

Written submissions about how the application should be examined

The Planning Act 2008 establishes a principally written process for the examination of applications for development consent orders and **representations made in writing carry equal weight to oral representations at all stages of the process.**

I am now requesting written submissions from recipients of this letter about how the application should be examined. I particularly wish to hear from you if either:

- you consider changes need to be made to the draft examination timetable set out at **annex D** to this letter, and /or
- you wish to comment about the arrangements for future examination hearings, including the use of virtual methods.

You are invited to make a written submission about how the application is to be examined by **procedural deadline A** (Tuesday 16 September 2025) (see **annex D** to this letter).

I request that all submissions are made using the '[Have your say](#)' page on the project webpage on or before **procedural deadline A**. **Annex I** to this letter provides further information about using the '[Have your say](#)' page.

Requests to participate at the preliminary meeting

Please note that **you are not required to attend, or make written submissions to, the preliminary meeting in order to participate in the examination.** If you are an interested party, you can make a written representation and comment on the written representations made by other interested parties during the examination. You will also be able to participate in any hearings that are arranged.

If you wish to participate at the preliminary meeting, you are required to notify the ExA in writing on or before **Tuesday 16 September 2025** (see **procedural deadline A**).

Any request to participate in the preliminary meeting **must include** the following information:

- name and unique reference number (found at the top of your 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)
- the agenda item on which you wish to speak and a list of the points you wish to make.

Requests to participate should be made using the [event participation form](#) on or before **procedural deadline A**.

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 preliminary meeting.

Format of examination events – preliminary meeting and 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.

Both blended (part in-person and part virtual) and fully virtual events form part of the Planning Inspectorate's operating model. I remain flexible and will confirm the format of any hearings to be held during the examination stage when I provide formal notification of each hearing in advance of it taking place.

I am providing formal notification that the **preliminary meeting (PM) will be a virtual event and that the open floor hearing (OFH) and issue specific hearing (ISH) referred to in annex F to this letter will also be held as virtual events.**

After the preliminary meeting

After the preliminary meeting I will issue a letter (known as the Rule 8 Letter) setting out the finalised examination timetable. A note of the meeting will also be published on the [project webpage](#).

Notification of initial hearings

I have made a procedural decision to hold the following initial hearings:

- Open Floor Hearing (OFH1) on Tuesday 23 September 2025 (virtual event)
- Issue Specific Hearing (ISH1) on Wednesday 24 September 2025 (virtual event)
- Issues Specific Hearing (ISH1) on Thursday 25 September 2025 (virtual event)

Important information about these hearings is contained in **annex F** to this letter, including what details need to be provided with a request to be heard at a hearing and the procedure that will be followed.



Other procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority

I have made some further procedural decisions which are set out in detail at **annex G** to this letter. They are summarised as follows:

- statements of common ground
- request for suggested locations for an accompanied site inspection
- acceptance of additional submissions into the examination.

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 Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) by emailing the project mailbox at: beaconfen@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

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.

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 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 I** 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 ExA) 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](#).

I look forward to working with all parties in the examination of this application.

Yours faithfully,

Andre Pinto

The Examining Authority

Annexes

- A** Agenda for the preliminary meeting
- B** Introduction to the preliminary meeting
- C** Initial assessment of principal issues
- D** Draft examination timetable
- E** The applicant's updates
- F** Notification of initial hearings
- G** Other procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority
- H** Examination documents
- I** Information about the 'Have your say' page



This communication does not constitute legal advice.

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



Agenda for the preliminary meeting

You must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by Tuesday 16 September 2025 if you intend to participate in the preliminary meeting and provide all the information requested (see below).

If you simply wish to observe the preliminary meeting, then you do not need to register as you will be able to watch a livestream of the event. A link to the livestream will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin. You will also be able to watch the recording of the event which will be published on the [project webpage](#) shortly after the event has finished.

Please note that by attending the event online you are agreeing to be filmed for the purposes of the online livestream of the event and the recording of the event which will get published on the project page of our website. If you do not wish your image to be recorded, you can turn off your camera once you have completed the registration process. However, please note that your voice will still be recorded and transmitted during the meeting. Please contact the case team if you have any queries regarding any of the above. A transcript of the event will also be published on the project page of our website after the event.

Date: **Tuesday 23 September 2025**

Meeting start time: **10.00am (please note registration times below)**

Venue: **Virtual event (Microsoft Teams)**

Full instructions on how to join online or by phone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered

Attendees: **Invited parties who have pre-registered**

Agenda for the preliminary meeting	
9.30am	<p>Virtual registration process</p> <p>Please arrive at 09.30am to enter the virtual lobby. From here you will be admitted to the virtual meeting by the case team, greeted and given further instructions.</p> <p>The registration process will commence at 09.30am. This will be hosted by the case team and cover the housekeeping arrangements for the preliminary meeting and allow for any questions to be asked about how to take part.</p>
10.00am Item 1	Preliminary meeting

	The preliminary meeting will formally open at 10.00am . The Examining Authority will join, welcome participants and lead with introductions.
Item 2	The Examining Authority's remarks about the examination process
Item 3	Initial assessment of principal issues – annex C to Rule 6 Letter
Item 4	Draft examination timetable – annex D to Rule 6 Letter
Item 5	Procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority – annex G to Rule 6 Letter
Item 6	The applicant's updates – annex E
Item 7	Hearings and Site Inspections – annex B to Rule 6 Letter
Item 8	Any other matters
Close of the preliminary meeting	

The event will start at **10.00am** irrespective of any late arrivals, for whom access may not be possible.

It may take some time to admit participants from the virtual lobby, your patience whilst you are waiting is appreciated.

The agenda for the preliminary meeting is subject to change at the discretion of the Examining Authority, although in making changes the Examining Authority will be mindful of the need to provide opportunities for fair involvement to all invited parties.

Any request to participate in the preliminary meeting **must include** the following information and be made on the [event participation form](#):

- name and unique reference number (found at the top of your 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)
- the agenda item on which you wish to speak and a list of the points you wish to make.

Introduction to the preliminary meeting

Background

The preliminary meeting (PM) will be a virtual event with participants attending virtually using Microsoft Teams.

The Examining Authority (ExA) is conscious of videoconferencing fatigue and will aim to keep the proceedings focussed and as efficient as possible. This annex provides advance access to information that would usually be included in the ExA's introductory remarks. Please read this carefully. The ExA will only present a summary of the key points set out here in order to ensure that the time available for participants to speak is maximised.

The Examining Authority and the case team

The ExA will introduce themselves at the start of the PM.

The ExA will be supported by the Planning Inspectorate case team. During the registration process a member of the case team will welcome and admit participants from the virtual lobby, and will be available to answer questions by email before and after the PM. The contact email address is: beaconfen@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

The purpose of the preliminary meeting

The PM is being held to discuss the arrangements for the examination of the application for a development consent order (DCO) for the Beacon Fen Energy Park, which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), and which will generally be referred to in the PM and examination as 'the proposed development'. The application has been made by Beacon Fen Energy Park Limited, which will be referred to as 'the applicant'.

You will find information about the application and, in due course, documents produced for the examination on the project webpage of the Find National Infrastructure Project website ([project webpage](#)). The project webpage has links to the examination timetable, relevant representations and examination documents and examination procedure.

You are encouraged to look at the [project webpage](#) if you haven't already done so, because it will be used to communicate with you and to provide access to documents throughout the examination.

The main purpose of the PM is to discuss the arrangements for the examination of the application. It focuses on the process only, and it will not be looking at the substance of the proposals: questions, discussions and representations about the merits or disadvantages of the proposed development are for the examination itself which will begin the day after the close of the PM.

The PM will be your opportunity to influence the process that the ExA intends to follow. The agenda for the PM is attached to this Rule 6 letter at **annex A**. It is

important to have the letter and the agenda in front of you and to refer to them during the course of the PM. You may wish to print these in advance of the PM for reference.

Government guidance and policy

The application is a NSIP under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) as a consequence of sections 14(1) and 15(2): it includes the construction or extension of a generating station in England with a capacity of more than 50 megawatts. The designated National Policy Statements (NPS) for Energy Infrastructure: Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1), National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) and National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) apply to this examination and to decision-making relating to this application.

The ExA will consider the proposed development in accordance with the NPSs, any other applicable policy or considerations the ExA deem to be important and relevant. The PA2008 makes it clear that, in making a decision, the relevant Secretary of State (SoS) “must decide the application in accordance with any relevant NPS” (s104(3)), subject to certain provisos. Essentially, the provisos are that the application must not breach legal or treaty obligations, and that any adverse impact of the proposed development would not outweigh its benefits.

The SoS is entitled to disregard any representations that relate to the merits of the designated NPS. In practice, this means that the ExA will not spend time examining representations that challenge policy set out in NPSs, or the validity of NPSs themselves. The focus will be on the merits or disadvantages of the proposed development, tested to the appropriate extent using the tests set out in relevant designated NPSs that are in force.

Other important and relevant planning policies that the ExA may consider include policies in the relevant local authorities’ development plans. However, if these conflict with policy in a NPS, then the NPS will take precedence.

In summary, the PM will establish the procedures and timetable for the examination of the proposed development. It will set a framework for the ExA to enable the SoS to consider and decide the application. In doing so, the ExA will have regard to:

- the positions and representations of all interested parties (IP)
- any local impact reports (LIR) prepared and provided by relevant local authorities
- other prescribed matters
- any other matters that appear to be both relevant and important to the relevant SoS’s decision.

Preliminary meeting invitees

The applicant is invited to the PM and is generally given the opportunity to reply to any representations made.

Everyone who has made a valid relevant representation has been registered as an IP and has been invited to the PM. All IPs are entitled to involvement in the examination.

Each person or organisation with an interest in land or rights that are affected by a compulsory acquisition request in this application is an affected person (AP) and has been invited to the PM. In addition to a general entitlement to involvement in the examination, APs have a right to be heard in relation to any objection about the effects of compulsory acquisition on their interests in land, and a right to be notified of any compulsory acquisition hearing. All APs are IPs, whether or not they have made a valid relevant representation.

Certain bodies are statutory parties and they have been invited to the PM. Statutory parties can elect to become IPs without having made a valid relevant representation by notifying the ExA in writing.

The ExA has the power to involve people who are not IPs in the examination as though they are IPs, including by inviting them to the PM. However, this is only done in exceptional circumstances, for example if it was clear that the application would materially affect a person, they are not automatically an IP or eligible to elect to become an IP and they had been unable to take the necessary action to register as an IP.

Conduct of the preliminary meeting

The ExA aims to close the PM by 01:00pm at the latest.

During the PM participants may have to make allowances and be patient if there are delays associated with the technology used. In recognition of the fatigue associated with on-screen communication, the ExA will provide breaks during the PM as appropriate.

A digital recording of the PM will be made available on the [project webpage](#) as soon as practicable following the close of the PM. The recording allows any member of the public who is interested in the application and the examination to find out what has been discussed at the PM. The making and publication of these recordings are a means by which the ExA meets the legal requirement to hold the PM (and any other hearings) in public. In this regard, **anyone speaking at the PM will need to introduce themselves each time they speak**, to ensure that someone listening to the recording after the event is clear who was speaking. A written note of the PM will be produced and published as soon as practicable following the close of the PM.

As the recordings are retained and published, they form a public record that can contain personal information to which The UK General Data Protection Regulation applies. Participants must do their best to avoid providing any information which

should otherwise be kept private and confidential. If there is a need to refer to such information, it should be in written form. Although this will also be published, personal and private content can be redacted or removed before it is made publicly available. Any person who is unclear on this point should ask the case team for guidance before they place personal and private information into the public domain.

The Planning Inspectorate's practice is to publish the recordings and retain them for a period of 5 years from the SoS's decision on the DCO. If you actively participate in the PM, it is important that you understand that you will be recorded and that the recording will be made available in the public domain. Please see our [Privacy Notice](#) for more information about how we handle your data.

Following the ExA's introductions, each participant who has been registered to speak will be asked to introduce themselves, including any organisations or groups that they represent. The ExA will then conduct the meeting in accordance with the agenda. If you prefer not to have your image recorded, you can switch off your camera at any point.

The examination process

The examination of NSIPs follows different processes to those, for example, of a public inquiry into a planning appeal following the refusal of planning permission. The main differences are that the examination of NSIPs are primarily a written process and hearings take on an inquisitorial approach as opposed to an adversarial one.

This means that the ExA will probe, test and assess the evidence primarily using written questions. While some hearings are held to provide supplementary evidence, questions to the applicant or to witnesses will come from the ExA. Questioning or cross-examination of witnesses by other parties will not generally be allowed.

In terms of opportunities to provide evidence in writing, the draft examination timetable makes provision for the following written processes:

- Local authorities can submit LIRs if they wish. Whilst these are voluntary, the PA2008 provides that if they are provided, they must be considered by the SoS in reaching a decision. Consequently, LIRs are a very important method for local authorities to communicate issues of concern to the ExA, the SoS and their residents
- IPs can make written representations (WR) and comment on WRs made by other parties
- IPs can respond to the ExA's written questions (ExQs) and comment on responses to these written questions provided by others
- IPs may be asked to contribute to the making of statements of common ground (SoCG) if it appears that there are matters on which they and the applicant agrees, and if it would be useful for this to be clarified. SoCGs most usefully extend to catalogue matters that are not agreed or are outstanding.

The draft examination timetable includes a series of numbered deadlines for receipt of written submissions. Timely submissions received by the relevant deadline and

that address its purpose will be accepted. **Documents received after the relevant deadline are only accepted at the discretion of the ExA and may not be accepted to ensure fairness to all parties.** Circumstances where documents are submitted late without good reason, causing inconvenience or delay to other parties can amount to unreasonable behaviour.

These written processes will be the principal means used by the ExA to gather information, evidence and views about the application. However, the examination will only be effective if all parties resolve to give timely, full, frank, clear and evidenced answers to every question that is relevant to their interests and to engage fully with any other related processes such as the completion of WRs and SoCGs.

There is no merit in withholding or delaying information, or in failing to co-operate, and should it occur, any unreasonable behaviour that caused another party to incur wasted expenditure could lead to an award of costs against the offending party.

The ExA has discretion to make amendments to the examination timetable for the wider benefit of the examination. If possible, events will be arranged for times when all relevant parties are available, but the ExA is under a duty to complete the examination by the end of the six-month period beginning with the day after the close of the PM. This requirement is set by legislation, and while the ExA will try to rearrange event dates to accommodate all relevant parties, in practice there will be limited scope to alter dates set out in the draft examination timetable.

The statutory time limit for the examination means that where there are matters that still need to be discussed and agreed between the applicant and IPs, it will be very helpful to the ExA if these could be progressed as early as possible.

Hearings

The draft examination timetable includes provision for hearings, at which the ExA takes oral evidence from the various parties.

Any registered IP may request an **open floor hearing** (OFH) to make oral representations about the application if they believe this to be preferable to relying on their written representation, though both carry equal weight. Oral submissions should be based on representations previously made in writing, but they should not simply repeat matters previously covered in the written submission. Rather, they should focus on specific detail and explanation to help inform the ExA. There should be no new or unexpected material in oral representations. A written summary note with any supporting evidence or references will be requested of each speaker following the hearing.

As with all examination events, OFHs are subject to the powers of control of the ExA, as set out in the PA2008 and supporting legislation. Participants must register in advance by the deadline shown in the examination timetable and in accordance with the instructions. It is common practice for the ExA to set a time limit for each speaker and speakers with common points are asked to come together to nominate a spokesperson or representative speakers to cover specific topics, so as to avoid repetition. Speakers representing public authorities, community and membership

organisations or multiple IPs are normally provided with an additional time allowance, recognising their representative role.

The applicant's draft DCO provides for the compulsory acquisition of land and rights, and the temporary possession of land. APs (meaning those whose land or rights over land are affected) have a right to request and be heard at a **compulsory acquisition hearing** (CAH). If one or more APs request to be heard then a CAH must be held. Provisional dates for CAHs are included in the draft examination timetable along with deadlines by which requests to be heard must be submitted.

The ExA has the discretion to hold **issue specific hearings** (ISH) if it would aid in the examination and there is a specific reason this would be more helpful than reliance on written evidence only. The lack of an ISH on one or more topics does not suggest that that topic is less important than others which are subject to a hearing. Rather, it is an indication that the ExA is satisfied that the issues can be fully considered through written submissions and responses to its written questions and that each party has had a fair opportunity to put its case.

The draft examination timetable includes a number of dates reserved for ISHs and IPs may make suggestions for topics to be discussed at an ISH in their written or oral representations to the PM.

It may be necessary for the ExA to hold more than one ISH on the draft DCO. This is normal practice, and they are held on a without prejudice basis. Parties can suggest modifications and amendments to the draft DCO provided by the applicant with the application, without prejudicing their overall position on the application.

Holding such hearings does not imply that the ExA has reached any judgements on the merits of the application. Whatever the ultimate recommendation is, the ExA must make sure that the draft DCO is fit for purpose if the SoS decides to grant consent, as any consent will be subject to requirements (similar to planning conditions) set out in the draft DCO.

At hearings it will not normally be necessary for parties to make long and detailed submissions that require, for example, PowerPoint presentations. Any supporting detail/ information can be provided in writing following the event by the relevant deadline.

The draft examination timetable includes a deadline (Deadline 1) for participants to notify the ExA that they wish to speak at an OFH or a CAH.

Site inspections

As part of the examination process the ExA may undertake site inspections. These can be either unaccompanied or accompanied.

The purpose of these is for the ExA to see features of the proposals within the context of the evidence put forward. The ExA has carried out an unaccompanied site inspection (USI) on the 24 July 2025. Please check the USI note on our examination

library [\[PD-002\]](#) for further details. Notes of further unaccompanied site inspections (USI) are published on the [project webpage](#).

Accompanied site inspections (ASI) will only be necessary to view land to which there is no public right of access, or with no clear view from nearby locations with open public access. The purpose of ASIs is familiarisation only and no discussion of the merits of the proposed development will be entertained during an ASI.

The ExA may decide to hold USIs to relevant nominated locations, supported by the submission of additional written, photographic, video or even drone material if this would be preferable to not visiting sites or holding ASIs in circumstances which could make them difficult and unduly time-consuming to conduct (for example if public health restrictions are in place). The ExA may 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 a USI on an access required basis (ARSI)

The draft examination timetable includes a deadline at **procedural deadline A** (Tuesday 16 September 2025) for IPs to make submissions suggesting sites and locations that the ExA should visit. These will be used to inform further USIs/ARSIs as well as possible ASIs.

Initial assessment of principal issues

This is the initial assessment of principal issues prepared as required under section 88(1) of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). It has been prepared by the Examining Authority (ExA) following its reading of:

- the application documents
- the relevant representations received in respect of the application
- its consideration of any other important and relevant matters

This initial assessment has guided the ExA in forming a provisional view as to how the application is to be examined. It is not a comprehensive or exclusive list of the issues that will be subject to examination and inevitably some issues will overlap or interrelate. The ExA will have regard to all important and relevant matters during the examination and when it writes its recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero after the examination has concluded.

The order of the issues listed does not imply any order of prioritisation or importance.

The policy and consenting requirements and documents associated with the PA2008 are an integral part of the examination and are therefore not listed as principal issues. It should also be noted that whilst the effects of the proposal in relation to human rights and equalities duties are not listed as principal issues, the ExA will conduct all aspects of the examination with these in mind.

Regarding national policy, the following National Policy Statements (NPS) have effect, and the issues contained therein will be an integral part of the examination:

- The Overarching NPS for Energy (NPS EN-1), including, for example matters relating to the need case, assessment principles and generic impacts as relevant (including for example, greenhouse gas emissions, land use, socio-economics, the historic environment, noise and vibration and landscape and visual).
- NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-3), particularly section 2.10 relating to solar photovoltaic generation, for example matters relating to biodiversity, water, landscape and visual, glint and glare, historic environment, traffic and transport, noise and vibration and agricultural land.
- NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5), for example matters relating to climate change, biodiversity net gain and good design.

Whilst matters relating to compulsory acquisition and the draft Development Consent Order (DCO) are not listed as principal issues, they will form an integral part of the examination.

Consideration will be given to all relevant matters during the construction, operation and decommissioning activities associated with the proposed development, and cumulatively with other plans and projects, as necessary.

The order of the issues listed does not imply any order of prioritisation or importance. The bulleted items under each issue are indicative and do not preclude other sub-items being considered.

Principal issue	To include, but not necessarily limited to:
General matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether all relevant legislation and policy has been complied with and the regard given to guidance and advice • The applicant's approach to EIA and the Environmental Statement submitted in support of the proposed development • Whether the proposed development complies with the relevant National Policy Statements, national strategy and policy, including contribution to the delivery of government targets and objectives • Matters arising in any Local Impact Reports • The applicant's approach to mitigation
Need, site selection and alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for the proposed development • The approach to alternatives, including location, layout cabling corridors, scale and proposed technology • Likely potential energy generation and storage • Capacity of the secured grid connection
Land rights and related matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accuracy of the Book of Reference, Statements of Reasons and Land Plans • Accuracy of the Land Plans and Works Plans and how these relate to the land identified as subject to Compulsory Acquisition (CA) and/or Temporary Possession (TP) • The Statement of Reasons and whether the powers sought are required for the development to which the order relates, whether they are legitimate, necessary, and proportionate and whether it is clear how the applicant intends to use the land • Whether the land rights powers sought including CA, TP, Restrictive Covenants, and any other powers in relation to the creation, suspension, or extinguishment of, or interference with, interests in or

	<p>rights over land are necessary to facilitate or are incidental to the proposed development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the CA and TP powers sought are compatible with Human Rights tests • Whether there is a compelling case in the public interest for the powers sought that justifies interference with the human rights of those affected • Minimisation of the need for acquisition of land and rights, consideration of acquisition by agreement and the exercise of any existing land option agreements • Whether all reasonable alternatives to compulsory acquisition have been explored • The effects of the proposed acquisition on any statutory undertakers' land or rights over such land and the detriment that may be caused to the carrying on of the undertaking in question • The adequacy of the protected provisions set out in the draft DCO and the need for any other protective provisions to safeguard relevant interests • Potential impediments to development • Whether adequate funding would be available to enable the applicant to carry out the CA within the statutory period
Draft Development Consent Order (DCO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adequacy of the Explanatory Memorandum and its consistency with the dDCO • Relationship with other consents, permits and licences and any impediments to them being granted • Whether the proposed requirements effectively secure the mitigation identified
Biodiversity and Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness of the habitat surveys and the applicant's approach to biodiversity, HRA and EIA matters • The effects of the proposed development, including in-combination assessment, on The Wash RAMSAR and SPA, and the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC • The effects of the proposed development on other statutory designated sites, namely the Horbling Fen SSSI and the Wilsford & Rauceby Warrens SSSI • The effects of the proposed development on non-statutory designated sites (including waterbodies, grassland, trees and hedgerows), sites of nature

	<p>conservation and on any other relevant ecological features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological conservation interests including, but not limited to, net gain
Historic Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effects of the proposed development on the historic environment, including archaeological remains and any designated or non-designated heritage assets • The effects of the proposed development on the setting of designated heritage assets, such as listed buildings, conservation areas and schedule monuments
Landscape and Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adequacy of assessment methodology and approach, including the identification and assessment of sensitive landscape receptors • The effects of the proposed development during construction, operation and decommissioning stages, including cumulative effects • The effects of the proposed development on view from the public right of way (PRoW) network, residential properties and other sensitive landscape receptors • The effects of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the landscape, including cumulative effects • Consideration of good design and relevant guidance, including a detailed design approach for all of the proposed structures
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment of Agricultural Land Classification and the effects of the proposal on agricultural land and farming • Loss of Best and Most Versatile Land and how this has been minimised • Proposed uses of the land during the operational phase of the proposed development
Socio-economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effects of the proposed development on residential amenity, local communities (including community and recreational uses) and the economy of the area

Traffic and Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adequacy of the transport assessment methodology, particularly in relation to the identification of sensitive receptors and baseline assumptions • The effects of the proposed development on traffic and transport in the area, including the local and strategic road networks, rail and PRoW networks and access to community and recreational facilities • The effects of the proposed development on pedestrians and non-motorised users
Water Environment and Flood Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effects of the proposed development on the water environment, including canals and water courses • The Flood Risk Assessment methodology used, including the identification of risk zones and climate change allowances • The proposed surface water drainage strategy • The effects of the proposed development on water quality, including groundwater • The effects of any proposed watercourse crossings • Compliance with the Water Framework Directive
Cumulative effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adequacy of the assessment methodology and approach, including the identification of in-combination effects (intra-project) and the cumulative effects (inter-project) • The suitability and accuracy of the long-list and short-list of other developments • The effects of the proposed development when considered cumulatively with other solar energy projects • Consideration of any necessary monitoring, management and compensatory measures and their effectiveness

Draft examination timetable

The Examining Authority (ExA) is under a duty to **complete** the examination of the application by the end of the period of 6 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.	Procedural deadline A Deadline for receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written submissions on the examination procedure and draft examination timetable • an updated Detailed Land and Rights Negotiations Tracker from the applicant (please refer to annex E) • requests to speak at the preliminary meeting • request to speak at open floor hearing 1 (OFH1) • request to speak at issue specific hearing 1 (ISH1) • suggested locations for site inspections (accompanied or unaccompanied), including justification and whether the location(s) require access to private land (if any) • notification of wish to have future correspondence delivered electronically, including confirmation of email address 	Tuesday 16 September 2025
2.	Preliminary Meeting	Tuesday 23 September 2025 (AM)
3.	Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1)	Tuesday 23 September 2025 (PM)
4.	Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On General Matters • Need, Site Selection and Alternatives • Water Environment and Flood Risk • Access and Traffic 	Wednesday 24 September 2025

5.	Time reserved for the continuation of ISH1 (if required)	Thursday 25 September 2025
6.	Issue by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the examination timetable (the Rule 8 letter) the ExA's first written questions (ExQ1) 	As soon as practicable after the Preliminary Meeting
7.	Deadline 1 For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-hearing submissions including written summaries of any oral cases as heard in OFH1 and ISH1 local impact reports (LIRs) from local authorities written representations from interested parties and summaries of any that exceed 1500 words comments on relevant representations (RRs) and any additional submissions received the applicant's draft itinerary for an accompanied site inspection (ASI) (if required) the applicant's updates – refer to annex E notification by statutory parties of their wish to be considered as an interested party (IP) by the ExA if not submitted an RR requests by interested parties to be heard at a further open floor hearing requests by affected persons (APs) (defined in section 59(4) of the Planning Act 2008) to be heard at a compulsory acquisition hearing (CAH) comments on any information or submissions accepted by the ExA any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules any other information submitted by the applicant 	Tuesday 07 October 2025
8.	Deadline 2 For receipt by the ExA of:	Tuesday 21 October 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responses to the ExA's ExQ1 • comments on LIR • comments on the applicant's draft itinerary for the ASI (if required) • comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 1, including the applicant's updates referred to in annex E and any other information requested by the ExA for Deadline 1 • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules • any other information submitted by the applicant 	
9. Deadline 3	<p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the applicant's updates – refer to annex E • comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 2, including the applicant's updates referred to in annex E and any other information requested by the ExA for Deadline • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules • any other information submitted by the applicant 	Friday 31 October 2025
10. Hearings:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compulsory acquisition hearing 1 (CAH1) • any issue specific hearings • any open floor hearings (if required) <p>Time reserved for an Accompanied Site Inspection (if held)</p>	Week commencing 10 November 2025
11. Deadline 4	<p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p>	Friday 21 November 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-hearing submissions including written summaries of any oral cases as heard in hearings held w/c 10 November 2025 • the applicant's updates – refer to annex E • comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 3, including the applicant's updates referred to in annex E, and any other information requested by the ExA for Deadline 3 • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules • any other information submitted by the applicant 	
12.	Issue by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ExA's second written questions (ExQ2) • the Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES) and any associated questions (if required) 	Monday 08 December 2025
13.	Deadline 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responses to ExQ2 • the applicant's updates – refer to Annex E • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules • comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 4, and any other information requested by the ExA for Deadline 4 • any other information submitted by the applicant 	Monday 29 December 2025
14.	Deadline 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the applicant's updates – refer to Annex E • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules • comments on the RIES (if provided) • comments on any further information/submissions received by 	Monday 12 January 2026

	<p>Deadline 5 and any other information requested by the ExA for Deadline 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any other information submitted by the applicant 	
15.	<p>Publication by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ExA's third written questions (ExQ3) (if required) the ExA's commentary on, or schedule of changes to, the draft DCO (if required) 	Monday 26 January 2026
16.	<p>Deadline 7</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> responses to the ExQ3 (if provided) comments on the ExA's commentary on, or schedule of changes to, the draft DCO (if provided) the applicant's updates – refer to annex E comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 6, and any other information requested by the ExA for Deadline 6 any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules 	Monday 09 February 2026
17.	<p>Deadline 8</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> closing summary statement from parties regarding matters that they have previously raised during the examination and that have not been resolved to their satisfaction the applicant's clean version of the final draft DCO in Microsoft Word, the email notification from legislation.gov.uk confirming successful validation and the validation report the applicant's final updates – refer to annex E the applicant's closing summary statement comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 7 	Monday 16 February 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	
18.	Close of examination The ExA intends to close the examination on this date. See 'Note about the close of examination date'.	Monday 23 February 2026

Note about the close of examination date

The ExA is under a duty to complete the examination of the application by the end of the period of 6 months beginning with the day after the close of the preliminary meeting. The ExA may however decide to close the examination earlier and on the date specified in the timetable if it considers that the application and relevant matters have been examined adequately.

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.

Hearing agendas

Please note that for ISHs and CAHs the ExA will publish a high-level agenda alongside the notification of the hearing to help inform your decision about whether to register to participate. A detailed draft agenda will be made available on the project webpage at least 5 working days in advance of the hearing date. However, the actual agenda on the day of each hearing may be subject to change at the discretion of the ExA. For OFHs agendas may not be published.

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.

The Applicant's Updates

The draft Examination Timetable in **annex D** includes deadlines for the applicant to provide updates to the examination. The deadlines are set at points in the timetable where it will help with the smooth running of the examination for the ExA to have the up-to-date information at that time. This annex sets out the ExA's request for the matters to be included in those updates. Please note that final updates must be submitted by **deadline 6**.

Statements of Common Ground

Annex G sets out the additional Statements of Common Ground between the applicant and various interested parties that are requested by the ExA, and the matters to be covered.

The Statements of Common Ground are to be accompanied by a document summarising:

- the status of each Statement of Common Ground
- the matters agreed between the applicant and each interested party
- the main outstanding concerns held by each interested party, the reasons for those concerns, the next steps to be taken to address them and the progress anticipated by the next deadline and by the close of the examination
- when it is anticipated that any draft Statements of Common Ground will be finalised and when the finalised signed and dated copies will be submitted to the examination.

The ExA notes the applicant's submission of several draft statements of common ground, namely a draft Statement of Common Ground (dSoCG) with Lincolnshire County Council [[APP-281](#)], a dSoCG with North Kesteven District Council [[APP-282](#)], a dSoCG with Boston Borough Council [[APP-283](#)] and a dSoCG with Anglian Water [[APP-284](#)]. However, the applicant is requested to develop additional Statements of Common Ground with the various interested parties included in **annex G**.

Updates to the Book of Reference, Statement of Reasons and Land Plans

To include:

- The latest, fully up-to-date versions of the Book of Reference, Statement of Reasons, Land Plans, Special Category Land Plans, and any related updates to the draft Development Consent Order.
- Clean copies and copies showing tracked changes to the previous versions.
- Each version supplied with unique revision numbers that are updated consecutively from the application versions, clearly indicated within the body of each document, and included within the electronic filename.
- A 'Schedule of Land Rights Changes' report, or equivalent, setting out the reasons for the changes included in each update.

Detailed Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker

The ExA notes the submission of a Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker [[APP-045](#)] by the applicant. However, having reviewed the submitted Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker and considered the nature of the proposed development, the number of land interests identified, the proportion of unresolved land agreements and the profile of affected land (which includes Crown Land), the ExA requests further detail to be included, in line with a [Detailed Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker](#), and for this to be submitted by the applicant in support of the application.

The [Detailed Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker](#) should then replace the submitted Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker [[APP-045](#)] and be updated throughout the examination as per the detailed Timetable.

The ExA recognises that the Detailed Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker represent a change in relation to the documents and components requested of the applicant up to this stage. However, for the reasons stated above, the ExA believes that a Detailed Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker will assist in the running and optimisation of the examination process. Also, as set out in [the Planning Inspectorate's guidance](#) in relation to pre-application, a detailed land and rights negotiation tracker is more suitable for complex land and rights profile which, for example, may include crown land as it is the case with the proposed development.

The above information will be published on the [project webpage](#), so commercial and/or confidential details need not be given.

Updates to the draft Development Consent Order and Explanatory Memorandum

To include:

- The latest, fully up-to-date versions of the draft Development Consent Order and Explanatory Memorandum.
- Clean copies and copies showing tracked changes to the previous versions.
- A copy of the draft Development Consent Order, showing tracked changes to the application version.
- A clean copy of the draft Development Order in Microsoft Word.
- Each version supplied with unique revision numbers that are updated consecutively from the application versions, clearly indicated within the body of each document, and included within the electronic filename.
- A report validating that the draft Development Consent Order is in the Statutory Instrument template (obtained from the publishing section of the [legislation.gov.uk](#) website) and email validation confirmation.
- A 'Schedule of Changes to the draft Development Consent Order' report, or equivalent, setting out the reasons for the changes included in each update.

Schedule of the latest versions of the applicant's submission documents and documents to be certified

To include:

- An updated Application Guide [[AS-004](#)] schedule identifying the latest version of each individual document and plan submitted by the applicant and identifying those documents that are to be certified under the draft Development Consent Order.
- A new Column to Table 2.1: List of Application Documents of the Application Guide [[AS-004](#)] setting out the purpose of all new documents and plans and the broad reasons for the changes to any document or plan included in each update.
- Clean copies of any new documents or plans.
- For any updated documents or plans, clean copies and copies showing tracked changes to the previous versions.
- Updates supplied with unique revision numbers that are updated consecutively from the application versions, clearly indicated within the body of each document, within the electronic filename, and (for the certified documents or plans) in the draft Development Consent Order.

Schedule of progress in securing other consents

To include:

- An update to the Other Consents and Licenses Statement [[APP-276](#)] to include an update to table 2.1 Other Consent and Licenses which should detail a schedule of all other consents (including any licences or agreements) required for the delivery of the proposed development, including the name of the consent, the relevant legislation (or policy or guidance), the consenting authority, the scope of the consent, why it is required, and when it is expected to be obtained.
- A summary of the up-to-date position in respect of obtaining the necessary consents and whether there is any reason to believe that any consent will not be granted.
- Where the Environment Agency or Natural England are the consenting authority, and without prejudice to their subsequent decision, written confirmation of whether they have any reason to believe that any consent will not be granted. As well as being required for the ExA to assess the adequacy of the applicant's mitigation proposals, this is required for the ExA to report any known impediments to the Secretary of State.
- A summary of the progress made since the last update, any outstanding matters, the next steps to be taken, and the progress anticipated by the next deadline and by the close of the examination.

Notification of initial hearings

The Examining Authority (ExA) provides notice of the following initial hearings:

Date	Hearing	Start time	Joining details
Tuesday 23 September 2025	Open Floor Hearing (ISH1)	Registration process from: 14:30 Hearing starts: 15:00	This hearing will be held virtually using Microsoft Teams Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered
Wednesday 24 September 2025	Issue Specific Hearing (ISH1) on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Matters • Need, Site Selection and Alternatives • Water Environment and Flood Risk • Access and Traffic 	Registration process from: 09:30 Hearing starts: 10:00	This hearing will be held virtually using Microsoft Teams Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered
Thursday 25 September 2025	Time reserved for continuation of ISH1 (if required)	Registration process from: 09:30 Hearing resumes: 10:00	This hearing will be held virtually using Microsoft Teams Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered
NOTE: If any of the above hearings are no longer required then notification that a particular date is no longer required will be published as soon as practicable on the project webpage , providing reasonable notice to interested parties of the decision to cancel them.			

You must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by procedural deadline A, Tuesday 16 September 2025, if you intend to participate in any of the hearings and provide all the information requested (see below).

If you simply wish to observe the hearings then you do not need to register as you will be able to watch a livestream of the events. A link to the livestream will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin. You will also be able to watch the recording of the events which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the events have finished.

Any request to participate in a hearing **must 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)
- 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 compulsory acquisition hearings, 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.

Requests to participate should be made using the [event participation form](#) on or before **procedural deadline A, Tuesday 16 September 2025**.

Depending on the number of requests, each party may be given a limited amount of time to make oral submissions (as a guide, each speaker should complete their oral submission within 10 minutes).

Please contact the case team using the contact details at the top of this letter if you require any support or assistance to attend any of the hearings.

Hearing agendas

For issue specific hearings and compulsory acquisition hearings the ExA will publish a detailed draft agenda on the project webpage at least 5 working days in advance of the hearing date. However, the actual agenda on the day of each hearing may be subject to change at the discretion of the ExA. For open floor hearings an agenda may not be published.

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 Planning Inspectorate's advice for members of the public 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](#)

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.

Other procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority

The Examining Authority (ExA) has made the following procedural decisions:

1. Statements of common ground (SoCG)

In relation to some of the principal issues identified in **annex C** to this letter, the ExA would be assisted by the preparation of SoCGs between the applicant and certain interested parties. The draft examination timetable at **annex D** to this letter therefore establishes **deadline 1** for submission of SoCGs.

The aim of a SoCG is to agree factual information and to inform the ExA and all other parties by identifying where there is agreement and where the differences lie at an early stage in the examination process. It should provide a focus and save time by identifying matters which are not in dispute or need not be the subject of further evidence. It can also usefully state where and why there may be disagreement about the interpretation and relevance of the information. Unless otherwise stated or agreed, the SoCG should be agreed between the applicant and the other relevant interested party or parties, and submitted **by the applicant**.

All of the SoCGs listed below should cover the articles and requirements in the draft Development Consent Order. Any interested party seeking that an article or requirement is reworded should provide the form of words which are being sought.

In addition to the draft SoCG already provided, SoCGs are requested to be prepared between the applicant and:

A. South Kyme Parish Council, to include:

- all Principal Issues identified in annex D
- any other matters raised by interested local residents, members of the Parish Council or internal consultees

B. Ewerby & Evedon Parish Council to include:

- all Principal Issues identified in annex D
- any other matters raised by interested local residents, members of the Parish Council or internal consultees

C. Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board (IDB), to include:

- effects on both the IDB and non IDB maintained watercourses
- adequacy of information in relation to watercourse crossings
- byelaws under the Land Drainage Act 1991
- relevant other agreements, consents, permits and licences

D. Environment Agency, to include:

- applicant's assessment (including survey areas, baseline data and methodology) in relation to flood risk and drainage, groundwater protection and water resources
- compliance with the Water Framework Directive
- appropriateness and effectiveness of the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) and the Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (ODEMP)
- relevant other agreements, consents, permits and licences

C. Forestry Commission, to include:

- effects on ancient and veteran trees, priority habitats, and protected woodlands
- appropriateness and effectiveness of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, the Vegetation Removal Plan, the Landscape Strategy Plan, the OCEMP and the ODEMP

D. Historic England, to include:

- effects on designated heritage assets including listed building, and schedule ancient monuments
- effects on archaeological remains and the appropriateness of any preservation measures proposed at construction and decommissioning stages, including those in the OCEMP and the ODEMP
- any other issues which Historic England may wish to raise in relation to heritage assets

E. Natural England, to include:

- effects on internationally designated sites, protected species (including otters, water voles and wintering birds) land use and soils (including best most versatile agricultural land) and any other relevant ecology and biodiversity features
- effects on sites and features relevant to a Habitats Regulations Assessment, including but not limited to qualifying features assessed and approach to in-combination assessment
- effects on any other habitats, species or relevant habitats
- the suitability and appropriateness of the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) assessment
- mitigation and enhancement measures, including the appropriateness and effectiveness of the Outline Soil Management Plan (OSMP), the OCEMP and the ODEMP
- biodiversity Net Gain
- protected species licences

F. National Highways, to include:

- applicant's assessment in relation to effects of the proposed development on the strategic road network including proposed access routes during construction, operational and decommission phases

- the appropriateness of the applicant's Transport Assessment (TA) traffic impact
- mitigation and enhancement measures, including the appropriateness and effectiveness of the measures included in the OCEMP and the ODEMP
- any other significant issues in relation to the effects of the proposed development on Traffic and Transport

The draft examination timetable makes provision for updated SoCGs to be submitted at various deadlines with final versions by **deadline 8**.

The content of SoCGs will help to inform the ExA about the need to hold any issue specific hearings during the examination, and to enable the ExA and the applicant to give notice of such hearings at least 21 days in advance of them taking place.

2. Accompanied site inspection – suggested locations

The draft examination timetable at **annex D** to this letter includes time for an accompanied site inspection (ASI), if needed, week commencing the **10 November 2025**.

The ExA requests that interested parties submit suggested locations for the ExA to visit as part of an ASI by **procedural deadline A** (16 September 2025). The request must include:

- sufficient information to identify the location
- the issues to be observed at the location
- information on whether the site can be accessed via public land
- the reason why the location has been suggested.

Interested parties should be aware that ASIs are not an opportunity to make any oral representations to the ExA about the proposed development. However, participants may be invited by the ExA to indicate specific features or sites of interest.

The applicant is requested to prepare a draft itinerary for the ASI to be submitted by **deadline 1, 07 October 2025**. This should include:

- relevant locations referred to in the relevant representations received
- any other locations at which the applicant has predicted likely significant environmental effects
- the locations suggested by interested parties submitted by **procedural deadline A** (16 September 2025).

Comments by interested parties on the applicant's draft itinerary must be submitted by **deadline 2, 21 October 2025**.

The ExA will consider each suggested site location, including those provided in the applicant's draft itinerary, 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. The ExA 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.

The ExA will publish its final itinerary at least 5 working days before the date of the ASI.

3. Local Impact Reports

The ExA requests Local Impact Reports (LIRs) from the host local authorities and welcomes LIRs from any other relevant local authority who may wish to submit one. All LIRs are requested to be submitted by **deadline 1, Tuesday 7 October 2025**.

4. Relevant representations (RRs)

The ExA requests the applicant provides responses to all RRs and summaries and responses to all RRs exceeding 1500 words by **deadline 1, Tuesday 7 October 2025**.

5. Written representations (WRs)

The ExA requests that WRs from interested parties are submitted by **deadline 1, Tuesday 7 October 2025 alongside a summary of any** and summaries of any WRs that exceed 1500 words. The applicant will then be expected to provide a response to any WRs by **deadline 2, Tuesday 21 October 2025**.

6. Status of the applicant's examination documents

The ExA requests 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.

7. Additional submissions

In addition to the documentation submitted by **procedural deadline A** the ExA has exercised its discretion and made a procedural decision to accept the following additional submissions, which can be found in the [Examination Library](#):

- Adequacy of Consultation Representation [[AS-001](#)] by Peterborough City Council

- Adequacy of Consultation Representation [[AS-002](#)] by Rutland County Council
- Several submissions in response to s51 Advise [[AS-003 to AS-022](#)] by Beacon Fen Energy Park Limited
- Additional Submission [[AS-023](#)] by Ewerby and Evedon Parish Council

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 beaconfen@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 made to the examination
- each procedural decision made by the Examining Authority

Each document is given a unique reference 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 Find a National Infrastructure Project 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 D** 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.

Agenda for the preliminary meeting

You must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by Tuesday 16 September 2025 if you intend to participate in the preliminary meeting and provide all the information requested (see below).

If you simply wish to observe the preliminary meeting, then you do not need to register as you will be able to watch a livestream of the event. A link to the livestream will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin. You will also be able to watch the recording of the event which will be published on the [project webpage](#) shortly after the event has finished.

Please note that by attending the event online you are agreeing to be filmed for the purposes of the online livestream of the event and the recording of the event which will get published on the project page of our website. If you do not wish your image to be recorded, you can turn off your camera once you have completed the registration process. However, please note that your voice will still be recorded and transmitted during the meeting. Please contact the case team if you have any queries regarding any of the above. A transcript of the event will also be published on the project page of our website after the event.

Date: **Tuesday 23 September 2025**

Meeting start time: **10.00am (please note registration times below)**

Venue: **Virtual event (Microsoft Teams)**

Full instructions on how to join online or by phone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered

Attendees: **Invited parties who have pre-registered**

Agenda for the preliminary meeting	
9.30am	<p>Virtual registration process</p> <p>Please arrive at 09.30am to enter the virtual lobby. From here you will be admitted to the virtual meeting by the case team, greeted and given further instructions.</p> <p>The registration process will commence at 09.30am. This will be hosted by the case team and cover the housekeeping arrangements for the preliminary meeting and allow for any questions to be asked about how to take part.</p>
10.00am Item 1	Preliminary meeting

	The preliminary meeting will formally open at 10.00am . The Examining Authority will join, welcome participants and lead with introductions.
Item 2	The Examining Authority's remarks about the examination process
Item 3	Initial assessment of principal issues – annex C to Rule 6 Letter
Item 4	Draft examination timetable – annex D to Rule 6 Letter
Item 5	Procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority – annex G to Rule 6 Letter
Item 6	The applicant's updates – annex E
Item 7	Hearings and Site Inspections – annex B to Rule 6 Letter
Item 8	Any other matters
Close of the preliminary meeting	

The event will start at **10.00am** irrespective of any late arrivals, for whom access may not be possible.

It may take some time to admit participants from the virtual lobby, your patience whilst you are waiting is appreciated.

The agenda for the preliminary meeting is subject to change at the discretion of the Examining Authority, although in making changes the Examining Authority will be mindful of the need to provide opportunities for fair involvement to all invited parties.

Any request to participate in the preliminary meeting **must include** the following information and be made on the [event participation form](#):

- name and unique reference number (found at the top of your 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)
- the agenda item on which you wish to speak and a list of the points you wish to make.

Introduction to the preliminary meeting

Background

The preliminary meeting (PM) will be a virtual event with participants attending virtually using Microsoft Teams.

The Examining Authority (ExA) is conscious of videoconferencing fatigue and will aim to keep the proceedings focussed and as efficient as possible. This annex provides advance access to information that would usually be included in the ExA's introductory remarks. Please read this carefully. The ExA will only present a summary of the key points set out here in order to ensure that the time available for participants to speak is maximised.

The Examining Authority and the case team

The ExA will introduce themselves at the start of the PM.

The ExA will be supported by the Planning Inspectorate case team. During the registration process a member of the case team will welcome and admit participants from the virtual lobby, and will be available to answer questions by email before and after the PM. The contact email address is: beaconfen@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

The purpose of the preliminary meeting

The PM is being held to discuss the arrangements for the examination of the application for a development consent order (DCO) for the Beacon Fen Energy Park, which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), and which will generally be referred to in the PM and examination as 'the proposed development'. The application has been made by Beacon Fen Energy Park Limited, which will be referred to as 'the applicant'.

You will find information about the application and, in due course, documents produced for the examination on the project webpage of the Find National Infrastructure Project website ([project webpage](#)). The project webpage has links to the examination timetable, relevant representations and examination documents and examination procedure.

You are encouraged to look at the [project webpage](#) if you haven't already done so, because it will be used to communicate with you and to provide access to documents throughout the examination.

The main purpose of the PM is to discuss the arrangements for the examination of the application. It focuses on the process only, and it will not be looking at the substance of the proposals: questions, discussions and representations about the merits or disadvantages of the proposed development are for the examination itself which will begin the day after the close of the PM.

The PM will be your opportunity to influence the process that the ExA intends to follow. The agenda for the PM is attached to this Rule 6 letter at **annex A**. It is

important to have the letter and the agenda in front of you and to refer to them during the course of the PM. You may wish to print these in advance of the PM for reference.

Government guidance and policy

The application is a NSIP under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) as a consequence of sections 14(1) and 15(2): it includes the construction or extension of a generating station in England with a capacity of more than 50 megawatts. The designated National Policy Statements (NPS) for Energy Infrastructure: Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1), National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) and National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) apply to this examination and to decision-making relating to this application.

The ExA will consider the proposed development in accordance with the NPSs, any other applicable policy or considerations the ExA deem to be important and relevant. The PA2008 makes it clear that, in making a decision, the relevant Secretary of State (SoS) “must decide the application in accordance with any relevant NPS” (s104(3)), subject to certain provisos. Essentially, the provisos are that the application must not breach legal or treaty obligations, and that any adverse impact of the proposed development would not outweigh its benefits.

The SoS is entitled to disregard any representations that relate to the merits of the designated NPS. In practice, this means that the ExA will not spend time examining representations that challenge policy set out in NPSs, or the validity of NPSs themselves. The focus will be on the merits or disadvantages of the proposed development, tested to the appropriate extent using the tests set out in relevant designated NPSs that are in force.

Other important and relevant planning policies that the ExA may consider include policies in the relevant local authorities’ development plans. However, if these conflict with policy in a NPS, then the NPS will take precedence.

In summary, the PM will establish the procedures and timetable for the examination of the proposed development. It will set a framework for the ExA to enable the SoS to consider and decide the application. In doing so, the ExA will have regard to:

- the positions and representations of all interested parties (IP)
- any local impact reports (LIR) prepared and provided by relevant local authorities
- other prescribed matters
- any other matters that appear to be both relevant and important to the relevant SoS’s decision.

Preliminary meeting invitees

The applicant is invited to the PM and is generally given the opportunity to reply to any representations made.

Everyone who has made a valid relevant representation has been registered as an IP and has been invited to the PM. All IPs are entitled to involvement in the examination.

Each person or organisation with an interest in land or rights that are affected by a compulsory acquisition request in this application is an affected person (AP) and has been invited to the PM. In addition to a general entitlement to involvement in the examination, APs have a right to be heard in relation to any objection about the effects of compulsory acquisition on their interests in land, and a right to be notified of any compulsory acquisition hearing. All APs are IPs, whether or not they have made a valid relevant representation.

Certain bodies are statutory parties and they have been invited to the PM. Statutory parties can elect to become IPs without having made a valid relevant representation by notifying the ExA in writing.

The ExA has the power to involve people who are not IPs in the examination as though they are IPs, including by inviting them to the PM. However, this is only done in exceptional circumstances, for example if it was clear that the application would materially affect a person, they are not automatically an IP or eligible to elect to become an IP and they had been unable to take the necessary action to register as an IP.

Conduct of the preliminary meeting

The ExA aims to close the PM by 01:00pm at the latest.

During the PM participants may have to make allowances and be patient if there are delays associated with the technology used. In recognition of the fatigue associated with on-screen communication, the ExA will provide breaks during the PM as appropriate.

A digital recording of the PM will be made available on the [project webpage](#) as soon as practicable following the close of the PM. The recording allows any member of the public who is interested in the application and the examination to find out what has been discussed at the PM. The making and publication of these recordings are a means by which the ExA meets the legal requirement to hold the PM (and any other hearings) in public. In this regard, **anyone speaking at the PM will need to introduce themselves each time they speak**, to ensure that someone listening to the recording after the event is clear who was speaking. A written note of the PM will be produced and published as soon as practicable following the close of the PM.

As the recordings are retained and published, they form a public record that can contain personal information to which The UK General Data Protection Regulation applies. Participants must do their best to avoid providing any information which

should otherwise be kept private and confidential. If there is a need to refer to such information, it should be in written form. Although this will also be published, personal and private content can be redacted or removed before it is made publicly available. Any person who is unclear on this point should ask the case team for guidance before they place personal and private information into the public domain.

The Planning Inspectorate's practice is to publish the recordings and retain them for a period of 5 years from the SoS's decision on the DCO. If you actively participate in the PM, it is important that you understand that you will be recorded and that the recording will be made available in the public domain. Please see our [Privacy Notice](#) for more information about how we handle your data.

Following the ExA's introductions, each participant who has been registered to speak will be asked to introduce themselves, including any organisations or groups that they represent. The ExA will then conduct the meeting in accordance with the agenda. If you prefer not to have your image recorded, you can switch off your camera at any point.

The examination process

The examination of NSIPs follows different processes to those, for example, of a public inquiry into a planning appeal following the refusal of planning permission. The main differences are that the examination of NSIPs are primarily a written process and hearings take on an inquisitorial approach as opposed to an adversarial one.

This means that the ExA will probe, test and assess the evidence primarily using written questions. While some hearings are held to provide supplementary evidence, questions to the applicant or to witnesses will come from the ExA. Questioning or cross-examination of witnesses by other parties will not generally be allowed.

In terms of opportunities to provide evidence in writing, the draft examination timetable makes provision for the following written processes:

- Local authorities can submit LIRs if they wish. Whilst these are voluntary, the PA2008 provides that if they are provided, they must be considered by the SoS in reaching a decision. Consequently, LIRs are a very important method for local authorities to communicate issues of concern to the ExA, the SoS and their residents
- IPs can make written representations (WR) and comment on WRs made by other parties
- IPs can respond to the ExA's written questions (ExQs) and comment on responses to these written questions provided by others
- IPs may be asked to contribute to the making of statements of common ground (SoCG) if it appears that there are matters on which they and the applicant agrees, and if it would be useful for this to be clarified. SoCGs most usefully extend to catalogue matters that are not agreed or are outstanding.

The draft examination timetable includes a series of numbered deadlines for receipt of written submissions. Timely submissions received by the relevant deadline and

that address its purpose will be accepted. **Documents received after the relevant deadline are only accepted at the discretion of the ExA and may not be accepted to ensure fairness to all parties.** Circumstances where documents are submitted late without good reason, causing inconvenience or delay to other parties can amount to unreasonable behaviour.

These written processes will be the principal means used by the ExA to gather information, evidence and views about the application. However, the examination will only be effective if all parties resolve to give timely, full, frank, clear and evidenced answers to every question that is relevant to their interests and to engage fully with any other related processes such as the completion of WRs and SoCGs.

There is no merit in withholding or delaying information, or in failing to co-operate, and should it occur, any unreasonable behaviour that caused another party to incur wasted expenditure could lead to an award of costs against the offending party.

The ExA has discretion to make amendments to the examination timetable for the wider benefit of the examination. If possible, events will be arranged for times when all relevant parties are available, but the ExA is under a duty to complete the examination by the end of the six-month period beginning with the day after the close of the PM. This requirement is set by legislation, and while the ExA will try to rearrange event dates to accommodate all relevant parties, in practice there will be limited scope to alter dates set out in the draft examination timetable.

The statutory time limit for the examination means that where there are matters that still need to be discussed and agreed between the applicant and IPs, it will be very helpful to the ExA if these could be progressed as early as possible.

Hearings

The draft examination timetable includes provision for hearings, at which the ExA takes oral evidence from the various parties.

Any registered IP may request an **open floor hearing** (OFH) to make oral representations about the application if they believe this to be preferable to relying on their written representation, though both carry equal weight. Oral submissions should be based on representations previously made in writing, but they should not simply repeat matters previously covered in the written submission. Rather, they should focus on specific detail and explanation to help inform the ExA. There should be no new or unexpected material in oral representations. A written summary note with any supporting evidence or references will be requested of each speaker following the hearing.

As with all examination events, OFHs are subject to the powers of control of the ExA, as set out in the PA2008 and supporting legislation. Participants must register in advance by the deadline shown in the examination timetable and in accordance with the instructions. It is common practice for the ExA to set a time limit for each speaker and speakers with common points are asked to come together to nominate a spokesperson or representative speakers to cover specific topics, so as to avoid repetition. Speakers representing public authorities, community and membership

organisations or multiple IPs are normally provided with an additional time allowance, recognising their representative role.

The applicant's draft DCO provides for the compulsory acquisition of land and rights, and the temporary possession of land. APs (meaning those whose land or rights over land are affected) have a right to request and be heard at a **compulsory acquisition hearing** (CAH). If one or more APs request to be heard then a CAH must be held. Provisional dates for CAHs are included in the draft examination timetable along with deadlines by which requests to be heard must be submitted.

The ExA has the discretion to hold **issue specific hearings** (ISH) if it would aid in the examination and there is a specific reason this would be more helpful than reliance on written evidence only. The lack of an ISH on one or more topics does not suggest that that topic is less important than others which are subject to a hearing. Rather, it is an indication that the ExA is satisfied that the issues can be fully considered through written submissions and responses to its written questions and that each party has had a fair opportunity to put its case.

The draft examination timetable includes a number of dates reserved for ISHs and IPs may make suggestions for topics to be discussed at an ISH in their written or oral representations to the PM.

It may be necessary for the ExA to hold more than one ISH on the draft DCO. This is normal practice, and they are held on a without prejudice basis. Parties can suggest modifications and amendments to the draft DCO provided by the applicant with the application, without prejudicing their overall position on the application.

Holding such hearings does not imply that the ExA has reached any judgements on the merits of the application. Whatever the ultimate recommendation is, the ExA must make sure that the draft DCO is fit for purpose if the SoS decides to grant consent, as any consent will be subject to requirements (similar to planning conditions) set out in the draft DCO.

At hearings it will not normally be necessary for parties to make long and detailed submissions that require, for example, PowerPoint presentations. Any supporting detail/ information can be provided in writing following the event by the relevant deadline.

The draft examination timetable includes a deadline (Deadline 1) for participants to notify the ExA that they wish to speak at an OFH or a CAH.

Site inspections

As part of the examination process the ExA may undertake site inspections. These can be either unaccompanied or accompanied.

The purpose of these is for the ExA to see features of the proposals within the context of the evidence put forward. The ExA has carried out an unaccompanied site inspection (USI) on the 24 July 2025. Please check the USI note on our examination

library [\[PD-002\]](#) for further details. Notes of further unaccompanied site inspections (USI) are published on the [project webpage](#).

Accompanied site inspections (ASI) will only be necessary to view land to which there is no public right of access, or with no clear view from nearby locations with open public access. The purpose of ASIs is familiarisation only and no discussion of the merits of the proposed development will be entertained during an ASI.

The ExA may decide to hold USIs to relevant nominated locations, supported by the submission of additional written, photographic, video or even drone material if this would be preferable to not visiting sites or holding ASIs in circumstances which could make them difficult and unduly time-consuming to conduct (for example if public health restrictions are in place). The ExA may 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 a USI on an access required basis (ARSI)

The draft examination timetable includes a deadline at **procedural deadline A** (Tuesday 16 September 2025) for IPs to make submissions suggesting sites and locations that the ExA should visit. These will be used to inform further USIs/ARSIs as well as possible ASIs.

Initial assessment of principal issues

This is the initial assessment of principal issues prepared as required under section 88(1) of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). It has been prepared by the Examining Authority (ExA) following its reading of:

- the application documents
- the relevant representations received in respect of the application
- its consideration of any other important and relevant matters

This initial assessment has guided the ExA in forming a provisional view as to how the application is to be examined. It is not a comprehensive or exclusive list of the issues that will be subject to examination and inevitably some issues will overlap or interrelate. The ExA will have regard to all important and relevant matters during the examination and when it writes its recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero after the examination has concluded.

The order of the issues listed does not imply any order of prioritisation or importance.

The policy and consenting requirements and documents associated with the PA2008 are an integral part of the examination and are therefore not listed as principal issues. It should also be noted that whilst the effects of the proposal in relation to human rights and equalities duties are not listed as principal issues, the ExA will conduct all aspects of the examination with these in mind.

Regarding national policy, the following National Policy Statements (NPS) have effect, and the issues contained therein will be an integral part of the examination:

- The Overarching NPS for Energy (NPS EN-1), including, for example matters relating to the need case, assessment principles and generic impacts as relevant (including for example, greenhouse gas emissions, land use, socio-economics, the historic environment, noise and vibration and landscape and visual).
- NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-3), particularly section 2.10 relating to solar photovoltaic generation, for example matters relating to biodiversity, water, landscape and visual, glint and glare, historic environment, traffic and transport, noise and vibration and agricultural land.
- NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5), for example matters relating to climate change, biodiversity net gain and good design.

Whilst matters relating to compulsory acquisition and the draft Development Consent Order (DCO) are not listed as principal issues, they will form an integral part of the examination.

Consideration will be given to all relevant matters during the construction, operation and decommissioning activities associated with the proposed development, and cumulatively with other plans and projects, as necessary.

The order of the issues listed does not imply any order of prioritisation or importance. The bulleted items under each issue are indicative and do not preclude other sub-items being considered.

Principal issue	To include, but not necessarily limited to:
General matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether all relevant legislation and policy has been complied with and the regard given to guidance and advice • The applicant's approach to EIA and the Environmental Statement submitted in support of the proposed development • Whether the proposed development complies with the relevant National Policy Statements, national strategy and policy, including contribution to the delivery of government targets and objectives • Matters arising in any Local Impact Reports • The applicant's approach to mitigation
Need, site selection and alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for the proposed development • The approach to alternatives, including location, layout cabling corridors, scale and proposed technology • Likely potential energy generation and storage • Capacity of the secured grid connection
Land rights and related matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accuracy of the Book of Reference, Statements of Reasons and Land Plans • Accuracy of the Land Plans and Works Plans and how these relate to the land identified as subject to Compulsory Acquisition (CA) and/or Temporary Possession (TP) • The Statement of Reasons and whether the powers sought are required for the development to which the order relates, whether they are legitimate, necessary, and proportionate and whether it is clear how the applicant intends to use the land • Whether the land rights powers sought including CA, TP, Restrictive Covenants, and any other powers in relation to the creation, suspension, or extinguishment of, or interference with, interests in or

	<p>rights over land are necessary to facilitate or are incidental to the proposed development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the CA and TP powers sought are compatible with Human Rights tests • Whether there is a compelling case in the public interest for the powers sought that justifies interference with the human rights of those affected • Minimisation of the need for acquisition of land and rights, consideration of acquisition by agreement and the exercise of any existing land option agreements • Whether all reasonable alternatives to compulsory acquisition have been explored • The effects of the proposed acquisition on any statutory undertakers' land or rights over such land and the detriment that may be caused to the carrying on of the undertaking in question • The adequacy of the protected provisions set out in the draft DCO and the need for any other protective provisions to safeguard relevant interests • Potential impediments to development • Whether adequate funding would be available to enable the applicant to carry out the CA within the statutory period
Draft Development Consent Order (DCO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adequacy of the Explanatory Memorandum and its consistency with the dDCO • Relationship with other consents, permits and licences and any impediments to them being granted • Whether the proposed requirements effectively secure the mitigation identified
Biodiversity and Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness of the habitat surveys and the applicant's approach to biodiversity, HRA and EIA matters • The effects of the proposed development, including in-combination assessment, on The Wash RAMSAR and SPA, and the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC • The effects of the proposed development on other statutory designated sites, namely the Horbling Fen SSSI and the Wilsford & Rauceby Warrens SSSI • The effects of the proposed development on non-statutory designated sites (including waterbodies, grassland, trees and hedgerows), sites of nature

	<p>conservation and on any other relevant ecological features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological conservation interests including, but not limited to, net gain
Historic Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effects of the proposed development on the historic environment, including archaeological remains and any designated or non-designated heritage assets • The effects of the proposed development on the setting of designated heritage assets, such as listed buildings, conservation areas and schedule monuments
Landscape and Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adequacy of assessment methodology and approach, including the identification and assessment of sensitive landscape receptors • The effects of the proposed development during construction, operation and decommissioning stages, including cumulative effects • The effects of the proposed development on view from the public right of way (PRoW) network, residential properties and other sensitive landscape receptors • The effects of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the landscape, including cumulative effects • Consideration of good design and relevant guidance, including a detailed design approach for all of the proposed structures
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment of Agricultural Land Classification and the effects of the proposal on agricultural land and farming • Loss of Best and Most Versatile Land and how this has been minimised • Proposed uses of the land during the operational phase of the proposed development
Socio-economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effects of the proposed development on residential amenity, local communities (including community and recreational uses) and the economy of the area

Traffic and Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adequacy of the transport assessment methodology, particularly in relation to the identification of sensitive receptors and baseline assumptions • The effects of the proposed development on traffic and transport in the area, including the local and strategic road networks, rail and PRoW networks and access to community and recreational facilities • The effects of the proposed development on pedestrians and non-motorised users
Water Environment and Flood Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effects of the proposed development on the water environment, including canals and water courses • The Flood Risk Assessment methodology used, including the identification of risk zones and climate change allowances • The proposed surface water drainage strategy • The effects of the proposed development on water quality, including groundwater • The effects of any proposed watercourse crossings • Compliance with the Water Framework Directive
Cumulative effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adequacy of the assessment methodology and approach, including the identification of in-combination effects (intra-project) and the cumulative effects (inter-project) • The suitability and accuracy of the long-list and short-list of other developments • The effects of the proposed development when considered cumulatively with other solar energy projects • Consideration of any necessary monitoring, management and compensatory measures and their effectiveness

Draft examination timetable

The Examining Authority (ExA) is under a duty to **complete** the examination of the application by the end of the period of 6 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.	Procedural deadline A Deadline for receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written submissions on the examination procedure and draft examination timetable • an updated Detailed Land and Rights Negotiations Tracker from the applicant (please refer to annex E) • requests to speak at the preliminary meeting • request to speak at open floor hearing 1 (OFH1) • request to speak at issue specific hearing 1 (ISH1) • suggested locations for site inspections (accompanied or unaccompanied), including justification and whether the location(s) require access to private land (if any) • notification of wish to have future correspondence delivered electronically, including confirmation of email address 	Tuesday 16 September 2025
2.	Preliminary Meeting	Tuesday 23 September 2025 (AM)
3.	Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1)	Tuesday 23 September 2025 (PM)
4.	Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On General Matters • Need, Site Selection and Alternatives • Water Environment and Flood Risk • Access and Traffic 	Wednesday 24 September 2025

5.	Time reserved for the continuation of ISH1 (if required)	Thursday 25 September 2025
6.	Issue by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the examination timetable (the Rule 8 letter) the ExA's first written questions (ExQ1) 	As soon as practicable after the Preliminary Meeting
7.	Deadline 1 For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-hearing submissions including written summaries of any oral cases as heard in OFH1 and ISH1 local impact reports (LIRs) from local authorities written representations from interested parties and summaries of any that exceed 1500 words comments on relevant representations (RRs) and any additional submissions received the applicant's draft itinerary for an accompanied site inspection (ASI) (if required) the applicant's updates – refer to annex E notification by statutory parties of their wish to be considered as an interested party (IP) by the ExA if not submitted an RR requests by interested parties to be heard at a further open floor hearing requests by affected persons (APs) (defined in section 59(4) of the Planning Act 2008) to be heard at a compulsory acquisition hearing (CAH) comments on any information or submissions accepted by the ExA any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules any other information submitted by the applicant 	Tuesday 07 October 2025
8.	Deadline 2 For receipt by the ExA of:	Tuesday 21 October 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responses to the ExA's ExQ1 • comments on LIR • comments on the applicant's draft itinerary for the ASI (if required) • comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 1, including the applicant's updates referred to in annex E and any other information requested by the ExA for Deadline 1 • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules • any other information submitted by the applicant 	
9. Deadline 3	<p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the applicant's updates – refer to annex E • comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 2, including the applicant's updates referred to in annex E and any other information requested by the ExA for Deadline • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules • any other information submitted by the applicant 	Friday 31 October 2025
10. Hearings:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compulsory acquisition hearing 1 (CAH1) • any issue specific hearings • any open floor hearings (if required) <p>Time reserved for an Accompanied Site Inspection (if held)</p>	Week commencing 10 November 2025
11. Deadline 4	<p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p>	Friday 21 November 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-hearing submissions including written summaries of any oral cases as heard in hearings held w/c 10 November 2025 • the applicant's updates – refer to annex E • comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 3, including the applicant's updates referred to in annex E, and any other information requested by the ExA for Deadline 3 • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules • any other information submitted by the applicant 	
12.	Issue by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ExA's second written questions (ExQ2) • the Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES) and any associated questions (if required) 	Monday 08 December 2025
13.	Deadline 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responses to ExQ2 • the applicant's updates – refer to Annex E • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules • comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 4, and any other information requested by the ExA for Deadline 4 • any other information submitted by the applicant 	Monday 29 December 2025
14.	Deadline 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the applicant's updates – refer to Annex E • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules • comments on the RIES (if provided) • comments on any further information/submissions received by 	Monday 12 January 2026

	<p>Deadline 5 and any other information requested by the ExA for Deadline 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any other information submitted by the applicant 	
15.	<p>Publication by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ExA's third written questions (ExQ3) (if required) the ExA's commentary on, or schedule of changes to, the draft DCO (if required) 	Monday 26 January 2026
16.	<p>Deadline 7</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> responses to the ExQ3 (if provided) comments on the ExA's commentary on, or schedule of changes to, the draft DCO (if provided) the applicant's updates – refer to annex E comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 6, and any other information requested by the ExA for Deadline 6 any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules 	Monday 09 February 2026
17.	<p>Deadline 8</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> closing summary statement from parties regarding matters that they have previously raised during the examination and that have not been resolved to their satisfaction the applicant's clean version of the final draft DCO in Microsoft Word, the email notification from legislation.gov.uk confirming successful validation and the validation report the applicant's final updates – refer to annex E the applicant's closing summary statement comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 7 	Monday 16 February 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	
18.	Close of examination The ExA intends to close the examination on this date. See 'Note about the close of examination date'.	Monday 23 February 2026

Note about the close of examination date

The ExA is under a duty to complete the examination of the application by the end of the period of 6 months beginning with the day after the close of the preliminary meeting. The ExA may however decide to close the examination earlier and on the date specified in the timetable if it considers that the application and relevant matters have been examined adequately.

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.

Hearing agendas

Please note that for ISHs and CAHs the ExA will publish a high-level agenda alongside the notification of the hearing to help inform your decision about whether to register to participate. A detailed draft agenda will be made available on the project webpage at least 5 working days in advance of the hearing date. However, the actual agenda on the day of each hearing may be subject to change at the discretion of the ExA. For OFHs agendas may not be published.

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.

The Applicant's Updates

The draft Examination Timetable in **annex D** includes deadlines for the applicant to provide updates to the examination. The deadlines are set at points in the timetable where it will help with the smooth running of the examination for the ExA to have the up-to-date information at that time. This annex sets out the ExA's request for the matters to be included in those updates. Please note that final updates must be submitted by **deadline 6**.

Statements of Common Ground

Annex G sets out the additional Statements of Common Ground between the applicant and various interested parties that are requested by the ExA, and the matters to be covered.

The Statements of Common Ground are to be accompanied by a document summarising:

- the status of each Statement of Common Ground
- the matters agreed between the applicant and each interested party
- the main outstanding concerns held by each interested party, the reasons for those concerns, the next steps to be taken to address them and the progress anticipated by the next deadline and by the close of the examination
- when it is anticipated that any draft Statements of Common Ground will be finalised and when the finalised signed and dated copies will be submitted to the examination.

The ExA notes the applicant's submission of several draft statements of common ground, namely a draft Statement of Common Ground (dSoCG) with Lincolnshire County Council [[APP-281](#)], a dSoCG with North Kesteven District Council [[APP-282](#)], a dSoCG with Boston Borough Council [[APP-283](#)] and a dSoCG with Anglian Water [[APP-284](#)]. However, the applicant is requested to develop additional Statements of Common Ground with the various interested parties included in **annex G**.

Updates to the Book of Reference, Statement of Reasons and Land Plans

To include:

- The latest, fully up-to-date versions of the Book of Reference, Statement of Reasons, Land Plans, Special Category Land Plans, and any related updates to the draft Development Consent Order.
- Clean copies and copies showing tracked changes to the previous versions.
- Each version supplied with unique revision numbers that are updated consecutively from the application versions, clearly indicated within the body of each document, and included within the electronic filename.
- A 'Schedule of Land Rights Changes' report, or equivalent, setting out the reasons for the changes included in each update.

Detailed Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker

The ExA notes the submission of a Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker [[APP-045](#)] by the applicant. However, having reviewed the submitted Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker and considered the nature of the proposed development, the number of land interests identified, the proportion of unresolved land agreements and the profile of affected land (which includes Crown Land), the ExA requests further detail to be included, in line with a [Detailed Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker](#), and for this to be submitted by the applicant in support of the application.

The [Detailed Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker](#) should then replace the submitted Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker [[APP-045](#)] and be updated throughout the examination as per the detailed Timetable.

The ExA recognises that the Detailed Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker represent a change in relation to the documents and components requested of the applicant up to this stage. However, for the reasons stated above, the ExA believes that a Detailed Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker will assist in the running and optimisation of the examination process. Also, as set out in [the Planning Inspectorate's guidance](#) in relation to pre-application, a detailed land and rights negotiation tracker is more suitable for complex land and rights profile which, for example, may include crown land as it is the case with the proposed development.

The above information will be published on the [project webpage](#), so commercial and/or confidential details need not be given.

Updates to the draft Development Consent Order and Explanatory Memorandum

To include:

- The latest, fully up-to-date versions of the draft Development Consent Order and Explanatory Memorandum.
- Clean copies and copies showing tracked changes to the previous versions.
- A copy of the draft Development Consent Order, showing tracked changes to the application version.
- A clean copy of the draft Development Order in Microsoft Word.
- Each version supplied with unique revision numbers that are updated consecutively from the application versions, clearly indicated within the body of each document, and included within the electronic filename.
- A report validating that the draft Development Consent Order is in the Statutory Instrument template (obtained from the publishing section of the [legislation.gov.uk](#) website) and email validation confirmation.
- A 'Schedule of Changes to the draft Development Consent Order' report, or equivalent, setting out the reasons for the changes included in each update.

Schedule of the latest versions of the applicant's submission documents and documents to be certified

To include:

- An updated Application Guide [[AS-004](#)] schedule identifying the latest version of each individual document and plan submitted by the applicant and identifying those documents that are to be certified under the draft Development Consent Order.
- A new Column to Table 2.1: List of Application Documents of the Application Guide [[AS-004](#)] setting out the purpose of all new documents and plans and the broad reasons for the changes to any document or plan included in each update.
- Clean copies of any new documents or plans.
- For any updated documents or plans, clean copies and copies showing tracked changes to the previous versions.
- Updates supplied with unique revision numbers that are updated consecutively from the application versions, clearly indicated within the body of each document, within the electronic filename, and (for the certified documents or plans) in the draft Development Consent Order.

Schedule of progress in securing other consents

To include:

- An update to the Other Consents and Licenses Statement [[APP-276](#)] to include an update to table 2.1 Other Consent and Licenses which should detail a schedule of all other consents (including any licences or agreements) required for the delivery of the proposed development, including the name of the consent, the relevant legislation (or policy or guidance), the consenting authority, the scope of the consent, why it is required, and when it is expected to be obtained.
- A summary of the up-to-date position in respect of obtaining the necessary consents and whether there is any reason to believe that any consent will not be granted.
- Where the Environment Agency or Natural England are the consenting authority, and without prejudice to their subsequent decision, written confirmation of whether they have any reason to believe that any consent will not be granted. As well as being required for the ExA to assess the adequacy of the applicant's mitigation proposals, this is required for the ExA to report any known impediments to the Secretary of State.
- A summary of the progress made since the last update, any outstanding matters, the next steps to be taken, and the progress anticipated by the next deadline and by the close of the examination.

Notification of initial hearings

The Examining Authority (ExA) provides notice of the following initial hearings:

Date	Hearing	Start time	Joining details
Tuesday 23 September 2025	Open Floor Hearing (ISH1)	Registration process from: 14:30 Hearing starts: 15:00	This hearing will be held virtually using Microsoft Teams Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered
Wednesday 24 September 2025	Issue Specific Hearing (ISH1) on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Matters • Need, Site Selection and Alternatives • Water Environment and Flood Risk • Access and Traffic 	Registration process from: 09:30 Hearing starts: 10:00	This hearing will be held virtually using Microsoft Teams Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered
Thursday 25 September 2025	Time reserved for continuation of ISH1 (if required)	Registration process from: 09:30 Hearing resumes: 10:00	This hearing will be held virtually using Microsoft Teams Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered
NOTE: If any of the above hearings are no longer required then notification that a particular date is no longer required will be published as soon as practicable on the project webpage , providing reasonable notice to interested parties of the decision to cancel them.			

You must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by procedural deadline A, Tuesday 16 September 2025, if you intend to participate in any of the hearings and provide all the information requested (see below).

If you simply wish to observe the hearings then you do not need to register as you will be able to watch a livestream of the events. A link to the livestream will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin. You will also be able to watch the recording of the events which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the events have finished.

Any request to participate in a hearing **must 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)
- 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 compulsory acquisition hearings, 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.

Requests to participate should be made using the [event participation form](#) on or before **procedural deadline A, Tuesday 16 September 2025**.

Depending on the number of requests, each party may be given a limited amount of time to make oral submissions (as a guide, each speaker should complete their oral submission within 10 minutes).

Please contact the case team using the contact details at the top of this letter if you require any support or assistance to attend any of the hearings.

Hearing agendas

For issue specific hearings and compulsory acquisition hearings the ExA will publish a detailed draft agenda on the project webpage at least 5 working days in advance of the hearing date. However, the actual agenda on the day of each hearing may be subject to change at the discretion of the ExA. For open floor hearings an agenda may not be published.

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 Planning Inspectorate's advice for members of the public 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](#)

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.

Other procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority

The Examining Authority (ExA) has made the following procedural decisions:

1. Statements of common ground (SoCG)

In relation to some of the principal issues identified in **annex C** to this letter, the ExA would be assisted by the preparation of SoCGs between the applicant and certain interested parties. The draft examination timetable at **annex D** to this letter therefore establishes **deadline 1** for submission of SoCGs.

The aim of a SoCG is to agree factual information and to inform the ExA and all other parties by identifying where there is agreement and where the differences lie at an early stage in the examination process. It should provide a focus and save time by identifying matters which are not in dispute or need not be the subject of further evidence. It can also usefully state where and why there may be disagreement about the interpretation and relevance of the information. Unless otherwise stated or agreed, the SoCG should be agreed between the applicant and the other relevant interested party or parties, and submitted **by the applicant**.

All of the SoCGs listed below should cover the articles and requirements in the draft Development Consent Order. Any interested party seeking that an article or requirement is reworded should provide the form of words which are being sought.

In addition to the draft SoCG already provided, SoCGs are requested to be prepared between the applicant and:

A. South Kyme Parish Council, to include:

- all Principal Issues identified in annex D
- any other matters raised by interested local residents, members of the Parish Council or internal consultees

B. Ewerby & Evedon Parish Council to include:

- all Principal Issues identified in annex D
- any other matters raised by interested local residents, members of the Parish Council or internal consultees

C. Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board (IDB), to include:

- effects on both the IDB and non IDB maintained watercourses
- adequacy of information in relation to watercourse crossings
- byelaws under the Land Drainage Act 1991
- relevant other agreements, consents, permits and licences

D. Environment Agency, to include:

- applicant's assessment (including survey areas, baseline data and methodology) in relation to flood risk and drainage, groundwater protection and water resources
- compliance with the Water Framework Directive
- appropriateness and effectiveness of the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) and the Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (ODEMP)
- relevant other agreements, consents, permits and licences

C. Forestry Commission, to include:

- effects on ancient and veteran trees, priority habitats, and protected woodlands
- appropriateness and effectiveness of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, the Vegetation Removal Plan, the Landscape Strategy Plan, the OCEMP and the ODEMP

D. Historic England, to include:

- effects on designated heritage assets including listed building, and schedule ancient monuments
- effects on archaeological remains and the appropriateness of any preservation measures proposed at construction and decommissioning stages, including those in the OCEMP and the ODEMP
- any other issues which Historic England may wish to raise in relation to heritage assets

E. Natural England, to include:

- effects on internationally designated sites, protected species (including otters, water voles and wintering birds) land use and soils (including best most versatile agricultural land) and any other relevant ecology and biodiversity features
- effects on sites and features relevant to a Habitats Regulations Assessment, including but not limited to qualifying features assessed and approach to in-combination assessment
- effects on any other habitats, species or relevant habitats
- the suitability and appropriateness of the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) assessment
- mitigation and enhancement measures, including the appropriateness and effectiveness of the Outline Soil Management Plan (OSMP), the OCEMP and the ODEMP
- biodiversity Net Gain
- protected species licences

F. National Highways, to include:

- applicant's assessment in relation to effects of the proposed development on the strategic road network including proposed access routes during construction, operational and decommission phases

- the appropriateness of the applicant's Transport Assessment (TA) traffic impact
- mitigation and enhancement measures, including the appropriateness and effectiveness of the measures included in the OCEMP and the ODEMP
- any other significant issues in relation to the effects of the proposed development on Traffic and Transport

The draft examination timetable makes provision for updated SoCGs to be submitted at various deadlines with final versions by **deadline 8**.

The content of SoCGs will help to inform the ExA about the need to hold any issue specific hearings during the examination, and to enable the ExA and the applicant to give notice of such hearings at least 21 days in advance of them taking place.

2. Accompanied site inspection – suggested locations

The draft examination timetable at **annex D** to this letter includes time for an accompanied site inspection (ASI), if needed, week commencing the **10 November 2025**.

The ExA requests that interested parties submit suggested locations for the ExA to visit as part of an ASI by **procedural deadline A** (16 September 2025). The request must include:

- sufficient information to identify the location
- the issues to be observed at the location
- information on whether the site can be accessed via public land
- the reason why the location has been suggested.

Interested parties should be aware that ASIs are not an opportunity to make any oral representations to the ExA about the proposed development. However, participants may be invited by the ExA to indicate specific features or sites of interest.

The applicant is requested to prepare a draft itinerary for the ASI to be submitted by **deadline 1, 07 October 2025**. This should include:

- relevant locations referred to in the relevant representations received
- any other locations at which the applicant has predicted likely significant environmental effects
- the locations suggested by interested parties submitted by **procedural deadline A** (16 September 2025).

Comments by interested parties on the applicant's draft itinerary must be submitted by **deadline 2, 21 October 2025**.

The ExA will consider each suggested site location, including those provided in the applicant's draft itinerary, 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. The ExA 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.

The ExA will publish its final itinerary at least 5 working days before the date of the ASI.

3. Local Impact Reports

The ExA requests Local Impact Reports (LIRs) from the host local authorities and welcomes LIRs from any other relevant local authority who may wish to submit one. All LIRs are requested to be submitted by **deadline 1, Tuesday 7 October 2025**.

4. Relevant representations (RRs)

The ExA requests the applicant provides responses to all RRs and summaries and responses to all RRs exceeding 1500 words by **deadline 1, Tuesday 7 October 2025**.

5. Written representations (WRs)

The ExA requests that WRs from interested parties are submitted by **deadline 1, Tuesday 7 October 2025 alongside a summary of any** and summaries of any WRs that exceed 1500 words. The applicant will then be expected to provide a response to any WRs by **deadline 2, Tuesday 21 October 2025**.

6. Status of the applicant's examination documents

The ExA requests 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.

7. Additional submissions

In addition to the documentation submitted by **procedural deadline A** the ExA has exercised its discretion and made a procedural decision to accept the following additional submissions, which can be found in the [Examination Library](#):

- Adequacy of Consultation Representation [[AS-001](#)] by Peterborough City Council

- Adequacy of Consultation Representation [[AS-002](#)] by Rutland County Council
- Several submissions in response to s51 Advise [[AS-003 to AS-022](#)] by Beacon Fen Energy Park Limited
- Additional Submission [[AS-023](#)] by Ewerby and Evedon Parish Council

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 beaconfen@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 made to the examination
- each procedural decision made by the Examining Authority

Each document is given a unique reference 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 Find a National Infrastructure Project 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 D** 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.