



## Preliminary Meeting note

**Application:** Fenwick Solar Farm  
**Reference:** EN010152  
**Time and date:** 10:00 Wednesday 19 March 2025  
**Venue:** Doncaster Racecourse

*This meeting note is not a full transcript of the preliminary meeting. It is a summary of the key points discussed.*

### 1. Welcome and Introduction

Rory Cridland (RC) (Lead ExA), welcomed those present and introduced himself as the lead member of the panel of Examining Inspectors, the Examining Authority (ExA) and Samantha Murphy as panel members to examine the Fenwick Solar Farm application.

RC explained the appointment was made by delegation from the Secretary of State (SoS) for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero on 28 January 2025.

RC explained that the ExA would be examining the application made by Fenwick Solar Project Limited ('the applicant') before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State who will decide whether an order granting development consent for the proposed project, which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), should be made.

Samantha Murphy (SM) explained the purpose of the preliminary meeting (PM) and noted that the Examination will commence after the PM closes.

The ExA confirmed that all documents and submissions received and accepted during the Examination will be published on the [project-specific page of the National Infrastructure Planning website](#).

The video recording of this PM is available on the National Infrastructure Planning website and can be accessed [here](#)

### 2. Examination process

The ExA briefly explained the examination process under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008), further info can be found:

- ['Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: What to expect at a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project event'](#)
- ['Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Registering to speak at, or attend, an event'](#)

The ExA clarified the purpose of:

- Issue specific hearings
- Compulsory acquisition hearings
- Open floor hearings
- Accompanied site inspections
- Unaccompanied site inspections

The ExA sought comments on the arrangements for the above events. These were duly noted and considered by the ExA. Further information relating to hearings and site inspections can be found in the links below:

- ['Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: What to expect at a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project event'](#)
- ['Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Registering to speak at, or attend, an event'](#)

SM explained that an Unaccompanied Site Inspection (USI) took place on 18 March 2025 and that a record of this inspection will be published on the [project website](#) in due course. Further USI's may take place at other viewpoints listed in the Environmental Statement or other locations suggested by Interested Parties. Details of these inspections will also be published on the [project website](#). If an Accompanied Site Inspection is required this will commence on the week commencing the 16 June 2025.

### **3. Initial assessment of principal issues**

The ExA explained the purpose of the initial assessment of principal issues (section 88 of the PA2008), which can be found in [annex C](#) of the [Rule 6](#) letter of 18 February 2025 and asked for any observations on them.

Able UK Ltd and Elba Securities Ltd highlighted that the Scope of Compulsory Acquisition Issues is not listed. The ExA confirmed that this was purposely not listed as this is assessed separately similarly to the draft DCO, however this is an integral part of the examination process and will be assessed in great detail.

### **4. Examination Timetable**

The ExA noted requests, already received in writing, to amend the draft examination timetable contained in [annex D](#) of Rule 6 letter and also welcomed further suggestions from the parties in attendance. RC highlighted that the proposed timetable is 5 months and no issues were raised with this length by any of the parties in attendance.

All comments on the timetable were duly noted by the ExA and considerations will be reflected in the rule 8 Letter.

The examination timetable can be found in the [rule 8](#) letter published on 31 March 2025.

### **5. Procedural decisions**

The ExA clarified the procedural decisions made under section 89(3) of the PA2008 and asked for any observations.

Procedural decisions can be found in [annex F](#) of the Rule 6 Letter.

The applicant proposed the following:

- Statements of Common Ground (SoCC) for Natural England, The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and The Burnet Heritage Trust - The applicant proposes to have separate SoCC for each party as separate matters are covered for each party and drafting of these separate documents has already commenced.
- SoCC are not required for Network Rail Infrastructure Limited, Northern Power Grid Yorkshire PLC, National Grid Electricity Transmission PLC as negotiations are currently under way with protective provisions and corresponding side agreements. Those documents will cover all matters of concern. Any SoCC would just state that such negotiations are underway and objections would be withdrawn once those documents have been agreed and signed.
- SoCC is not necessary for Historic England. As per Historic England's Procedural Deadline 1 submission (PD1-003) they have withdrawn from the Examination and therefore a SoCC is not necessary.

RC responded and was concerned that if SOCC was not provided for the negotiations with Network Rail Infrastructure Limited, Northern Power Grid Yorkshire PLC, National Grid Electricity Transmission PLC then details of those negotiations would be quite limited for the ExA and other Interested parties to examine. SoCC's allow issues to be tracked throughout the Examination. In addition the risk is the issues not being resolved before the close of examination and ExA being unaware of the issues between those parties.

The applicant outlined that they expect agreements to be made very early in the process.

To avoid duplication RC proposed no SoCC with those parties are needed at Deadline 1 but if there are significant issues still outstanding halfway through the examination the ExA may issue a Rule 17 request for SoCC for those parties so the ExA can see current progress with securing agreements. The final decision on this will be confirmed in the Rule 8 letter.

Able UK Ltd and Elba Securities Ltd requested to be added to the list for SoCC. The applicant agreed they are happy to enter into discussions and enter something in draft form at deadline 1.

SM requested SoCC be received from the applicant at least in draft form at Deadline 1. The applicant agreed to start negotiations and will aim for that deadline.

No other issues were raised about the examination process and RC then advised of the next steps in issuing the Rule 8 letter to confirm the Examination Timetable and any other procedural decisions made as a result of this hearing. RC then advised that this note along with the hearing recordings will be published on the [project web page of the National Infrastructure website](#). RC then proceeded to close the hearing which closed at 10:43am on Wednesday 19 March 2025.