



Planning Inspectorate

Preliminary meeting note

Application: Dean Moor Solar Farm
Reference: EN010155
Time and date: 10:00am 22 July 2025
Venue: Via Microsoft Teams

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

Matthew Woodward welcomed those present and introduced himself as the single appointed Inspector, the Examining Authority (ExA) to examine the Dean Moor Solar Farm application.

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

The ExA explained that he would be examining the application made by FVS Dean Moor 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.

The ExA 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, and encouraged all attendees to familiarise themselves with the webpage as it is the primary means of communication throughout the Examination.

2. Audio recording

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

3. General Data Protection Regulation

The ExA explained The Planning Inspectorate's duties under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Further info relating to the GDPR can be found in the Planning Inspectorate's ['Privacy Note'](#).

4. Examination process

The ExA briefly explained the examination process under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008), further information 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'](#)

5. 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** to the [rule 6 letter](#) of 24 June 2025, and asked for any observations on them.

No comments regarding the initial assessment of principal issues were made by any of the parties in attendance.

6. Examination Timetable

The ExA summarised key points of the draft timetable, set out in **annex D** to the [rule 6 letter](#), and in particular noted that it did not encompass the full six months allowed in legislation. The ExA explained that he considered the period given was sufficient to enable the project to be thoroughly assessed, and that if there were changes to the timetable during the Examination process, all interested parties would be notified.

The ExA noted comments already received in writing regarding the differing timescales set out in the draft timetable for hearing attendance requests and also welcomed further suggestions from the parties in attendance.

The ExA explained that due to the anticipated timescales for the Examination, there would be limited potential for any change requests. The applicant confirmed, without prejudice to issues that might arise during the examination, a change request is not envisioned at this stage.

All comments received, both written and during the meeting, 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 25 July 2025.

7. Hearings and site inspections

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, and also explained that he had already undertaken an unaccompanied site inspection. These were duly noted and considered by the ExA.

Further information relating to hearings and site inspections 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'](#)

8. 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 E** to the [rule 6 letter](#). The ExA also outlined additional procedural decisions that he had made since publication of the rule 6 letter.

The ExA noted that he invited Cumbria Wildlife Trust (CWT) to the Preliminary Meeting as an 'other person' and to participate in the Examination at the ExA's discretion. It was confirmed by the applicant that they intended to engage CWT on a SoCG.

Cumberland Council confirmed that it was content with the examination timetable relating to the SoCG with the applicant, and the submission of its Local Impact Report.

In response to **annex E** of the [rule 6 letter](#), the applicant confirmed that they had received confirmation from Dumfries and Galloway Council, Northumberland County Council, Northumberland National Park Authority and Scottish Borders Council that they did not wish to engage with the applicant in relation to completing a SoCG. The applicant stated that a response was awaited in relation to Westmoreland and Furness Council. The ExA acknowledged that this response would be considered.

The ExA noted that the applicant was also undertaking a SoCG with the Mining Remediation Authority (formerly the Coal Authority) and while the ExA had not originally requested this, agreed that it would be helpful.

9. Other matters

The ExA explained that while this meeting was being held virtually, he hoped to hold any future hearings in blended format with a venue near the site. The applicant confirmed that it had carried out a search for suitable venues, and had suggested Washington Central Hotel in Wokington, but that there was limited availability of venues that met requirements on the suggested dates. The ExA suggested it may be worth discussing this with Cumberland Council given their local knowledge.

The ExA thanked the interested parties for attending the meeting, and confirmed that he was aware of the contents of their relevant representations and their concerns regarding the scheme. While those were not discussed at this meeting, he confirmed that they would be considered as part of the Examination.