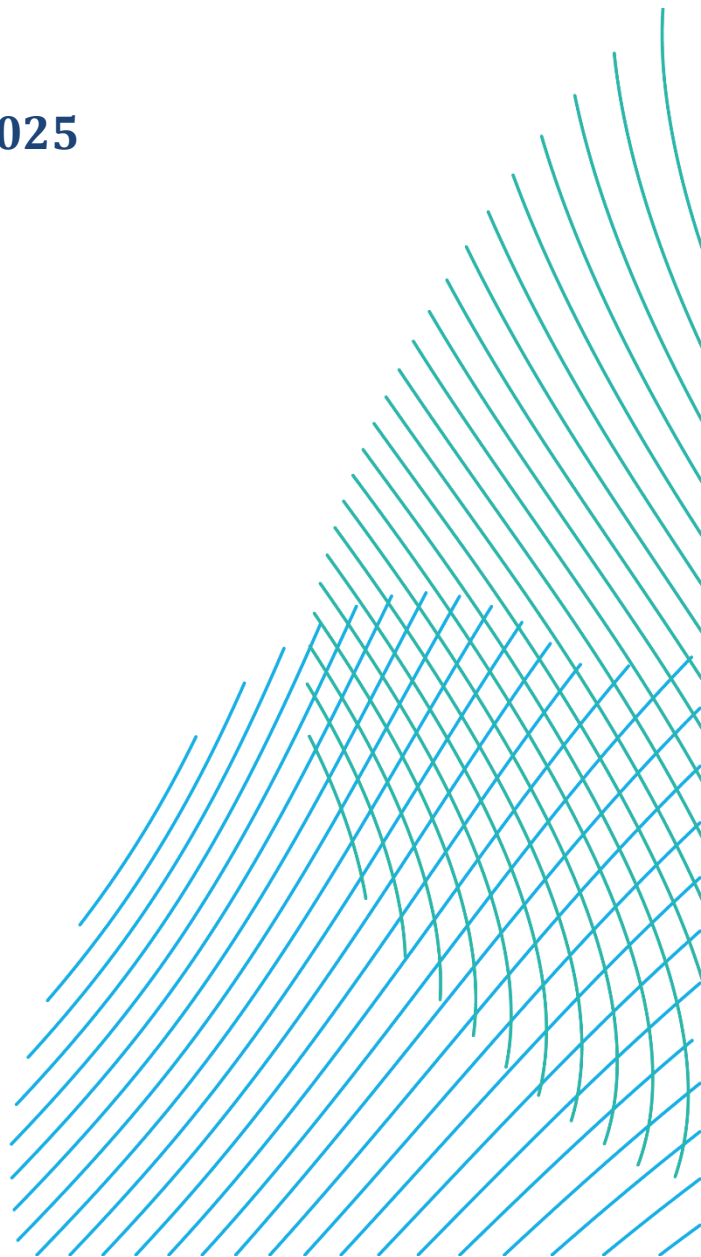




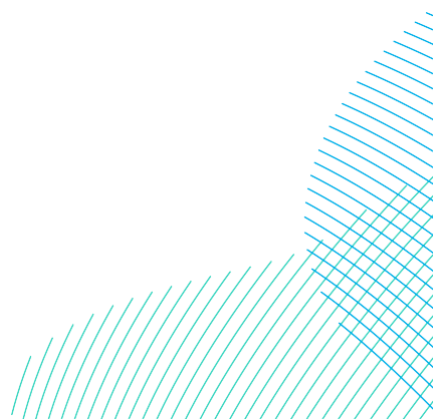
Statement of Common Ground with National Highways (draft)

August 2025



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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this document

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (hereafter referred to as the 'SoCG') has been prepared to support the Examination of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application (the 'DCO Application') for Peartree Hill Solar Farm (the 'Proposed Development').
- 1.1.2 The DCO Application is for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) for the construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) array electricity generating facility, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure which would allow for the generation and export of electricity.
- 1.1.3 The SoCG is a 'live' document that has been prepared collaboratively by the Applicant and the Consultee (National Highways).
- 1.1.4 The SoCG has been prepared in accordance with the Guidance for examination of DCO applications which was published in 2024 by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities¹.
- 1.1.5 This Guidance comments that:
"A statement of common ground is a written statement prepared jointly by the applicant and another party or parties, setting out any matters on which they agree, or indeed disagree. A SoCG helps to ensure that the evidence at examination focuses on the material differences between the main parties and therefore makes best use of the lines of questioning pursued by the Examining Authority".
- 1.1.6 The aim of this SoCG is to therefore provide a clear position of the progress and agreement made or not yet made between the Applicant and National Highways on matters relating to the Proposed Development. Where matters are yet to be agreed, the parties will continue to proactively work to reach agreement.
- 1.1.7 The SoCG will be updated as more information becomes available and as a result of ongoing discussions between the Applicant and National Highways.

1.2 Parties to this Statement of Common Ground

- 1.2.1 This SoCG has been prepared by (1) the Applicant and (2) National Highways.

¹ Planning Act 2008: Examination stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (April 2024)

- 1.2.2 National Highways are responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the Strategic Road Network (SRN) within England which has the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development
- 1.2.3 Collectively, the Applicant and National Highways are referred to as 'the parties'.

1.3 Terminology

- 1.3.1 Section 3 of this document sets out the relevant matters raised though discussion between the parties. It provides a summary of the position of each party and identifies the status of discussions on each matter:
- “Agreed” indicates where the issue has been resolved between the parties and is not anticipated to be subject to further discussions;
 - “Under discussion” indicates where a matter remains in active dialogue between the parties and a final position has not yet been reached;
 - “Not Agreed” indicates where the parties have established a final position that they cannot resolve the matter and will remain a point of difference.

2 Record of Engagement

2.1 Summary of consultation and engagement

- 2.1.1 The parties have been engaged in consultation and engagement throughout the development of the Proposed Development. Table 1 shows a summary of the meetings and correspondence that has taken place between the Applicant and National Highways in relation to the Proposed Development. This is limited to engagement which is materially relevant to the contents of this SoCG and does not seek to include every correspondence between the parties (e.g. that which was primarily administrative).

Table 1: Record of Engagement since March 2024

Date	Purpose of engagement	Description
25 March 2024	To discuss the potential impact of the Proposed Development on the Strategic Road Network.	Online meeting to introduce the Proposed Development and to provide a summary of the potential worst-case site traffic scenario and potential impacts on the Strategic Road Network.
November 2024	To provide an update on the project, to outline how National Highways' statutory consultation comments had been addressed in the relevant DCO Application documentation and to reach agreement on any outstanding issues prior to submission of the DCO Application.	Email correspondence setting out where in the DCO Application documentation National Highways' statutory consultation comments had been addressed and confirming there were no outstanding issues at that stage.

3 Current Position

- 3.1.1 The table below provides a summary of the current position of the Applicant and National Highways in relation to specific matters that have been under discussion to date.
- 3.1.2 Where a matter is not represented in the table, it should be assumed that it is either: (i) agreed between the parties and has not been the subject of detailed discussion; or (ii) not relevant to the discussion between the parties.
- 3.1.3 As noted above, this is a 'live' document and there are some aspects that are still under discussion between the parties. The intention is to provide a final position in subsequent versions of the SoCG, addressing and identifying where changes have been made and where agreement has been reached between the parties.

Table 2: Current position of the Applicant and National Highways in relation to specific matters that have been under discussion to date

Ref	Topic	National Highways Position	Applicant's Position	Status
NH01	Potential impacts on the Strategic Road Network – construction <i>Transport and Access</i>	In their relevant representation [RR-011] , National Highways agrees that the construction impact associated with the peak construction period of the Proposed Development will be limited and can be appropriately managed by the measures outlined within the Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan.	The Applicant welcomes this response. See Environmental Statement (ES) Volume 2, Chapter 14: Transport and Access [APP-050] and associated appendices and the Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN010157/APP/7.7 Revision 2] for details.	Agreed
NH02	Potential impacts on the SRN – operation <i>Transport and Access</i>	In their relevant representation [RR-011] , National Highways agrees that the daily operation of the Proposed Development will not incur a material impact at the SRN owing to the very limited staff presence necessitated by the facility once operational.	The Applicant welcomes this response. See Environmental Statement (ES) Volume 2, Chapter 14: Transport and Access [APP-050] and associated appendices for details.	Agreed
NH03	Potential impacts on the SRN – decommissioning <i>Transport and Access</i>	In their relevant representation [RR-011] , National Highways agrees that the Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan is appropriate in presenting a framework methodology for securing and mitigating any potential impact at the SRN at the point of site decommissioning.	The Applicant welcomes this response. See Environmental Statement (ES) Volume 2, Chapter 14: Transport and Access [APP-050] and associated appendices and the Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010157/APP/7.4 Revision 2] for details.	Agreed

4 Signatures

4.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground is agreed upon:

On behalf of National Highways:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

On behalf of the Applicant:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

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