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To interested parties

Our Ref: EN010157

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The Planning Act 2008 – sections 89 and 123, The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – rule 9 and The Infrastructure Planning (Compulsory Acquisition) Regulations 2010 – regulation 6

Application by RWE Renewables UK Solar and Storage Limited (the applicant) for an order granting development consent for Peartree Hill Solar Farm (EN010157)

Procedural decision following the applicant's request to make changes to the application

The Examining Authority (ExA) is writing to inform you of its procedural decision relating to the applicant's request to make changes to the application. The ExA has decided **to accept** the applicant's proposed changes to the application into the examination. All documents referred to herein have been published on the [project page](#) of the Find a National Infrastructure Project website. The documents can also be found using the [examination library](#) (EL).

Background

The applicant notified the ExA via a letter dated 6 August 2025 [[AS-015](#)] that it intended to submit a request to make changes to the application, to which the ExA provided a response [[PD-010](#)]. The applicant subsequently submitted a formal request for the proposed changes at examination deadline 2 on 10 September 2025. The relevant documents can be found with EL references [REP2-046 to REP2-152]. The document titled Change Application [REP2-149] sets out the details of the changes proposed and the reasons for them. The proposed changes broadly reflect those outlined in the initial notification (albeit Change 9 seeks some additional land for temporary possession which had not previously been identified), and can be summarised as follows:

- a) **Change 3** – alteration to the Order limits to enable the creation of a revised access point on the western side of the A165 to aid the laying of the B-B cable route between the solar array areas in Land Area B and for maintenance of that cable during operation.

- b) **Change 4** – alteration to the Order limits to improve access for construction of the grid connection cable route on the A1174 and for maintenance during operation.
- c) **Change 5** – alteration to the Order limits to improve access for construction of the grid connection cable route on Long Lane and for maintenance during operation.
- d) **Change 6** – alteration to the Order limits to improve access for construction of the grid connection cable route on the approach to the National Grid Creyke Beck substation and to facilitate future access to the grid connection cable route for maintenance during operation.
- e) **Change 7** – the construction of an additional permanent bridge connecting fields C5/ C8 for construction purposes and for maintenance during operation.
- f) **Change 8** – alteration to the Order limits to the north of the A1079 to provide greater flexibility in the placement of the grid connection cable.
- g) **Change 9** – alterations to the Order limits to accommodate a new temporary and/ or permanent access route directly off the A1035 for construction and for maintenance during operation and the removal of the internal access track off the west of Meaux Lane, which would no longer be required for construction or maintenance purposes as a result. This would remove any potential impacts on a veteran tree and would reduce the level of construction traffic using Meaux Lane.

ExA's consideration of the change request

In reaching our decision to accept the proposed changes to the application, the ExA has had regard to the Planning Inspectorate's advice page on [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Changes to an application after it has been accepted for examination](#). The ExA has also had regard to the provisions of the Infrastructure Planning (Compulsory Acquisition) Regulations 2010 (CA Regulations).

The question as to whether a change is material or not is for the ExA to determine. Having reviewed the change request documents, the ExA takes the view that Changes 3 to 8 would be unlikely to result in any materially new or materially different effects, including incrementally, to those reported in the environmental statement (ES) submitted with the application.

Regarding Change 9, the ExA notes that if Plot 2A-5 were to be used temporarily for construction traffic including heavy goods vehicles, thereby negating a need to use the part of Plot 2A-4 adjacent to residential properties associated with Field House Farm, this change would be unlikely to result in any materially new or materially different effects (including in respect of noise and vibration), including incrementally, to those reported in the ES submitted with the application. However, the ExA notes from the Change Application Consultation Report [REP2-150] the concerns of the landowner of this plot and the implications the use of this plot may have for the delivery of a consented solar farm known as Field House Solar Farm. The ExA considers there to be insufficient information at the current time to reach an informed conclusion on the matter and thus, it is likely that this matter would be explored further during examination.

The alternative to the use of Plot 2A-5, as set out as part of the change request, would be to use the whole of Plot 2A-4 for construction traffic. However, this would bring it in closer proximity to residential properties associated with Field House Farm. The ExA notes that the applicant has updated assessments in respect of traffic and transport and has updated ES Chapter 14: Transport and Access [REP2-081] in this regard, finding no significant effects for users of the existing access route along Plot 2A-4. The ExA also notes the applicant's conclusions that construction vehicle movements in this scenario would be

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unlikely to result in any significant effects in respect of other environmental aspects, including noise and vibration. The applicant thus considers the proposed change would be unlikely to result in any materially new or materially different effects, including incrementally, to those reported in the ES submitted with the application. Whilst the ExA has no substantive evidence to demonstrate the contrary, noting from the Change Application Consultation Report some concerns of the landowner and others in respect of these matters, it is likely that these matters would be explored further during examination.

The ExA recognises that the proposed changes (except for Change 7) would engage the prescribed procedures of the CA Regulations, given that additional land and powers of compulsory acquisition (CA) and temporary possession (TP) would be required. For this reason alone, the ExA considers that the proposed changes, taken together, amount to a material change to the application.

Having regard to the prescribed procedures of the CA Regulations, and Table 11.4 of the Change Application [REP2-149], the ExA is satisfied that there is sufficient time remaining in the examination process (taking into account statutory timeframes as necessary) to examine the changed application. This will require the applicant to strictly adhere to its commitments in Table 11.4 and appropriately discharge its duties under the CA Regulations, including regulations 7, 8 and 9. The ExA does however note, and has some initial concerns around the very limited timeframe between the dates of 25 and 28 November 2025 in rows 9 and 10 of Table 11.4 (including taking into account time required by the Planning Inspectorate for its processes for the publication of documents as well as allowing sufficient time in general for parties to respond as necessary). The ExA would consider this further, amongst other things, in any future updates to the examination timetable arising from the changed application.

The ExA notes the consultation that the applicant has carried out as detailed in the Change Application Consultation Report [REP2-149]. Having regard to this and having carefully considered the responses of consultees around the consultation process, the ExA is satisfied that the applicant has undertaken adequate consultation and engagement for the purposes of submitting the formal change request. Moreover, there will be the opportunity for any parties affected by the proposed changes to submit representations and if required, to be heard at hearings, during the course of the examination.

Accordingly, on this basis of the above, the ExA concludes that the proposed changes amount to a material change. Nevertheless, the ExA also considers, notwithstanding concerns raised in some consultee responses as set out in the Change Application Consultation Report, that by accepting the changes, the project would be substantially the same as the project which was initially applied for. The ExA also considers that there is sufficient time remaining in the examination process to examine the changes and adhere to the prescribed procedures of the CA Regulations. The ExA has thus decided to accept the proposed changes into the examination.

Next steps

It is now the applicant's responsibility to publicise the changes that incorporate additional land in accordance with the CA Regulations. The applicant must advise the Case Team of its proposed schedule as soon as possible, so that an appropriate form for making relevant representations about the proposed provision for the CA and TP of additional land can be made available on the project page of the Find a National Infrastructure Project website.

Following completion of the relevant representation period, and if required, a revised examination timetable, which addresses the change request, will be issued under rule 8(3) of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010. The revised examination timetable, if required, will be issued after the close of the relevant representation period related to this change request. Such a revised examination timetable would be likely to include relevant deadline(s) for written representations to be submitted, periods within which responses should be submitted and an indication of any necessary hearings.

Please note that the acceptance of the proposed changes is made on the basis that all the processes can be completed in the required time prior to the close of the examination (taking into account statutory timeframes as necessary) and in accordance with any revised examination timetable that may be published in due course. If this is not achieved, then the ExA will not be in a position to take the change request into account in our recommendation report to the Secretary of State as it will not have complied with the relevant statutory procedures.

Please do not hesitate to contact the case team using the contact details at the head of this letter should you have any queries.

Yours faithfully

Alex Hutson

Lead member of the Examining Authority

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