



Planning Inspectorate
c/o QUADIENT
69 Buckingham Avenue
Slough
SL1 4PN

Customer
Services: 0303 444 5000

email: Rosefieldsolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

All interested parties, statutory parties and other persons invited to the preliminary meeting

Your Ref:

Our Ref: EN010158

Date: 27 January 2026

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 Rosefield Energyfarm Limited for an order granting development consent for the Rosefield Solar Farm

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

On 30 October 2025 The Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government appointed Helena Obremski as lead member of the Examining Authority [[PD-004](#)], however, she has now submitted her resignation under s66(3) of the Planning Act 2008. I have been appointed as replacement lead member of the ExA with effect from 27 February 2026 [PD-007]. My name is Richard Morgan and the other member of the ExA remains as Mark James.

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

Invitation to the preliminary meeting

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	Venue and joining details
24 February 2026	<p>Registration and seating available at venue from:</p> <p>9:00am</p> <p>Virtual registration process from:</p> <p>9:00am</p> <p>Preliminary meeting starts:</p> <p>9:30am</p>	<p>Horwood House, Mursley Road, Little Horwood, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK17 0PH</p> <p>and</p> <p>By virtual means using Microsoft Teams</p> <p>Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered</p>

You must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by 10 February 2026 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 either:

1. 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
2. watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished

Alternatively, you can attend the physical event at the venue to observe the proceedings; however, to ensure there is adequate seating capacity at the venue we request that you register your attendance to **observe only** by **10 February 2026** using the [event participation form](#). Please note that it may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **10 February 2026**.

Purpose of the preliminary meeting

The purpose of the preliminary meeting is to enable views to be put to us 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 we 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 our initial assessment of principal issues arising from our 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.**

We are now requesting written submissions from recipients of this letter about how the application should be examined. We 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, 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** (on 10 February 2026 by 23:59) (see **annex D** to this letter).

We request that all submissions are made using the ['Have your say' page](#) on the project webpage on or before **procedural deadline A**. **Annex H** 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 **10 February 2026** (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 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)
- for blended events, confirmation of whether you will participate virtually or in-person



- 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, either virtually or in person.

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. We remain flexible and will confirm the format of any hearings to be held during the examination stage when we provide formal notification of each hearing in advance of it taking place.

We are providing formal notification that the **preliminary meeting will be a blended event and that the open floor hearing and compulsory acquisition hearing referred to in annex E to this letter will also be blended events.**

After the preliminary meeting

After the preliminary meeting we 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

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

- **Open floor hearing 1 (OFH1)** on 24 February 2026 (afternoon session), with a reserve session to be held on 25 February 2026, if required.
- **Compulsory acquisition hearing 1 (CAH1)** on 25 February 2026 (afternoon session), with a reserve session to be held on 26 February 2026, if required.

Important information about these hearings is contained in **annex E** to this letter, including the venue, type of event (virtual/ in-person/ blended event), session timings, 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

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



- deadline for the submission of written representations and local impact reports
- submission of statements of common ground
- submission of principal areas of disagreement statements
- suggested locations for accompanied site inspections
- the applicant's required updates at examination deadlines
- acceptance of additional submissions

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 PA2008. They should inform them that information about how to do this can be found in the Planning Inspectorate's advice for members of the public: [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and the people and organisations involved in the process](#). 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 H** to this letter.

You can also use the 'Get updates' button on the project webpage 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 Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project 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](#).

Examination documents can also be viewed electronically at the locations listed at **annex G** to this letter.

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](#).

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

Yours faithfully

Richard Morgan

Richard Morgan
Lead Member of 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** Notification of initial hearings
- F** Other procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority
- G** Examination documents
- H** 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 **10 February 2026** 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 either:

1. 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
2. watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished.

Alternatively, you can attend the physical event at the venue to observe the proceedings; however, to ensure there is adequate seating capacity at the venue we request that you register your attendance to **observe only** by **10 February 2026** using the [event participation form](#). Please note that it may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **10 February 2026**.

Please note that by attending the event either in person or 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 be published on the [project webpage](#). A limited number of seats will be available for observers who wish not to be filmed at the venue. Please contact the Case Team to notify them if you prefer not to be filmed at the event. A transcript of the event will also be published on the project page of our website after the event.

Date: **24 February 2026**

Registration process: **9:00am**

Meeting start time: **9:30am**

Venue: **Blended event at Horwood House, Mursley Road, Little Horwood, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK17 0PH and by virtual means using 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	
9:00am	Registration and seating available at venue for in-person attendees
9:00am	<p>Virtual registration process</p> <p>Please arrive at 9:00am 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 9:00am. 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>
9:30am	Preliminary meeting
Item 1	The preliminary meeting will formally open at 9:30am . The Examining Authority will join, welcome participants and lead 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	Any other matters
Close of the preliminary meeting	

If you are participating using Microsoft Teams please join the virtual lobby promptly using the instructions that will be sent to you. The event will start at **9:30am** 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 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)

- for blended events, confirmation of whether you will participate virtually or in-person
- 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 blended event with some participants attending in person and some taking part 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:

Rosefieldsolar@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 Rosefield Solar Farm, 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 Rosefield Energyfarm Limited, who 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, examination documents and the 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 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 relevant sections 14(1)(a) and 15(2), as it includes the construction of an onshore electricity generating station with a total capacity exceeding 50MW. The designated National Policy Statements (NPS) (2024) EN-1, EN-3 and EN-5 apply to this examination and to decision-making relating to this application.

The ExA will consider the proposed development in accordance with NPSs EN1, EN-3 and EN-5 and 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” (section 104(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.

Although updated versions NPSs EN-1, EN-3 and EN-5 came into force on 6 January 2026, section 1.6 of EN-1 makes it clear that for applications accepted for examination before the publication of the final amendments, the 2024 suite of NPSs have effect. However, the updated NPSs are capable of being important and relevant considerations.

The SoS is entitled to disregard any representations that relate to the merits of the designated NPSs. **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 are 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.

The ExA has decided to invite the following other persons to the PM:

- Thames Water Utilities Limited

Conduct of the preliminary meeting

The ExA estimate that the PM will take a few hours to complete.

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 (deadline 1, deadline 2 etc) for receipt of written submissions. Timely submissions received by the relevant deadline will be accepted and each deadline included in the Examination Timetable should be treated as being a '**not later than time and date**'. There is therefore no reason why submissions relating to a particular deadline cannot be made to The Planning Inspectorate in advance of the stated deadline rather than waiting to make submissions on the day of that deadline. Any submissions that are submitted in advance of a deadline will, however, only be published by The Planning Inspectorate following the expiry of the relevant deadline. **Documents received after 23:59 on the relevant deadline may only be 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. Affected persons (AP) (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 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 (**10 March 2026**) 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. Notes of 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 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 ExA following its reading of the application documents, the relevant representations and other submissions received to date, and following 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 SoS after the examination has concluded.

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.

Moreover, whilst matters relating to compulsory acquisition and the draft 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 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:
Need, site selection and alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approach to the consideration of alternatives, including location, scale and technology. • Energy generation and the status of the grid connection.
Biodiversity and ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequacy of the assessments and surveys. • Effects on species and habitats. • Effects on statutory designated and non-designated sites, sites of nature conservation and on any other relevant ecological features. • Habitats Regulations Assessment matters. • Effects on ancient woodland, veteran trees and hedgerows. • Biodiversity net gain assessment and how biodiversity net gain would be secured.

Cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on cultural heritage, including designated and non-designated heritage assets. • Adequacy of mitigation.
Cumulative effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumulative effects from the proposed development and other projects. • Co-ordination with other projects in the vicinity.
Health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment methodology and adequacy. • Significance of effects.
Land and groundwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequacy of the assessments. • Adequacy of the proposed mitigation measures and how they would be secured.
Landscape and visual (including good design)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on landscape character. • Effects on visual amenity. • The adequacy of landscape and visual mitigation.
Noise and vibration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on receptors during construction and operation. • The adequacy of mitigation.
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on businesses, including agricultural businesses. • Effects on tourism and the visitor economy. • Effects on community access for recreation and connectivity walkers, cyclists and horse riders, including public rights of way and permissive paths.
Soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on soils, including best and most versatile agricultural land. • Adequacy of soil management and mitigation. • Implications of the proposed development on food production and food security.
Transport and access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on the road network and road users. • Adequacy of construction traffic management.
Water environment (including flood risk and drainage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequacy of the assessments, including the sequential and exception tests. • Effects on flood risk within and outside the order limits. • Effects on Water Framework Directive waterbodies. • Adequacy of the proposed mitigation measures and how they would be secured.
Other matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of, and effects from the proposed battery energy storage systems. • Overall net greenhouse gas emissions.

Draft examination timetable

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 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 Examining Authority (ExA) of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written submissions on the examination procedure, including any submissions about the use of virtual methods • requests to speak at the preliminary meeting and/ or attend at the venue in person • requests to speak at open floor hearing 1 and/ or attend at the venue in person • requests to speak at compulsory acquisition hearing 1 and/ or attend at the venue in person • comments on relevant representations (RR) and additional submissions • suggested locations for site inspections (accompanied or unaccompanied), including justification, for consideration by the ExA 	10 February 2026
2.	Preliminary meeting	24 February 2026 at 9:30am
3.	Open floor hearing 1 (OFH1) Reserve session for continuation of OFH1 (if required)	24 February 2026 at 1:30pm (25 February 2026 at 9:30am)
4.	Compulsory acquisition hearing 1 (CAH1) Reserve session for continuation of CAH1 (if required)	25 February 2026 at 1:30pm (26 February 2026 at 9:30am)
5.	Issue by the Examining Authority (ExA) of:	As soon as practicable

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the examination timetable 	following the preliminary meeting
6.	<p>Deadline 1</p> <p>For receipt by the Examining Authority (ExA) of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> written summaries of oral submissions made at the hearings and any other post hearing submissions any specific responses to points raised in oral submissions at the hearings the applicant's draft itinerary for an accompanied site inspection (ASI) (if required) local impact reports (LIRs) from local authorities written representations (WR) from interested parties and summaries of any that exceed 1500 words notification by statutory parties of their wish to be considered as an interested party by the ExA responses to comments on relevant representations (RRs) initial principal areas of disagreement statements from interested parties see annex F requests to be heard at a future open floor hearing (OFH), if not already heard requests by interested parties to be heard at an OFH requests to be heard at a future compulsory acquisition hearing (CAH) requests by affected persons (defined in section 59(4) of the Planning Act 2008) to be heard at a CAH the applicant's updates see annex F any other information submitted by the applicant notification of wish to have future correspondence received electronically any further information requested by ExA any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 comments on any further information/ submissions accepted by the ExA 	10 March 2026

7.	Publication of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Examining Authority's first written questions (ExQ1) 	2 April 2026
8.	Deadline 2 For receipt by the Examining Authority (ExA) of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> responses to Examining Authority's first written questions (ExQ1) comments on the local impact reports (LIRs) comments on written representations (WRs) comments on the applicant's draft itinerary for the accompanied site inspection (ASI) (if required) the applicant's updates see annex F any other information submitted by the applicant comments from affected persons on the applicant's updated land and rights negotiations tracker comments on the applicant's revised draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) (if submitted) requests to be heard at hearing(s) during w/c 18 May 2026 any further information requested by ExA any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 comments on any further information received comments on any further information requested by the ExA and received by deadline 1 	22 April 2026
9.	Dates reserved (if required) for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any compulsory acquisition hearing any issue specific hearing any open floor hearing accompanied site inspection 	Week commencing 18 May 2026
10.	Deadline 3 For receipt by the Examining Authority (ExA) of:	27 May 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written summaries of oral submissions made at the hearings and any other post hearing submissions • any specific responses to points raised in oral submissions at the hearings • responses to comments on local impact reports (LIRs) • responses to comments on written representations (WRs) • comments on responses to Examining Authority's first written questions (ExQ1) • submission of any draft section 106 agreement(s) (if required) • the applicant's updates see annex F • any other information submitted by the applicant • any further information requested by ExA any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 • comments on any further information received comments on any further information requested by the ExA and received by deadline 2 	
11.	Publication of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Examining Authority's second written questions (ExQ2) • the Report on the Implications of European Sites (RIES) (if required) 	5 June 2026
12.	Deadline 4 For receipt by the Examining Authority (ExA) of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responses to Examining Authority's second written questions (ExQ2) • the applicant's updates see annex F • any other information submitted by the applicant • updated principal areas of disagreement statements from interested parties see annex F 	22 June 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comments from affected persons on the applicant's updated land and rights negotiations tracker • comments on the applicant's revised draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) (if submitted) • requests to be heard at hearing(s) during w/c 6 July 2026 • any further information requested by ExA any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 • comments on any further information received comments on any further information requested by the ExA and received by deadline 3 	
13.	Dates reserved (if required) for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any compulsory acquisition hearing • any issue specific hearing • any open floor hearing 	Week commencing 6 July 2026
14.	Issue by the Examining Authority (ExA) of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ExA's schedule of changes to the draft Development Consent Order (if required) 	15 July 2026
15.	Deadline 5 For receipt by the Examining Authority (ExA) of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responses to ExA's proposed draft Development Consent Order (if issued) • comments on Report on the Implications of European Sites (RIES) (if issued) • written summaries of oral submissions made at the hearings and any other post hearing submissions (if held) • any specific responses to points raised in oral submissions at the hearings (if held) • comments on responses to Examining Authority's second written questions (ExQ2) • the applicant's updates see annex F • any other information submitted by the applicant 	29 July 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any further information requested by ExA any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 • comments on any further information received comments on any further information requested by the ExA and received by deadline 4 	
16.	<p>Deadline 6</p> <p>For receipt by the Examining Authority (ExA), from the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • closing summary statement • final draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) and schedule of changes final dDCO to be submitted by the applicant in the SI template the applicant to provide the email notification from https://publishing.legislation.gov.uk/validation confirming the document has successfully passed validation, and the PDF version of the SI validation report obtained from the link in the notification email. The applicant should also provide a clean (all tracking removed) standalone MS Word version of the draft DCO, with no header or cover page • final Explanatory Memorandum • final updated Book of Reference (BoR) final BoR and schedule of changes to BoR • final statement of reasons • final statements of common ground (SoCG) • final Statement of Commonality of SoCG • list of matters not agreed where SoCG could not be finalised • final Guide to the Application, including an up-to-date schedule of documents to be certified • final Status of Negotiations Compulsory Acquisition Schedule and Land Rights Tracker • final Status of Negotiations with Statutory Undertakers • final Consents and Licences Position Statement • final National Policy Statement Tracker • final versions of any other of the applicant's • documents that have been updated 	12 August 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • final signed and dated section 106 agreement(s) (if required) • any other information submitted by the applicant <p>For receipt by the ExA, from any interested party, of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • closing summary statements from parties regarding matters that they have previously raised during the examination and that have not been resolved to their satisfaction • final updated principal areas of disagreement statements from interested parties see annex F • comments on any further information received comments on any additional information/submissions received by deadline 5 • any further information requested by ExA any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	
17.	<p>Close of examination</p> <p>The Examining Authority (ExA) intends to close the examination on this date. See 'Note about the close of examination date'.</p>	24 August 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 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.

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 and/ or regulation 28 of The Offshore Marine Regulations.

Notification of initial hearings

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

Date	Hearing	Start time	Venue and Joining details
Tuesday 24 February 2026 (reserve slot if required Wednesday 25 February 2026 9:30am)	Open floor hearing 1 (OFH1)	Registration and seating available at venue from: 1:00pm Virtual registration process from: 1:00pm Hearing starts: 1:30pm	Horwood House, Mursley Road, Little Horwood, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK17 0PH and by virtual means 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 25 February 2026 (reserve slot if required Thursday 26 February 2026 9:30am)	Compulsory acquisition hearing 1 (CAH1)	Registration and seating available at venue from: 1:00pm Virtual registration process from: 1:00pm Hearing starts: 1:30pm	Horwood House, Mursley Road, Little Horwood, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK17 0PH and by virtual means 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			

Date	Hearing	Start time	Venue and Joining details
project webpage , providing reasonable notice to interested parties of the decision to cancel them.			

You must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by 10 February 2026 if you intend to participate in any of the hearings and provide all the information requested (see below).

If you simply wish to observe any of the hearings then you do not need to register as you will be able to either:

1. 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
2. watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished.

Alternatively, you can attend the physical hearing at the venue to observe the proceedings; however, to ensure there is adequate seating capacity at the venue we request that you register your attendance to **observe only** by **10 February 2026** using the [event participation form](#). Please note that it may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **10 February 2026**.

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)
- for blended events, confirmation of whether you will participate virtually or in-person
- 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**.

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, either virtually or in person.

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. Deadline for the submission of written representations and local impact reports

In order to maximise the time available to examine the application the ExA has made the procedural decision to request written representations (WRs) and local impact reports (LIRs) at **deadline 1 (10 March 2026)**. For the avoidance of doubt, the ExA wishes to make it clear that WRs and LIRs are 2 separate documents and must be submitted separately and independently of each other.

Rule 10(2) of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 sets out the minimum notice period of 21 days, which the ExA must provide notice for the submission of WRs. However, as the deadline for submission of WRs is set at **deadline 1 (10 March 2026)** and the ExA is giving notice in this letter, in excess of 21 days, the ExA is satisfied that interested parties have been permitted sufficient time in which to draft and submit WRs.

2. 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 6** for the submission of final 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**.

For each of those areas that are in dispute, it would be beneficial if each party would put their estimation as to the likelihood that disagreement will remain by the end of the examination. This should be done on a 'Low', 'Medium' and 'High' traffic light model. This will allow the ExA to assess those areas where oral discussions may be most beneficial.

The ExA notes that the Consultation Report [[APP-020](#)] states that draft SoCGs have been prepared and submitted as part of the application with Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority [[APP-041](#)] and UK Health Security Agency [[APP-042](#)]. The report also states SoCGs would be prepared with the host authority (Buckinghamshire Council), Natural England, Historic England, the National Trust and Anglian Water Services, and that a Statement

of Commonality to outline the position between the applicant and relevant statutory consultees and interested parties would be prepared. The ExA welcomes these clarifications.

To confirm, the ExA requests that SoCGs are prepared between the applicant and:

- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- National Highways
- UK Health Security Agency - updates to draft SoCG [[APP-042](#)]
- Buckinghamshire Council
- Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority - updates to draft SoCG [[APP-041](#)]
- National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc
- National Grid Electricity Distribution (East Midlands) Plc
- National Trust
- Anglian Water Services
- Claydons Solar Action Group

SoCGs should cover the following matters, to the extent that they are relevant to the particular interests of the party:

- as appropriate for its area of responsibility, the matters listed under the relevant headings in the ExA's Initial Assessment of Principal Issues (see **annex C** of this letter)
- all matters raised in the interested party's relevant representation
- relevant policy, legislation and guidance
- mitigation, monitoring and management plans
- a summary of matters agreed and matters not agreed or outstanding
- details of any supplementary agreements, such as draft section 106 agreements
- any other matters upon which agreement might aid the running of the examination and assist the ExA's recommendation to the Secretary of State

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

Where a particular SoCG cannot be agreed between the parties by **deadline 6**, or if any local authority position needs to be signed off at a higher level, draft versions of that SoCG are requested to be submitted **by the applicant at deadline 1**. The position of the relevant interested parties should then be confirmed in the course of the examination. The draft examination timetable makes provision for updated SoCGs to be submitted at various deadlines with final versions by **deadline 6**.

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 in advance of them taking place.

3. Principal Areas of Disagreement Statements (PADS)

The ExA considers that identification, at an early stage in the process, of the principal areas of disagreement from interested parties would be helpful.

PADS should remain the responsibility of if the interested party and should only be produced if they hold a substantive concern or concerns with the proposed development and should only set out the summary position as directed below. The ExA would anticipate that such matters listed in a PADS would be expanded upon within a local authority's local impact report or written representation and other parties' written representation, alongside their other comments on the proposed development. The ExA considers that an early identification of the principal disagreeable matters, read alongside relevant representations, would assist in the identification of the principal issues, and provide a clear focus for the examination and subsequent written questions to be asked.

With this in mind, the ExA has made a procedural decision to request that the following interested parties prepare PADS:

- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- National Highways
- UK Health Security Agency
- Buckinghamshire Council
- Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority
- National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc
- National Grid Electricity Distribution (East Midlands) Plc
- National Trust
- Anglian Water Services
- Claydons Solar Action Group

The ExA requires this to be in a table format, addressing the following matters:

- The principal issue in question.
- The brief concern held by the party which they will report on in full in the local impact report or written representation.
- What, in their view, needs to be amended or included so as to overcome the disagreement.
- In the opinion of that party, the likelihood of the concern being addressed during the examination stage.

The ExA would like PADS to be a live document and updated throughout the examination stage indicating what progress, if any, has been made. An example of the format which the ExA expects the PADS to be set out in is shown below:

Table 1 – Outstanding Principal Areas of Disagreement			
Area of Concern	Explanation	Remedy Measures	Likelihood of Resolution
<i>e.g., Traffic</i>	<i>e.g., Significant concerns over modelling of traffic impacts at London Road roundabout.</i>	<i>e.g., Applicant to provide additional information on modelling.</i>	<i>e.g., Yes – Applicant has indicated this will be provided at the next Deadline.</i>

Table 2 - Resolved Principal Areas of Disagreement			
Area of Concern	Explanation	Remedy Measures	Likelihood of Resolution
<i>e.g., Landscape and Visual</i>	<i>e.g., Significant concerns over the visual effect of Proposed Development at London Road receptor.</i>	<i>e.g., Applicant to provide additional viewpoints at this location and mitigation in the draft DCO.</i>	<i>e.g., Provided at Deadline 1.</i>

4. Accompanied site inspection – suggested locations

The draft examination timetable at **annex D** to this letter includes a date reserved for an accompanied site inspection (ASI) during the week commencing 18 May 2026.

The ExA requests that interested parties submit suggested locations for the ExA to visit as part of an ASI by **procedural deadline A** (10 February 2026). 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**. 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**

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

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.

5. The applicant's required updates at examination deadlines

The draft examination timetable in **annex D** includes deadlines for the applicant to provide updates to the examination. This will help with the smooth running of the examination and will ensure that the ExA has the most up-to-date information at that time. This annex sets out the ExA's request for the matters to be included in those updates.

The applicant does not need to submit updates as set out below if there are no changes to the previous version.

Please note that final updates must be submitted by **deadline 6** (12 August 2026).

Statements of common ground

Above, this annex sets out the 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 summary document (a Statement of Commonality) summarising:

- The status of each statement of common ground.
- The matters agreed between the applicant and each interested party - the material should be presented in a tabular 'traffic light' coloured format wherever possible.
- 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.

Updates to the Book of Reference and Statement of Reasons

To include:

- The latest, fully up-to-date versions of the Book of Reference and Statement of Reasons.
- Clean copies and copies showing tracked changes/ explanation for 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.

Land Rights Tracker

The ExA notes the submission of the 'Schedule of Negotiations and Powers Sought' [\[AS-016\]](#). However, the ExA wishes to take this data a stage further with the capture and manipulation of all non-agreed land rights at the outset of the examination in a simple, usable table. The aim is to make the process of reporting on the applicant's on-going discussions with affected persons (APs) (including statutory undertakers) easier, and to enable the ExA to provide that information to the Secretary of State in a more efficient way.

With that in mind, the ExA requests that the applicant completes and maintains a Land Rights Tracker. An example is shown below and will be sent to the applicant by the Case Team. In the example, the structure of the Land Rights Tracker would provide a comprehensive account of the status of non-agreed matters with APs (including statutory undertakers). The Land Rights Tracker would replace the applicant's 'Schedule of Negotiations and Powers Sought' document [\[AS-016\]](#) to avoid duplication.

Please ensure that the specific purposes for which land is required are clearly identified for individual plots affected. This is not the case in the Schedule of Negotiations and Powers Sought [\[AS-016\]](#) as currently presented. For example, the reasons given for the acquisition of plot 2/5 in table 1 include reference to multiple works, including Works No 1 - Ground Mounted Solar PV Generating Station, that are of relevance to all of the plots of the Affected Person in question. However, the Works Plans [\[AS-006\]](#) indicate that plot 2/5 is required for Works No 10A – Green and Blue Infrastructure only.

The ExA recognises that the figure below is draft only and is not a statutory requirement. However, it is hoped that the applicant and APs (including statutory undertakers) will recognise that the purpose of the Land Rights Tracker is to simplify the whole examination, recommendation and decision-making process. The ExA requests that all parties therefore positively engage with the process.

Should the applicant consider that the required information for the Land Rights Tracker can be captured in a different and more efficient way or by using different software, it may wish to discuss this with the Case Manager and update the ExA at the preliminary meeting.

Example Land Rights Tracker

Ref	Land interest ¹	Type of interest ²	Powers sought ³	Plots affected ⁴	Status of negotiations with land interest	Likelihood of resolution prior to submission of the application/ during the examination
[x]						
[x]						
[x]						
[x]						
[x]						
[x]						
[x]						

1. The name/ organisation of the interest in the land, where applicable including any land agent's name
2. The category of the interest, within s44 of the Planning Act 2008
3. The type of power(s) sought in the Development Consent Order, including one or more from: compulsory acquisition of land (CAL), compulsory acquisition of rights (CAR), compulsory acquisition of subsoil (CAS), temporary possession (TP)
4. Where/ when known, the reference for the plots affected in the draft Land Plans and draft Book of Reference

Examination Progress Tracker

This should be in the form of a table, reporting on what it considers are the principal and other notable issues in the examination. It should be set out by issue and/ or sub-issue, the interested parties which have raised them, the summary of the concerns raised, the progress being made to address them (if any), the up-to-date position and any progress to resolution.

Updates to the draft Development Consent Order (DCO)

- The amended draft DCO must be submitted in Microsoft Word except for the version to be submitted at deadline 6 which must include a version that has been validated against the Statutory Instrument template.
- A clean (all tracking removed) standalone Microsoft Word version of the draft DCO at **deadline 4 only**, with no header or cover page - this would not be published and is for the ExA's internal use only.
- Each version must be accompanied by a tracked change copy.
- Where necessary be accompanied by an updated Explanatory Memorandum.
- Be accompanied by a consolidated schedule of changes listing all changes to the draft Development Consent Order since the application version and for what purpose each change was introduced.

Updated Guide to the application

This will enable the ExA and interested parties the ability to identify the latest versions of documents that have been submitted into the examination. This is a 'living' document which should capture all updates/ revisions to the application documents along with any new documents submitted into the examination by the applicant. A final version must be submitted at **deadline 6** before the close of the examination. This document should form part of the certification of plans identified in the draft DCO.

Status of Negotiations with Statutory Undertakers (SU)

The status of negotiations with SUs should provide further detail of ongoing discussions between the applicant and those SUs with outstanding concerns which have not been provided within the land rights tracker, including:

A schedule of progress in relation to each SU where s127 and/ or s138 of the PA2008 applies and that sets out:

- An up-to-date list of SUs.
- The nature of their undertakings.
- The SU's land, rights or apparatus that would be affected and how it would be affected.
- The progress made in discussions with SUs since the last update in relation to the tests set out in s127(3)(a) or (b), s127(6)(a) or (b) and s138(4) of the PA2008.

- Any agreement or differences between the applicant and the SU about whether the tests have been met.
- 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 close of the examination.

A schedule of progress in relation to the protective provisions included in the draft DCO, and any related side agreements, setting out:

- The name of each organisation that each protective provision applies to where this is not identified in the draft DCO.
- The scope and purpose of any relevant side agreements with each organisation.
- Whether the protective provisions and any side agreements have been agreed with each organisation, providing written evidence from each party of any agreement. If written confirmation is not received by all relevant parties before the close of the examination, then the ExA may be minded to recommend to the Secretary of State that it does not make a decision until it has satisfied itself that the protective provisions and any relevant side agreements have been agreed.
- 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 close of the examination. The above information will be published on the project webpage, so commercial and/ or confidential details need not be given.

In addition, the following documents:

- National Policy Statement (NPS) tracker
- Updates to the Schedule of Other Consents and Licences [[APP-035](#)]

6. Additional submissions

In addition to the additional submissions the ExA has already accepted into the examination, the ExA has exercised its discretion and made a procedural decision to accept the following additional submissions:

- Representation by Thames Water Utilities Limited [[AS-032](#)]
- Response to request for additional information by the ExA from the applicant dated 9 January 2026 [[AS-024](#) to [AS-031](#)]
- Response to request for additional information by the ExA from the applicant dated 23 February 2026 [[AS-033](#) to [AS-036](#)]
- Response to request for additional information by the ExA from National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc [[AS-037](#)]
- Response to request for additional information by the ExA from Natural England [[AS-038](#)]
- Response to request for additional information by the ExA from National Grid Electricity Distribution Plc [[AS-039](#)]

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 Rosefieldsolar@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.