

Reference	EN010159
Name	One Earth Solar Farm
Document	Rule 6 letter - Notification of the Preliminary Meeting and matters to be discussed
Status	Superseded

Following the issuing of the Rule 6 letter on 10 June, this document has been superseded due to a need to change the venue. All other matters in this Rule 6 letter remain the same.

The superseding document can be found [here](#).

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All interested parties, statutory parties and other  
persons invited to the Preliminary Meeting

Our Ref: EN010159  
Date: 10 June 2025

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Dear Recipient

**Planning Act 2008 – section 88 and 89 and The Infrastructure Planning  
(Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – Rules 4, 6, 9 and 13**

**Application by One Earth Solar Farm Ltd for an order granting development  
consent for the One Earth Solar Farm**

**Appointment of the Examining Authority, and invitation to the preliminary  
meeting and notification of hearings.**

Following my appointment by the Secretary of State as the lead member of the Examining Authority (ExA) to carry out an examination of the above application I am writing to introduce myself and the other member of the ExA. My name is Edwin Maund and the other member of the ExA is Alex Jack. A copy of the appointment notice can be viewed under [documents](#) on the project webpage of the Find a National Infrastructure Project website ([project webpage](#)).

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
<b>Tuesday 8 July 2025</b>	Registration and seating available at venue and virtual registration process from:  <b>9.30am</b>  Hearing starts:  <b>10.00am</b>	Double Tree by Hilton, Brayford Wharf North, Lincoln, LN1 1YW.  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

The preliminary meeting should be completed before 1.00pm on 8 July 2025. However, a reserve period has been scheduled for 2.00pm on the same day to allow for the meeting to be resumed in exceptional circumstances, for example to account for a failure of technology. Normally the reserve period will not be required and confirmation of this will be provided by the ExA at the end of the preliminary meeting and subsequently notified on the [project webpage](#).

**You must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by 1 July 2025 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 **1 July 2025** using the [event participation form](#). It may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **1 July**.

If you attend 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 get published on the project page of our website. A limited number of seats will be available for observers who wish not to be filmed at the event. 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.

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.

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.

### **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 SoS 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:



1. you consider changes need to be made to the draft examination timetable set out at **Annex D** to this letter, and/or
2. 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** (1 July 2025 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**

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.

### **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. However, and for this case, the ExA expects hearings will be blended.

As such we are providing formal notification that the Preliminary Meeting the Open Floor Hearings 1 and 2, and Issue Specific Hearing 1 will 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**

The ExA provides notice of the following initial hearings that will take place:



Date	Hearing	Start time	Venue and joining details
<b>Tuesday 8 July 2025</b>	<b>Open Floor Hearing 1</b>	Registration and seating available at venue and virtual registration process from: <b>6.30pm</b> Hearing starts: <b>7.00pm</b>	Double Tree by Hilton, Brayford Wharf North, Lincoln, LN1 1YW. 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
<b>Wednesday 9 July 2025</b>	<b>Open Floor Hearing 2</b>	Registration and seating available at venue and virtual registration process from: <b>9.30am</b> Hearing starts: <b>10.00am</b>	White Hart Hotel. Bailgate, Lincoln, LN1 3AR. 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
<b>Wednesday 9 July 2025</b>	<b>Issue Specific Hearing 1</b> on Environmental Matters and the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO)	Registration and seating available at venue and virtual registration process from: <b>1.30pm</b> Hearing starts: <b>2.00pm</b>	White Hart Hotel. Bailgate, Lincoln, LN1 3AR. 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
<b>Thursday 10 July 2025</b>	<b>Issue Specific Hearing 1</b> on Environmental Matters and	Registration and seating available at venue and virtual registration process from:	White Hart Hotel. Bailgate, Lincoln, LN1 3AR. and By virtual means using Microsoft Teams

	the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO)  (This will only be held for any items not completed on 9 July 2025)	<b>9.30am</b>  Hearing starts:  <b>10.00am</b>	Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered
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Important information about these hearings is contained in **Annex E** to this letter, including what details need to be provided with a request to be heard at a hearing and the procedure that will be followed.

For issue specific hearing 1 the ExA will publish a detailed agenda on the project webpage at least five working days in advance of the hearing date. However, the actual agenda on the day of the hearing may be subject to change at the discretion of the ExA. For open floor hearings an agenda will not be published.

### **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:

- Request for additional submissions
- Updates to the Guide to the Application
- A request for statements of common ground with Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Services
- Request for suggested locations for an accompanied site inspection
- Acceptance of additional submissions into the examination – submissions by the applicant following s51 advice [AS-001 – AS-010] in the [Examination Library](#) and following the letter from the ExA of the 7 May 2025 received on the 14 May 2025, (Examination Library references will be available in due course.)

### **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 by emailing the case team using the contact details at the top of this letter. 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.

There is also a function on the left-hand side of the project webpage called 'Get updates'. This provides you with an opportunity 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 NSIP 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](#).

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

*Edwin Maund*

**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 1 July 2025 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 **1 July 2025** using the [event participation form](#). It may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **1 July 2025**.

If you attend 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 get published on the project page of our website. A limited number of seats will be available for observers who wish not to be filmed at the event. 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:** **Tuesday 8 July 2025**

**Registration process:** **9.30am**

**Meeting start time:** **10.00am**

**Venue:** Blended event at Double Tree by Hilton, Brayford Wharf North, Lincoln, LN1 1YW, 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**

<b>Agenda for the preliminary meeting</b>	
<b>9.30am</b>	Registration and seating available at venue for in-person attendees
<b>9.30am</b>	<p><b>Virtual registration process</b></p> <p>Please arrive at 9.30am 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 9.30am. 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>
<b>10.00am</b> <b>Item 1</b>	<p><b>Preliminary meeting</b></p> <p>The preliminary meeting will formally open at <b>10.00am</b>. The Examining Authority will join, welcome participants and lead introductions.</p> <p>A public livestream of the meeting will be made available on the project webpage of the Find a National Infrastructure Project website shortly before the meeting is due to open.</p>
<b>Item 2</b>	The Examining Authority's remarks about the examination process
<b>Item 3</b>	Initial assessment of principal issues – <b>Annex C</b> to Rule 6 Letter
<b>Item 4</b>	Draft examination timetable – <b>Annex D</b> to Rule 6 Letter
<b>Item 5</b>	Procedural decisions
<b>Item 6</b>	Any other matters
<b>Close of the preliminary meeting</b>	

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 **10.00am** 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.

Observing the Preliminary Meeting - If you wish to observe the preliminary meeting in person and at the physical venue, you are still required to register by procedural deadline a, via the event participation form.

However, if you wish to observe virtually then you do not need to register. You will be able to: watch a livestream of the event via a weblink that will be made available on the project webpage shortly before the event is scheduled to begin; or watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished.

## **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:

[oneearthsolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:oneearthsolar@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 One Earth 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 One Earth Solar Farm Ltd, which 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 and examination documents and 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 the day 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 sections 14(1)(a) and 15(2) of the PA2008 as it includes the construction, operation and maintenance of a solar farm with a generating capacity of over 50MW. The designated National Policy Statements (NPS) 'Overarching NPS for Energy' (NPS EN-1) and 'Renewable Energy Infrastructure' (NPS EN-3) and Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5) apply to this Examination and to decision-making relating to this application.

The ExA will consider the proposed development in accordance with the NPSs 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*" (s104(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.

The SoS is entitled to disregard any representations that relate to the merits of the designated National Policy Statement (NPS). 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 appear to be 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:

- Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service

### **Conduct of the preliminary meeting**

The PM will start promptly at 10.00am on Tuesday 8 July 2025 (**Annex A**), and the ExA estimates that it will take between one and three 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 five 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 is 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 for receipt of written submissions. Timely submissions received by the relevant deadline and that address its purpose will be accepted. **Documents received after the relevant deadline are only 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. APs (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 a number of 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 (**1 July 2025**) 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 and ARSIs, as well as possible ASIs. **Any nominations for any locations for an ASI must include the reason for the nomination and whether those sites can be seen from public land or whether they need to be seen from private land.**

The ExA undertook unaccompanied site inspections (USI) over four days between 19 and 22 May 2025. These are respectively referred to as USI1. A brief record of the USI to inform the applicant, interested parties and other parties of the actions taken by the ExA will be published on the project webpage. This note of USI1 has been assigned the reference OD-004.

## 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 Examining Authority (ExA) following its reading of:

- the application documents
- the relevant representations received in respect of the application
- 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 Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero after the examination has concluded.

The order of the issues listed is alphabetic and does not imply any order of prioritisation or importance.

The policy and consenting requirements and documents associated with the PA2008 are an integral part of the examination and are therefore not listed as main 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 main issues, the ExA will conduct all aspects of the examination with these in mind.

<b>Principal Issue</b>	<b>Brief amplification. To include, but not necessarily limited to:</b>
Assessment of Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development scenarios and the Rochdale Envelope, including the rationale of the preferred layout and the discounting of other potential layouts.</li> <li>• Selection of sites for the above ground installations substations and battery storage.</li> <li>• The need for this type of infrastructure.</li> </ul>
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The effects of the Proposed Development on heritage assets (Designated and Non-designated) and their visual and functional settings.</li> <li>• Effects upon known and unknown archaeology, and the quality and extent of investigation.</li> </ul>
Ecology and HRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effect of EMF on the natural environment</li> <li>• Adequacy of survey, and assessment of effects on ecology and biodiversity.</li> </ul>
Flood Risk, Hydrology and Water Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of the accuracy and quality of the presented Flood Risk Assessments, and whether the Proposed Development passes the sequential and exception tests.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drainage Strategy.</li> <li>• Contamination risks during construction, operation and decommissioning and whether there is sufficient information presented to ensure that the risk to the water environment as a result of the Proposed Development is effectively mitigated.</li> </ul>
Geology and Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts on agricultural land, best and most versatile agricultural land and other land.</li> <li>• Impacts on agricultural businesses and enterprises.</li> <li>• Risks from discovery of contaminated soils/ ground water, including from adjoining sites and former uses, and securing appropriate mitigation.</li> </ul>
Landscape and Visual Amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities and constraints in elements of design.</li> <li>• Zone of Theoretical Influence - The impact of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual amenity.</li> <li>• Impacts on recreational routes and views within the local landscape.</li> <li>• Impacts on local communities.</li> </ul>
Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effect on human health of the Proposed Development taking into account, consultation, construction, scale and proximity to residential property.</li> </ul>
Traffic and Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effect on local road network from construction traffic.</li> <li>• Effect on residents from noise from traffic.</li> </ul>

### Draft examination timetable

The Examining Authority (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.

All updated documents must be provided in two versions: one with tracked changes and the second clean, without tracks. Please provide a cover letter to summarise which documents have been amended.

Item	Matters	Date
1.	<b>Procedural Deadline A</b>  For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments about how the application is to be examined, including the draft examination timetable and virtual methods</li> <li>• Requests to speak at or observe the Preliminary Meeting, or other hearings if held.</li> <li>• Requests to speak at any hearings held in wc 7 July 2025.</li> <li>• Suggested locations for site inspections (accompanied or unaccompanied), including justification, for consideration by the ExA<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	<b>Tuesday 1 July 2025</b>
2.	<b>Preliminary meeting</b>	<b>Tuesday 8 July 2025</b>
3.	<b>Preliminary meeting, reserved time (if required)</b>	<b>Tuesday 8 July 2025</b>
4.	<b>Open floor hearing (OFH1)</b>	<b>Tuesday 8 July 2025</b>
5.	<b>Open floor hearing (OFH2)</b>	<b>Wednesday 9 July 2025</b>
6.	<b>Issue specific hearing (ISH1)</b>	<b>Wednesday 9 July 2025</b>

<sup>1</sup> When suggesting locations, please have regard to the places already visited by the ExA on any unaccompanied site inspections (USI) it undertakes. Suggestions must explain why the location needs to be visited, information about whether the location can be accessed or seen using public rights of way or publicly accessible land, and what access arrangements would need to be made.

7.	<b>Issue specific hearing (ISH1) continued if not completed on 9 July 2025</b>	<b>Thursday 10 July 2025</b>
8.	<b>Issue by the ExA of:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the examination timetable</li> </ul>	<b>As soon as practicable following the Preliminary Meeting</b>
9.	<b>Deadline 1</b> For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written representations (WR), and summaries of any WR which exceed 1500 words</li> <li>Written summaries of oral submissions given at the hearings during the week of 7 July 2025</li> <li>Comments on relevant representations (RR) (registration comments)</li> <li>Requests to speak at a further open floor hearing (OFH)</li> <li>Requests to speak at a compulsory acquisition hearing (CAH) – Requests can be made by affected persons (defined in section 59(4) of the Planning Act 2008) to be heard at a CAH</li> <li>Requests to speak at further issue specific hearings (ISH)</li> <li>Comments on any updated or additional documents received from the applicant</li> <li>Post hearing submissions, requested by the ExA</li> <li>Comments on any additional submissions accepted by the ExA</li> <li>Responses to any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules</li> </ul> From local authorities only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Impact Reports (LIR)</li> </ul> From the applicant only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft itinerary for an accompanied site inspection (ASI)</li> <li>Drafts of any DCO obligations (s106) if necessary</li> <li>Statements of Common Ground (SoCG)</li> </ul>	<b>Tuesday 29 July 2025</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant's revised dDCO and schedule of changes to dDCO</li> <li>• Applicant's revised Explanatory Memorandum</li> <li>• Updated land and rights negotiations tracker</li> <li>• Schedule of statutory undertakers and progress on protective provisions</li> </ul>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Publication by the ExA of:</b>  Written questions (ExQ1), if required	<b>Thursday 7 August 2025</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Deadline 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses to ExQ1</li> <li>• Responses to WRs</li> <li>• Comments on responses to RRs</li> <li>• Comments on applicant's draft itinerary for ASI</li> <li>• Comments on LIRs</li> <li>• Comments from affected persons on the applicant's updated land and rights negotiations tracker</li> <li>• Comments on any updated or additional applicant documents</li> <li>• Comments on any additional submissions received by D1 and accepted by the ExA</li> <li>• Responses to any further information request by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules</li> </ul> <p>From applicant only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress on SoCG</li> <li>• Updated outline control documents</li> <li>• Progress on securing other consents</li> <li>• Updated Policy Compliance document</li> </ul>	<b>Thursday 21 August 2025</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Week reserved, if required, for:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue Specific Hearing</li> <li>• Compulsory Acquisition Hearing</li> <li>• Further Open Floor Hearing</li> <li>• ASI</li> </ul>	<b>W/C Monday 1 September 2025</b>



13.	<p><b>Deadline 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments on responses to ExQ1</li> <li>• Comments on responses to LIRs</li> <li>• Comments on responses to WRs</li> <li>• Post hearing submissions</li> <li>• Comments on any additional submissions received by D2 and accepted by the ExA</li> <li>• Responses to any further information request by the ExA</li> </ul> <p>From applicant only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised SoCG</li> <li>• Applicant's revised dDCO and schedule of changes to dDCO</li> <li>• Applicant's revised Explanatory Memorandum</li> <li>• Updated land and rights negotiations tracker</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tuesday 16 September 2025</b></p>
14.	<p><b>Publication by the ExA of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second written questions (ExQ2), if required</li> <li>• Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES)</li> <li>• ExA's schedule of proposed changes to the dDCO</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tuesday 30 September 2025</b></p>
15.	<p><b>Deadline 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses to ExQ2</li> <li>• Responses to RIES</li> <li>• Responses to ExA's schedule of proposed changes to the dDCO</li> <li>• Comments on any revised SoCG</li> <li>• Comments on applicant's revised dDCO</li> <li>• Comments on any additional submissions received by D3 and accepted by the ExA</li> <li>• Responses to any further information request by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules</li> <li>• Requests to speak at hearings scheduled for the week of 3 November 2025</li> </ul> <p>From the applicant only</p>	<p><b>Tuesday 14 October 2025</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised SoCG</li> <li>• Applicant's revised dDCO and schedule of changes to dDCO</li> <li>• Applicant's revised Explanatory Memorandum</li> <li>• Updated land and rights negotiations tracker</li> <li>• Updated BoR, schedule of changes to the BoR, Statement of Reasons and Land Plans</li> <li>• Updated outline control documents</li> <li>• Progress regarding protective provisions</li> <li>• Progress on securing other consents</li> <li>• Updated Policy Compliance document</li> </ul>	
<b>16.</b>	<b>Week reserved, if required, for:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue Specific Hearing</li> <li>• Further Compulsory Acquisition Hearing</li> <li>• Further Open Floor Hearing</li> <li>• Further ASI</li> </ul>	<b>W/C Monday 3 November 2025</b>
<b>17.</b>	<b>Deadline 5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post hearing submissions</li> <li>• Comments on responses to ExQ2, if required</li> <li>• Comments on responses to RIES</li> <li>• Comments on responses to ExA's schedule of proposed changes to the dDCO</li> <li>• Comments on any additional submissions received by D4 and accepted by the ExA</li> <li>• Responses to any further information request by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules</li> </ul> <p>From the applicant only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised SoCG</li> <li>• Applicant's revised dDCO and schedule of changes to dDCO</li> <li>• Applicant's revised Explanatory Memorandum</li> <li>• Updated land and rights negotiations tracker</li> </ul>	<b>Wednesday 12 November 2025</b>
<b>18.</b>	<b>Deadline 6</b>	<b>Wednesday 3</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments on any additional submissions received by D5 and accepted by the ExA</li> <li>• Responses to any further information request by the ExA</li> </ul>	<b>December 2025</b>
<b>19.</b>	<p><b>Deadline 7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments on responses to ExQ3, if required</li> <li>• Comments on responses to the ExA's proposed dDCO</li> <li>• Comments on any additional submissions received by D6 and accepted by the ExA</li> <li>• Responses to any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules</li> </ul> <p>From the applicant only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final navigation document or guide to the application</li> <li>• Applicant's final preferred dDCO and schedule of changes to dDCO. The applicant must provide the email notification from <a href="https://publishing.legislation.gov.uk/validation">https://publishing.legislation.gov.uk/validation</a> 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</li> <li>• Final Explanatory Memorandum</li> <li>• Final SoCG</li> <li>• List of matters not agreed where SoCG could not be finalised</li> <li>• Final land and rights negotiations tracker</li> <li>• Final status of negotiations with statutory undertakers</li> <li>• Final BoR, schedule of changes to the BoR, Statement of Reasons and Land Plans</li> <li>• Final outline control documents</li> <li>• Final position of Protective Provisions</li> <li>• Final position on securing other consents</li> <li>• Final Policy Compliance document</li> <li>• Final signed and dated Section 106 agreements, if required</li> </ul>	<b>Tuesday 16 December 2025</b>

<b>20.</b>	<b>Deadline 8</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments on any documents submitted at D7</li> <li>• Responses to any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules</li> </ul>	<b>Monday 22 December 2025</b>
<b>21.</b>	<b>Close of examination</b> The ExA is under a duty to complete the examination of the application by the end of the period of 6 months.	<b>Thursday 8 January 2026</b>

### Submission times for deadlines

The time for submission of documents at any deadline in the timetable is 23:59 (11.59pm) 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
<b>Tuesday 8 July 2025</b>	<b>Open Floor Hearing 1</b>	Registration and seating available at venue and virtual registration process from: <b>6.30pm</b> Hearing starts: <b>7.00pm</b>	Double Tree by Hilton, Brayford Wharf North, Lincoln, LN1 1YW. 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
<b>Wednesday 9 July 2025</b>	<b>Open Floor Hearing 2</b>	Registration and seating available at venue and virtual registration process from: <b>9.30am</b> Hearing starts: <b>10.00am</b>	White Hart Hotel. Bailgate, Lincoln, LN1 3AR. 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
<b>Wednesday 9 July 2025</b>	<b>Issue Specific Hearing 1</b> on Environmental Matters and the draft Development	Registration and seating available at venue and virtual registration process from: <b>1.30pm</b>	White Hart Hotel. Bailgate, Lincoln, LN1 3AR. and

Date	Hearing	Start time	Venue and Joining details
	Consent Order (dDCO)	Hearing starts: <b>2.00pm</b>	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
<b>Thursday 10 July 2025</b>	<b>Issue Specific Hearing 1</b>  on Environmental Matters and the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO)  (This will only be held for any items not completed on 9 July 2025)	Registration and seating available at venue and virtual registration process from: <b>9.30am</b>  Hearing starts: <b>10.00am</b>	White Hart Hotel. Bailgate, Lincoln, LN1 3AR.  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
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 <a href="#">project webpage</a> , providing reasonable notice to interested parties of the decision to cancel them.			

**You must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by Tuesday 1 July 2025 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 **1 July 2025** using the [event participation form](#). It may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **1 July 2025**.

If you attend 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 get published on the project page of our website. A limited number of seats will be available for observers who wish not to be filmed at the event. 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.

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 Plan](#)
- 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

The Issue Specific Hearing scheduled for 9 July 2025 will be to consider the scope of the draft Development Consent Order and to clarify strategic matters to ensure an agreed position on the Examination to follow. An agenda covering the principal topics will be published prior to the event, if not earlier.

For issue specific hearings and compulsory acquisition hearings the ExA will publish a detailed draft agenda on the project webpage in advance of the hearing date.

The ExA will publish a detailed agenda for the Open Floor Hearings, giving notification of the IPs listed to speak on each day, on the [project webpage](#) as soon as practicable following the close of **Procedural Deadline A, 1 July 2025**.

However, the actual agenda on the day of each hearing may be subject to change at the discretion of the ExA.

### **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. 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 1 (29 July 2025)** for submission of 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**.

In addition to the SoCGs identified by the applicant within their application documents as:

- Lincolnshire County Council;
- Nottingham County Council;
- Newark and Sherwood District Council;
- Bassetlaw District Council;
- West Lindsey District Council;
- The Environment Agency;
- Natural England; and
- Historic England.

the ExA requests SoCGs to be prepared between the applicant and:

#### A. **Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service**, to include:

- Matters related to fire safety
- Emergency planning

#### B. **Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service**, to include:

- Matters related to fire safety
- Emergency planning

#### C. **National Grid**, to include:

- Agreement on and timing of connection
- The dDCO

- CA and temporary possession provisions

**All of the SoCGs listed above should cover the articles and requirements in the draft Development Consent Order.** 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 1**, 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 to deadline 3**. 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 7**.

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 reasonable notice of them taking place.

## **2. Accompanied site inspection – suggested locations**

The draft examination timetable at **Annex D** to this letter includes dates reserved for an accompanied site inspection (ASI) on **1 September 2025** and **3 November 2025**.

The ExA requests that interested parties submit suggested locations for the ExA to visit as part of an ASI by **procedural deadline A (1 July 2025)**. 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 before the date of the ASI.

### **3. Status of the applicant's examination documents**

The ExA requests that the applicant provides, at each deadline, an updated 'Status of the applicant's examination documents' document which provides a list of the most up-to-date status of the documents submitted, including which copies have been superseded in whole or in part. A final version must be submitted before the close of the examination. All examination documents submitted should include a version number and date.

### **4. Additional submissions**

In addition to the documentation submitted by **procedural deadline A** the ExA has exercised its discretion and made a procedural decision to accept the following additional submissions:

- Documents [AS-001 to AS-010] from the applicant in response to s51 advice following acceptance
- Response from the applicant to requests under Rule 17 for clarification on the Landscape and Visualisation Chapter of the ES, its supporting figures, as well as the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy [AS014 to AS-055].

## 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 [documents](#) 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 [oneearth solar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:oneearth solar@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 through the [documents](#) page. 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 of 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 and evidence hosted on a third-party website (for example technical reports, media articles). 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 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 '[project webpage](#)' page please contact the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter and they will assist.