



Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park

Written Summary of Oral Submissions at Preliminary Meeting

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This document contains Elements Green Trent Limited's ('the Applicant') summary of its oral submissions made at Preliminary Meeting ('PM') which took place in a blended format at the Sir Goodwin Suite, Newark Showground and on Microsoft Teams on 26 November 2025.
- 1.1.2 The PM was attended by members of the Applicant team and the Applicant is grateful to all those Interested Parties ('IP') that participated and provided their comments.

2 SUMMARY OF THE APPLICANT'S ORAL SUBMISSIONS AT THE PRELIMINARY MEETING

2.1 AGENDA 1: AGENDA FOR THE PRELIMINARY MEETING (ANNEX A TO THE RULE 6 LETTER)

- 2.1.1 *The ExA* formally opened the PM at 10.00am. The ExA welcomed participants, set out the purpose of the PM and led introductions.
- 2.1.2 No queries were raised by the Applicant or the Interested Parties ('IPs') present relating to the agenda for the PM.

2.2 AGENDA 2: EXA'S REMARKS ABOUT THE EXAMINATION PROCESS (ANNEX B TO THE RULE 6 LETTER)

- 2.2.1 *The ExA* noted that Annex B of the Rule 6 letter sets out introductory information about the Examination process [\[PD-005\]](#).
- 2.2.2 No queries were raised by the Applicant or the IPs present relating to the examination process

2.3 AGENDA 3: INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF PRINCIPAL ISSUES (ANNEX C TO THE RULE 6 LETTER)

- 2.3.1 *The ExA* noted that the list set out in Annex C of the Rule 6 Letter is not intended to be exhaustive and it is not routinely updated. The ExA will take into account all the issues and evidence based throughout the examination, and the initial assessment of principal issues (IAP) will not constrain the examination of other important and relevant matters that may emerge throughout the Examination period.
- 2.3.2 *The ExA* noted that a number of relevant representations have been made in relation to flooding and localised flooding. Although these issues are not on the agenda for Issue Specific Hearing 1, the ExA confirmed that this a matter to be examined, and there would be opportunity for IPs to provide their views during the Open Floor Hearing, and to supplement written submissions during the Examination. There will be opportunities for other specific hearings in due course.

- 2.3.3 *Anthony Northcode (JPAG)* referred to NPS EN-3, paragraph 2.10.17, which identifies scale as a main issue for solar projects, especially in rural areas. He requested that the project scale should be treated as a separate principal issue.
- 2.3.4 *The ExA* responded that although scale is not listed as its own issue in the IAP, it will be considered when assessing landscape effects, and the implications for the Development's need and site selection. The ExA noted Mr Northcote's comments and confirmed they will be taken into account.
- 2.3.5 *A local resident* asked for cost-benefit analysis to be included as a specific issue. *The ExA* explained that cost-benefit analysis falls outside the scope of this type of examination, as they are matters for the Applicant. The ExA must assess applications against planning policy and legislation, which do not consider cost-benefit analysis as an issue. However, the ExA confirmed that the viability of the funding for the Proposed Development will be considered as part of the consideration of compulsory acquisition.
- 2.3.6 The resident then clarified that the concern is related to the balance between the project's benefits and its potential detrimental effects on the countryside. The ExA confirmed that any written submissions the IP provides will be taken into account during the examination.
- 2.3.7 No other queries were raised by the Applicant or the IPs present relating to the initial assessment of principle issues.

2.4 AGENDA 4: DRAFT EXAMINATION TIMETABLE (ANNEX D TO THE RULE 6 LETTER)

- 2.4.1 *The ExA* ran through the comments relevant to this agenda item that the ExA received by Procedural Deadline A, which was the 18th November, and provide the ExA's responses to those comments.
- 2.4.2 The ExA summarised JPAG's comments [[PDA-009](#)], particularly paragraphs 11 to 15. It is noted that JPAG questioned the justification for the five-month examination period, queried whether the fast-track procedure had been used, and noted that the examination period overlaps with Christmas, Easter, and February half-term. The ExA made the following responses:
- 2.4.3 The ExA confirmed that the Applicant has not used the fast-track procedure.
- 2.4.4 It was the ExA's decision to set out a timetable that signals their intention to complete the examination in five months, starting from the day after the Preliminary Meeting has been completed.
- 2.4.5 Factors such as representations, document volume, or geographical area involved do not create a more complex examination process. In any case, this is offset to some degree by the experience gained by statutory consultees (e.g., local authorities, Environment Agency) on recent solar projects.

- 2.4.6 JPAG referenced Cottam, West Burton and Gates Burton. These were examined under Section 106 of the Planning Act 2008. Since 17 January 2024, when the updated Energy National Policy Statement EN-1 came into force, solar projects above the threshold (including One Earth and Tilbury Solar) are instead examined under Section 104. The ExA noted that the updated policy framework has provided greater clarity, and that the experience the ExA have gained in examining under Section 104, which has led to more efficient examinations.
- 2.4.7 The ExA also noted that this examination is being conducted by a panel of three members, who are well used to dealing with examinations that extend through holiday periods.
- 2.4.8 The ExA stated that, if necessary, the ExA can revert to the statutory examination period, and this will be proposed in a later procedural decision if required.
- 2.4.9 On the use of reserve time for this meeting (paragraph 5 of [\[PDA-009\]](#)) and further site inspections (paragraphs 16 to 18 of [\[PDA-009\]](#)), these would be addressed under Agenda Item 5 (Procedural Decisions) of this Preliminary Meeting.
- 2.4.10 The ExA thanked JPAG for highlighting an error in Annex F of the Rule 6 Letter and confirmed that the week reserved for accompanied site inspections in the draft timetable is week commencing 2 February 2026, not 2 February 2025.
- 2.4.11 *Mr Northcote (JPAG)* reinstated concerns about the proposed five-month examination period. In response, the ExA noted the points raised, and confirmed that the ExA's position had already been set out. The ExA stated the comments would be considered.
- 2.4.12 *Liz Hopkins (Carlton-on-Trent Parish Council)* raised concern that the current timetable does not provide enough time for the public to review the application. The ExA reiterated that, if necessary, the ExA can revert to the statutory six-month examination period should it benefit the Examination.
- 2.4.13 *The ExA* noted two further requests regarding the examination timetable. The Environment Agency requested that the deadline be moved to 23 January 2026, due to the ExA's first written questions being published on 19 December and concerns about staff availability over the Christmas period. The Applicant proposed moving the deadline from 16 January to 21 January 2026, for similar reasons and to ensure fairness to all parties.
- 2.4.14 The ExA stated that the first round of written questions needs to be as focused as possible, and that this relies on good progress being made between the Applicant and Interested Parties, in particular the statutory consultees by Deadline 1 (10 December).

2.4.15 The ExA then emphasised that late submissions will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion. Submissions received after the close of the examination cannot be accepted.

2.4.16 *Simon Betts (NSDC)* supported the requests from both the Applicant and the Environment Agency for additional time over the festive period. He noted that extending the deadline would allow more progress to be made in discussions with the Applicant, particularly on Statements of Common Ground.

2.4.17 *The ExA* noted the comments from Mr. Richard Gill who could not attend the Preliminary Hearing and his comments will be considered. The final version of the timetable will be provided in Rule 8 Letter.

2.5 AGENDA 5: PROCEDURAL DECISIONS MADE BY THE EXAMINING AUTHORITY (ANNEX F OF THE RULE 6 LETTER)

2.5.1 *The ExA* ran through the other procedural decisions in Annex F of the Rule 6 Letter.

2.5.2 The ExA noted that several suggestions from the IPs on the proposed locations for accompanied site inspections were received. The ExA clarified that accompanied site inspections are not necessary if locations can be viewed from public land or inspected unaccompanied, and that access-only arrangements may be considered.

2.5.3 IPs were reminded that written representations are due by Deadline 1 (10 December), with the Applicant's responses to the written representations due by Deadline 2 (16 January). Procedural decisions have also been made to hold Issue Specific Hearing 1 and Open Floor Hearing 1.

2.5.4 *Mr Northcote (JPAG)* raised concerns about the tight deadline for submitting suggestions for site inspection locations, noting that parish councils need more time. He suggested that Deadline 1 would have been more appropriate. The ExA noted that these points had already been made in JPAG's written submission.

2.6 AGENDA 6: ANY OTHER MATTERS

2.6.1 *Mr Northcote (JPAG)* raised concerns regarding the adequacy of consultation, referencing their submission [[PDA-009](#)]. He noted that s51 advice required the Applicant to clearly distinguish what is within the DCO scheme and what is not. Consultation materials referred to NG+ projects that are outside the DCO, which has been considered to be misleading. Parish councils had no prior opportunity to raise adequacy of consultation concerns, and this was the first chance to do so at the meeting.

2.6.2 *Mr Nesbitt (Applicant)* responded that NG+ measures were clearly presented as community benefits, separate from the DCO. The statutory consultation requirements were fully complied with. Further clarification on NG+ matters would be provided during Issue Specific Hearing 1.

- 2.6.3 *The ExA* confirmed that the application had been accepted and the examination would proceed. Points about what is included in the scheme would also be addressed in Issue Specific Hearing 1.
- 2.6.4 *Garry Hobbs* (North Muskham Parish Council) supported Mr Northcote's point, noting significant confusion among parish residents regarding what is included in the scheme.
- 2.6.5 *Mr Northcote (JPAG)* requested a specific agenda item in Issue Specific Hearing 1 to clarify what is within the scheme and what is not. This request was noted by the ExA.
- 2.6.6 *The ExA* thanked all participants and closed the preliminary meeting at 10:44.