



Application by Elements Green Trent Limited for the Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park

The Examining Authority's written questions and requests for information (ExQ1): Issued on Friday 19 December 2025

Responses are due by deadline 2: Friday 16 January 2026

The following table sets out the Examining Authority's (ExA's) written questions and requests for information - ExQ1. If necessary, the examination timetable enables the ExA to issue a further round of written questions in due course. If this is done, the further round of questions will be referred to as ExQ2.

Questions are set out using an issues-based framework derived from the initial assessment of principal issues provided as **annex C** to the Rule 6 Letter dated 23 October 2023. Questions have been added to the framework of issues set out there as they have arisen from representations and to address the assessment of the application against relevant policies.

Column 2 of the table indicates which interested parties (IPs) and other persons each question is directed to. The ExA would be grateful if all persons named could answer all questions directed to them, providing a substantive response, or indicating that the question is not relevant to them for a reason. This does not prevent an answer being provided to a question by a person to whom it is not directed, should the question be relevant to their interests.

Each question has a unique reference number which starts with 1 (indicating that it is from ExQ1) and then has an issue number and a question number. For example, the first question on general and cross-cutting matters is identified as Q1.1.1. When you are answering a question, please start your answer by quoting the unique reference number.

You should respond to the questions by using the **Have your say** function on the [project page](#) of the National Infrastructure website and selecting 'Responses to Examining Authority's First Written Questions (ExQ1)' when asked.

If you are responding to a small number of questions, you can submit your answers by choosing 'Make a comment' and entering your answers in the 'Your comments' box. If you are answering a larger number of questions you should download a copy of the Microsoft Word version of the document, enter your answers and save the document using an appropriate file name. You can then submit the completed document by selecting 'Upload files'.



Abbreviations used:

APs	Affected persons	LVIA	Landscape and visual impact assessment
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System	LIR	Local Impact Report
BMV	Best and most versatile agricultural land	NE	Natural England
BoR	the Book of Reference	NCC	Nottinghamshire County Council
CA	compulsory acquisition	NG+	Community benefit fund/scheme
CEMP	Construction environmental management plan	NPS	National Policy Statement
dDCO	the draft Development Consent Order	NSDC	Newark and Sherwood District Council
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment	NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
EM	the Explanatory Memorandum	RWE	RWE Generation U plc
ES	the Environmental Statement	oSMP	outline soil management plan
ExA	Examining Authority	PV	Photovoltaic
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment	PA2008	Planning Act 2008
IPs	Interested parties	PRoW	Public Right of Way
LCT	Landscape character type	RVA	Residential visual amenity
LEMP	Landscape and ecological management plan	SoCG	Statement of Common Ground
		TP	temporary possession

The Examination Library

References in these questions set out in square brackets (for example [APP-010]) are to documents catalogued in the Examination Library.

The Examination Library can be obtained from the following link: [GNRS Library](#)

It will be updated as the examination progresses.

Citation of questions

Questions in this table should be cited as follows:

Question reference: issue reference: question number, for example ExQ1 1.1.1 – refers to question 1 in this table.



Index

1. **General and cross-topic questions**....Error! Bookmark not defined.
2. **Development consent order** .Error! Bookmark not defined.
3. **Agriculture and land use**.....Error! Bookmark not defined.
4. **Biodiversity, ecology and the natural environment** Error! Bookmark not defined.
5. **Climate change and sustainability**.....Error! Bookmark not defined.
6. **Community and human health**Error! Bookmark not defined.
7. **Construction effects**.....Error! Bookmark not defined.
8. **Cultural heritage and archaeology**.....Error! Bookmark not defined.
9. **Cumulative effects**.....Error! Bookmark not defined.
10. **Compulsory acquisition, temporary possession and other land or rights considerations** ...Error! Bookmark not defined.
11. **Landscape and visual impacts**Error! Bookmark not defined.
12. **Need, site selection and alternatives** .Error! Bookmark not defined.
13. **Water environment and flood risks**....Error! Bookmark not defined.
14. **Any other matters**.....Error! Bookmark not defined.

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:	Natural England Response:
Q3.1.1	Natural England (NE) and the applicant	<p>BMV land during construction</p> <p>In your relevant representation [RR-154] (NE14) and statement of common ground (SoCG) with the applicant [REP1-055], you state that you consider that the total area of best and most versatile agricultural (BMV) land disturbed during the construction of the proposed development would be considerably greater than the 19.4ha assessed by the applicant in Chapter 17 of the Environmental Statement (ES) [APP-060]. Please could you confirm the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> If you consider that there would be any significant effects arising from this greater area during the construction phase that have not been assessed in the ES. If any further mitigations would be required were this greater area to be taken into consideration. If you consider that this would also apply during the decommissioning phase of the proposed development. <p>To the applicant – please respond to the points raised by NE in paragraph 2.5.2 (NE14) of the SoCG [REP1-055] in respect of the area of BMV land disturbed during construction of the proposed development, and/or provide an update as the status of discussions on the provision of the relevant information requested by NE.</p>	<p>Natural England considers that the extent of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land that will be disturbed during construction is significantly greater than the 19.4ha indicated by the applicant. As outlined in our previous response, although the construction impacts are temporary in nature, there remains the potential for permanent adverse effects on soil resources and agricultural land quality across a much wider area than that presented. Our earlier comments were intended to highlight that the applicant’s assessment did not reflect the full quantum of BMV land likely to be affected.</p> <p>Nonetheless, Natural England confirms that no significant additional effects are expected to arise from this larger area of disturbance that have not already been considered within the Environmental Statement (ES). The overall conclusions of the EIA therefore remain valid.</p> <p>Natural England also confirms that we are not seeking any further mitigation measures beyond those already proposed by the applicant. This position equally applies to the decommissioning phase, as described in the ES.</p>
Q3.1.2	Natural England (NE)	<p>BMV land and woodland planting</p> <p>In your relevant representation [RR-156] (NE15) and SoCG with the applicant [REP1-055] concerning the amount of BMV land that could be lost due to woodland planting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Could you explain if the addition of any BMV land lost to woodland planting to the total already assessed by the applicant would, in your opinion, change the conclusions of the applicant’s assessment undertaken in [APP-060]? Could any additional mitigations reduce this potential loss? <p>Economic impacts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have any comments regarding the economic impacts of the BMV land that would be temporarily or permanently lost as a result of the proposed development? 	<p>Natural England have requested further information regarding the total amount of BMV land that could be permanently lost due to woodland planting. We are currently awaiting this information from the applicant.</p> <p>The applicant has indicated that all but 4.5ha of BMV land is to be fully restored to a ‘comparable’ grade at the decommissioning stage. Should the permanent loss exceed 5ha as a result of woodland planting or any other means, this would constitute a medium magnitude of impact, leading to a moderate adverse effect that would be considered significant in EIA terms, in accordance with Tables 17.2–17.4 of [APP-060]. Ensuring precise quantification of losses is therefore critical to determining the correct level of significance.</p> <p>Natural England do not propose any additional mitigation to reduce potential loss.</p> <p>Natural England do not have any specific comments or advice regarding the economic impacts of the BMV land beyond the policy requirements set out in the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1). We draw attention to paragraph 5.11.34 which states:</p> <p><i>‘The Secretary of State should ensure that applicants do not site their scheme on the best and most versatile agricultural land without justification. Where schemes are to be sited on best and most versatile agricultural land the Secretary of State should take into account the economic and other benefits of that land. Where development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality’.</i></p>

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:	Natural England Response:
			<p>We note that the design of woodland planting can significantly affect the scale of economic impacts. By planning schemes to avoid removing whole field parcels or the most productive agricultural land, and instead placing woodland along field boundaries, in corners, or in areas of lower agricultural value, overall economic impacts can be reduced. This contrasts with designs that occupy entire fields or high-productivity land, which tend to result in greater economic loss.</p>
Q4.1.9	Natural England	<p>Other qualifying features of the Humber Estuary sites</p> <p>The ExA notes that the assessment of the Humber Estuary SAC and Ramsar site is limited to the lamprey features and excludes any other feature of these sites such as habitats, bird species/ assemblages and onshore species. The applicant has justified this due to the distance to the sites from the proposed development.</p> <p>Can you confirm whether you are in agreement with this approach, and whether the HRA [AS-020] is required to be updated to include all qualifying features of the Humber Estuary SAC and Ramsar, and whether there is any requirement to include the overlapping Humber Estuary SPA.</p>	<p>Natural England can confirm that it agrees with the approach taken by the applicant. While the Humber Estuary SAC and Ramsar are designated for a wider range of qualifying features, Natural England is satisfied that, other than lamprey, there are no credible impact pathways arising from the proposed development due to separation distance. The additional features are therefore unlikely to be affected.</p> <p>Through engagement with the applicant, it has been agreed that the only relevant feature requiring consideration for this project is lamprey. As such, there is no requirement to update HRA as the assessment already appropriately reflects the only feature for which a potential impact pathway exists.</p> <p>There is also no requirement to include the overlapping Humber Estuary SPA. Given the distance of the project from the designated site and its position beyond all relevant screening thresholds, no plausible impact pathways exist that would affect SPA features. The decision not to include the SPA is therefore justified and consistent with established screening practice.</p>
Q4.1.10	Natural England and interested parties	<p>Consideration of mitigation measures</p> <p>The ExA notes that the screening assessment is specified to consider project wide / design related mitigation measures only, rather than any specific mitigation for impacts to European sites (as required by the Sweetman judgement). Can you (or any other IPs) confirm that you are in agreement that specific mitigation has not been considered at the stage 1 screening [AS-020]?</p>	<p>Natural England confirms that it agrees that specific mitigation to European Sites has not been considered at the stage 1 screening, and are satisfied the mitigation is embedded.</p>