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

Our Ref: EN010168

Date: **9 February 2026**

Dear Recipient

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

**Application by Lime Down Solar Park Limited for an order granting
development consent for the Lime Down Solar Project**

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

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 members of the ExA. My name is Janine Laver and the other members of the ExA are David Love and Ben Northover. A copy of the appointment notices can be viewed under the [documents tab](#) on the project webpage of the Find a National Infrastructure Project website [Lime Down Solar Project](#).

We would like to thank those of you who submitted relevant representations (RRs). These RRs 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 on **Tuesday 21 April 2026** to discuss the procedure for the examination of the above application. The agenda for the meeting is at **Annex A** to this letter.

Date	Start time	Venue and joining details
Tuesday 21 April 2026	Registration and seating available at venue from: 9:15am Virtual registration process from: 9:15am Preliminary meeting starts: 10:00am	Neeld Community & Arts Centre Borough Parade, Chippenham, SN15 3WL 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

Requests to Participate in the Preliminary Meeting

If you intend to participate in the preliminary meeting in person or virtually, you must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by procedural deadline A (Monday 9 March 2026) and provide all the information requested below:

- Name and unique reference number (found at the top of your letter or email from the Planning Inspectorate) (and that of any person/ organisation that you are representing, if applicable)
- Email address (if available) and contact telephone number
- 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.

If you simply wish to observe the preliminary meeting virtually then you do not need to register as you will be able to 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. You will also be able to watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished.

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. This is explained in more detail in **Annex B** to this letter.

The preliminary meeting is not an opportunity for you to give your views about what you like or do not like about the application. There will be subsequent opportunities for you to discuss the merits or disadvantages of the application 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 (SoS) for Energy Security and Net Zero, who will take the final decision in this case.

The agenda for this meeting (**Annex A**) 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 (PA2008) 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**.

You are invited to make a written submission about how the application is to be examined by **procedural deadline A (Monday 9 March 2026)**. 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
2. you wish to comment about the arrangements for future examination hearings, including the use of virtual methods

We request that all submissions are made using the [Have your say page](#) on the project webpage on or before **procedural deadline A (Monday 9 March 2026)**. **Annex H** to this letter provides further information about using the 'Have your say' page. All submissions should include reasons for your comments.

Please note that you are not required to attend or make written submissions to the preliminary meeting in order to participate in the examination. If you are an interested party (IP), you can still make subsequent written submissions and comment on the written submissions made by other IPs during the examination regardless of attendance at the preliminary meeting. 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.

We are providing formal notification that the preliminary meeting will be a blended event.

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 be published on the project webpage. A limited number of seats will be available for observers who wish not to be filmed at the venue. Please contact the Case Team to notify them if you prefer not to be filmed at the event. A transcript of the event will also be published on the project page of our website after the event.

After the preliminary meeting

As soon as practicable after the preliminary meeting we will issue a letter (known as the Rule 8 Letter) setting out the finalised examination timetable. A note of the meeting will also be published on the [project webpage](#).

Notification of initial hearings

We have made a procedural decision to hold the following initial hearings, which will be blended events:

- **Open floor hearing 1 (OFH1)** on the afternoon of **Tuesday 21 April 2026**. Depending on the number of participants, this hearing may run into the evening.
- **Issue specific hearing 1 (ISH1)** on the morning of **Wednesday 22 April 2026** on the scope of the development. Due to venue restrictions, this hearing must conclude by 3.00pm.

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.

Other procedural decisions made by the ExA

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

1. Use of artificial intelligence in submissions
2. Requests for statements of common ground
3. Comments on relevant representations
4. Accompanied site inspections – suggested locations
5. Deadline for the submission of local impact reports and written representations
6. Document updates

7. Requests for a future open floor hearing
8. Requests for a compulsory acquisition hearing
9. Acceptance of additional submissions into the examination

Changes to land interests

If and 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 IP under section 102A of the PA2008. They should inform them that information about how to do this can be found in the Planning Inspectorate's advice for members of the public: [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and the people and organisations involved in the process](#).

Managing examination correspondence

Given the volume and frequency of letters the Planning Inspectorate needs to send to IPs during an examination, we aim to communicate with people by email as much as possible, as electronic communication is more environmentally friendly and cost effective.

If you have received a letter but would prefer to receive future communications by email, please inform the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter.

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 through which parties should make written submissions at relevant deadlines during the examination.

You can also use the '[Get updates](#)' button on the project webpage to register to receive automatic e-mail updates at key stages during the examination.

Your status in the examination

You have received this letter because you are a person or organisation who is involved in the 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](#).

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](#).

How to stay up to date

All further documents submitted in the course of the examination will also be published under the [documents tab](#) of the project webpage.

You can also sign up to get [email updates](#).

If you have any questions about the process, examination events or how to access the documents, you can email limedown@planninginspectorate.gov.uk or contact us on 0303 444 5000.

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

Yours faithfully

Janine Laver

Lead Member of the Examining Authority

Annexes

- A** Agenda for the preliminary meeting
- B** Preliminary meeting and examination guide
- C** Initial assessment of principal issues
- D** Draft examination timetable
- E** Notification of initial hearings
- F** Other procedural decisions made by the ExA
- 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

Date: **Tuesday 21 April 2026**

Registration process: **from 9:15am**

Meeting start time: **10:00am**

Venue: In person at **Neeld Community & Arts Centre, Chippenham, SN15 3WL** and online via **Microsoft Teams**
Full instructions on how to join online or by phone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered

Attendees: **Invited parties who have pre-registered**

Agenda for the preliminary meeting	
9.15am	Registration and seating available at venue for in-person attendees.
9.15am	<p>Virtual registration process</p> <p>Please arrive at 9:15am 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 9:15am. 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>
10.00am	<p>Preliminary meeting</p> <p>Item 1</p> <p>The preliminary meeting will formally open at 10:00am. The Examining Authority will join, welcome participants and lead introductions. The public livestream and recording will start.</p>
Item 2	The ExA's remarks about the examination process.
Item 3	Initial assessment of principal issues – Annex C to Rule 6 Letter.
Item 4	Draft examination timetable – Annex D to Rule 6 Letter.
Item 5	Procedural decisions made by the ExA – Annex F to the Rule 6 Letter.
Item 6	Any other matters
Close of the preliminary meeting	

If you are participating using Microsoft Teams, please join the virtual lobby promptly using the instructions that will be sent to you. The event will start at **10:00am** irrespective of late arrivals.

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 ExA, although in making changes the ExA 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) (and that of any person/ organisation that you are representing, if applicable)
- Email address (if available) and contact telephone number
- 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

PRELIMINARY MEETING AND EXAMINATION GUIDE

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 ExA will aim to keep the proceedings focused 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 to ensure that the time available for participants to speak is maximised.

Introductions

The ExA will introduce themselves at the start of the PM.

The ExA will be supported in person and behind the scenes 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: limedown@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 Lime Down Solar Project, and which will generally be referred to in the PM and examination as 'the proposed development'. The application has been made by Lime Down Solar Park Limited, 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 National Infrastructure website. The project webpage has links to the examination timetable, relevant representations and examination documents and examination procedures.

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 PM will focus on the examination process only, such as when documents should be submitted, when responses should be provided and when hearings should be held. In that regard the ExA will not be considering 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 immediately after the close of the PM.

Government guidance and policy

The application is a nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP) as a consequence of sections 14 and 15 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) because it includes a generating station that would have a capacity of more than 50 megawatts (MW).

The Infrastructure Planning (offshore Wind and Solar Generation) Order 2025, which came into force on 31 December 2025, raised the NSIP threshold from 50MW to 100MW for solar proposals; however, Article 5 of the 2025 Order retains the lower threshold of 50MW for applications made before 31 December 2025. As such, the 2025 Order does not change the status of the application as a NSIP.

National Policy Statements (NPSs) for Energy (NPS EN-1), for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-3), and for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5), dated November 2023, and which came into force in January 2024, apply to this examination and to decision making relating to this application.

The NPSs were recently updated (December 2025) and came into force on 6 January 2026. However, section 1.6 of the updated NPS EN-1 states that for any application accepted for examination before the final publication of the 2025 amendments, the 2024 suite of NPSs should have effect.

The ExA will therefore consider the proposed development in accordance with the 2024 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 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 NPSs. In practice, this means that the ExA will not spend time examining representations that challenge policy set out in NPSs, or the validity of NPSs themselves. The focus will be on the merits or otherwise 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.

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 RR by notifying the ExA in writing by **Deadline 1 (Friday 1 May 2026)**.

The ExA also 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.

Conduct of the preliminary meeting

The PM will start promptly at 10:00am and is likely to take up to two and a half hours to complete.

During the PM participants may have to make allowances and be patient if there are delays associated with the technology used. 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. 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. While a written submission will also be published, personal and private content can be redacted or removed by the Planning Inspectorate before it is made publicly available. Any person who is unclear on this point should ask the Case Team for guidance before they place personal and private information into the public domain.

The Planning Inspectorate's practice is to publish the recordings and retain them for a period of 5 years from the SoS's decision on the DCO. If you actively participate in the PM, it is important that you understand that you will be recorded and that the

recording will be made available in the public domain. Please see our [Privacy Notice](#) for more information about how the Planning Inspectorate handles 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.

The examination process

Section 87 of the PA2008 states that it is for the ExA to decide how to examine the application.

Examining Inspectors are employed by the Planning Inspectorate. The Planning Inspectorate is an Executive Agency of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. For the examination of NSIPs the ExA produces an independent and impartial report with a recommendation to the relevant Secretary of State. In the case of this project this is the SoS for Energy Security and Net Zero. **It is the SoS who will make the decision on the application, not the ExA.**

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 a NSIP is primarily conducted through a written process, with the ExA probing, testing and assessing the evidence primarily using written questions.

While some hearings are held, these will follow an inquisitorial approach, as opposed to an adversarial approach, meaning that 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 local impact reports (LIRs) if they wish. Whilst these are voluntary, the PA2008 provides that if they are submitted, 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 (WRs) and subsequently comment on WRs made by other parties
- IPs can respond to the ExA's written questions (ExQs) and comment on responses to ExQs provided by others
- IPs may be asked to contribute to the making of statements of common ground (SoCGs) if it appears that there are matters on which they and the applicant agree, 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.

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 examination will therefore 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. These written processes will be the principal means used by the ExA to gather information, evidence and views about the application.

The ExA has discretion to make amendments to the examination timetable for the wider benefit of the examination. However, 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 consider requests at the PM for alternative dates for submission of documents and events, 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.

Open Floor Hearing (OFH)

Any registered IP may request an 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(s) 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 speaker(s) 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 ExA has provided notification in this letter of an OFH on the afternoon of **Tuesday 21 April 2026**. Participants must register in advance by **Monday 9 March 2026** on the [event participation form](#). Time has also been reserved for a further OFH during the week commencing 9 June 2026, but this would only be held if requested by IPs who did not have the opportunity to participate at OFH1 on 21 April 2026. The deadline for IPs to submit requests for a further OFH is Friday 1 May 2026.

Compulsory Acquisition Hearing (CAH)

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 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 (**Annex D**) along with deadlines by which requests to be heard must be submitted.

Issue Specific Hearing (ISH)

The ExA has the discretion to hold ISHs if it would aid the examination and there is a specific reason this would be more helpful than reliance on written evidence only. An ISH may include agenda items on a range of environmental matters as well as the draft DCO. DCO hearings are held on a without prejudice basis. Parties can and are encouraged to suggest modifications and amendments to the draft DCO provided by the applicant with the application, without prejudicing their overall position on the application.

Holding a DCO hearing does not imply that the ExA has reached any judgement on the merits of the application. Whether the ExA's recommendation to the SoS is favourable or unfavourable, the ExA must still make sure that the draft DCO is fit for purpose if the SoS decides to grant consent. In that regard, the examination is likely to include at least one hearing on the draft DCO.

The lack of an ISH on one or more other topics does not mean that that topic is less important to the ExA 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 ExA has provided notification in this letter for the first ISH with further information provided in **Annex E**.

The draft examination timetable at **Annex D** includes a number of dates reserved for subsequent ISHs if the ExA decides they are required. IPs may make suggestions for topics to be discussed at an ISH in their written or oral representations to the PM.

All parties are reminded that if they register to participate in hearings, it is not necessary for them to make long and detailed submissions that require PowerPoint presentations. Any supporting detail/ information can be provided in writing following the event by the relevant deadline.

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 (USIs) which generally identify the locations which the ExA has visited, will be published on the [project webpage](#).

Accompanied site inspections (ASIs) 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 draft Examination Timetable in **Annex D** makes provision for ASIs to be held.

The draft examination timetable includes a deadline (**Monday 9 March 2026**) for IPs to make submissions suggesting sites and locations that the ExA should visit. These will be used to inform USIs as well as possible ASIs.

Further information about this process is included at **Annex F** of this letter.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF PRINCIPAL ISSUES

This is the initial assessment of principal issues prepared as required under section 88(1) of the PA2008. It has been prepared by the ExA following its reading of:

- the application documents
- the RRs received in respect of the application
- its consideration of any other important and relevant matters

It is not a comprehensive or exclusive list of the issues that will be subject to examination and inevitably some issues will overlap or interrelate. The ExA will have regard to all important and relevant matters during the examination and when it writes its recommendation to the SoS for Energy Security and Net Zero after the examination has concluded.

The policy and consenting requirements and documents associated with the PA2008 are an integral part of the examination and are therefore not listed as main issues. Nonetheless, and for clarification, the following National Policy Statements (NPS) published in November 2023 and designated in January 2024 have effect:

- The overarching National Policy Statement for Energy ([NPS EN-1](#))
- The NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure ([NPS EN-3](#)), particularly section 2.10 relating to solar photovoltaic generation
- The NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure ([NPS EN-5](#))

The order of the principal issues listed below is alphabetic and does not imply any order of prioritisation or importance. The issues are indicative at this early stage and do not preclude other issues being considered or some being grouped together for reporting purposes:

- Biodiversity, ecology and the natural environment
- Climate impacts, including greenhouse gas assessment, equipment resilience and equipment sustainability
- Cultural heritage, including archaeology
- Cumulative and in-combination effects
- Land use and soils, including loss of best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land, and food security
- Landscape and visual impact
- Population and risks to human health, including noise impacts and potential for, and modelling of, battery energy storage systems (BESS) thermal runaway
- Site selection, alternatives, scale, generation capacity, technology and design
- Socio-economics, including impacts on local amenity (residential properties, local businesses, tourism and recreation uses)
- Transportation and traffic
- Water environment and flood risk

Specifically in relation to the principle of/ need for the proposed development, the energy NPSs make clear that there is an urgent need for new electricity network infrastructure, including large scale ground mounted solar and battery storage. As a result, the principle of development will not be a principal issue in the examination. Nevertheless, as noted above, the approach to site selection, alternatives, scale, generation capacity, technology, and design of the proposed infrastructure will be examined.

Matters relating to compulsory acquisition, temporary possession, and the draft Development Consent Order are not listed as principal issues, however they will form an integral part of the examination.

Consideration will also be given to all relevant matters during the construction, operation and decommissioning activities associated with the proposed development, and cumulatively with other plans and projects, as necessary.

It should also be noted that whilst the effects of the proposal in relation to human rights and equalities duties are not listed as principal issues, the ExA will conduct all aspects of the examination with these in mind.

DRAFT EXAMINATION TIMETABLE

The ExA is under a duty to complete the examination of the application by the end of the period of 6 months beginning with the day after the close of the preliminary meeting.

The examination of the application primarily takes the form of the consideration of written submissions. The ExA will also consider any oral representations made at hearings.

Item	Matters	Date
1.	<p>Procedural deadline A</p> <p>Deadline for receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any written submissions on the examination procedure, including any submissions about the draft examination timetable • Requests by interested parties (IPs) to speak at the preliminary meeting, including which agenda items you wish to speak on, points you wish to make and why these need to be made orally rather than in writing • Requests by IPs to speak at Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1) on Tuesday 21 April 2026 • Requests by IPs to participate in Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) on Wednesday 22 April 2026 • Comments on relevant representations (RRs), as requested in Annex F of this letter • Applicant's submission of an amended Land Rights and Negotiations Tracker and submission of a spreadsheet version of the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Appendix, as requested in Annex F of this letter • Suggestions from IPs for locations for site inspections (accompanied or unaccompanied), including justification, and whether such locations can be seen from public land or require private access, for consideration by the ExA 	Monday 9 March 2026
2.	<p>Procedural deadline B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant's draft itinerary for an ASI for consideration by the ExA (if subsequently required) 	Wednesday 1 April 2026

3.	Preliminary meeting	Tuesday 21 April 2026 (10:00am)
4.	Open floor hearing 1 (OFH1)	Tuesday 21 April 2026 (2:00pm)
5.	Issue specific hearing 1 (ISH1) ISH1 relating to the scope of development, including (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) • Site selection, alternatives and design evolution • Generating capacity 	Wednesday 22 April 2026 (10:00am)
6.	Publication by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The examination timetable (Rule 8 Letter) 	As soon as possible following the preliminary meeting
7.	Deadline 1 For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification by any statutory parties who have not submitted a RR of their wish to be considered as an IP by the ExA • Comments on RRs (if these have not been provided at procedural deadline A) • Written representations (WRs) and summaries for any that exceed 1500 words • Local impact reports (LIRs) from any local authorities • Comments on the applicant's draft itinerary for the ASI • Requests from IPs to be heard at any further OFH • Requests from Affected Persons (defined in section 59(4) of the Planning Act 2008) to be heard at a compulsory acquisition hearing (CAH) • Initial statements of common ground (SoCGs), as requested in Annex F of this letter • The applicant's updated documents if any revisions have been made, as set out in Annex F of this letter 	Friday 1 May 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	
8.	<p>Deadline 1A</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post hearing submissions, including written summaries of any oral cases, and responses to any hearing action points arising from OFH1 and ISH1 	Friday 8 May 2026
9.	<p>Deadline 2</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments on WRs Comments on LIRs Comments on initial SoCGs Comments from any party on any other submissions received at deadlines 1 and 1A Notification of a wish to attend the ASI (if required) in the week commencing 8 June 2026 The applicant's updated documents if any revisions have been made, as set out in Annex F of this letter Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	Wednesday 20 May 2026
10.	<p>Publication by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ExA's first written questions (ExQ1) 	Monday 1 June 2026
11.	Dates reserved for ASI (if required)	Week commencing 8 June 2026
12.	<p>Deadline 3</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses to ExQ1 Comments from any party on any other submissions received at deadline 2 The applicant's updated documents if any revisions have been made, as set out in Annex F of this letter 	Friday 12 June 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	
13.	Dates reserved for hearings (ISH, CAH and/ or OFH (if required))	Week commencing 29 June 2026
14.	<p>Deadline 4</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post hearing submissions, including written summaries of any oral cases, and responses to any hearing action points. Comments on responses to ExQ1 Comments from any party on any other submissions received at deadline 3 The applicant's updated documents if any revisions have been made, as set out in Annex F of this letter Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	Friday 10 July 2026
15.	Publication by the ExA of:	Monday 27 July 2026
16.	<p>Deadline 5</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses to ExQ2 Comments from any party on any other submissions received at deadline 4 The applicant's updated documents if any revisions have been made, as set out in Annex F of this letter Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	Friday 7 August 2026
17.	<p>Deadline 6</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments on responses to ExQ2 Comments from any party on any other submissions received at deadline 5 	Friday 21 August 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant's updated documents if any revisions have been made, as set out in Annex F of this letter • Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	
18.	<p>Publication by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES) and any associated questions (if required) • The ExA's commentary on, or schedule of changes to, the dDCO (if required) 	Friday 28 August 2026
19.	Dates reserved for hearings and further ASI (if required)	Week commencing 14 September 2026
20.	<p>Deadline 7</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post hearing submissions, including written summaries of any oral cases, and responses to any hearing action points. • Comments from any party on any other submissions received at deadline 6 • Comments on the RIES and responses to any associated questions within the RIES (if issued by ExA) • Comments on the ExA's commentary on, or schedule of changes to, the dDCO (if issued by ExA) <p>Final updated documents (in clean and tracked versions):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed SoCGs and a list of matters not agreed where SoCGs could not be finalised • dDCO to be submitted by the applicant in the statutory instrument (SI) template with the SI template validation report • Book of reference (BoR) and schedule of changes to BoR • Land Rights and Negotiations Tracker • Guide to the Application 	Friday 2 October 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Statement and other documents including management plans/ control documents Any signed and dated section 106 agreements together with CIL compliance schedule Applicant's closing statement with summary of areas of disagreement IPs closing statement(s) (if desired) regarding matters that they have previously raised during the examination and which have not been resolved to their satisfaction Any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	
21.	Deadline 8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	Friday 16 October 2026
22.	Close of examination See '*Note about the close of examination date'.	Wednesday 21 October 2026

***Note about the close of examination date**

The ExA is under a duty to complete the examination of the application by the end of the period of 6 months beginning with the day after the close of the preliminary meeting. The ExA may however decide to close the examination earlier than the date specified in the examination timetable above if it considers that the application and relevant matters have been examined adequately.

Submission times for deadlines

The time for submission of documents at any deadline and the close of the examination in the timetable is 23:59 on the relevant deadline date, unless instructed otherwise by the ExA.

Publication dates

All information received will be published on the documents page of 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 SoS, 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 SoS 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 ExA provides notice of the following initial hearings:

Date	Hearing	Start time	Venue and Joining details
Tuesday 21 April 2026	Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1)	Registration and seating available at venue from: 1:15pm Virtual registration process from: 1:15pm Hearing starts: 2:00pm	Neeld Community & Arts Centre Borough Parade, Chippenham, SN15 3WL and By virtual means using Microsoft Teams Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered
Wednesday 22 April 2026	Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) on the scope of the development, including (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft DCO provisions • Site selection, alternatives and design evolution • Generating capacity 	Registration and seating available at venue from: 9:15am Virtual registration process from: 9:15am Hearing starts: 10:00am	Neeld Community & Arts Centre Borough Parade, Chippenham, SN15 3WL 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 project webpage , providing reasonable notice to interested parties of the decision to cancel them.			

If you intend to participate in any of the hearings notified above, you must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by **Monday 9 March 2026** and provide all the information requested below:

- Name and unique reference number (found at the top of any letter or email from The Planning Inspectorate) (and that of any person/ organisation that you are representing, if applicable)
- Email address (if available) and contact telephone number
- Confirmation of your wish to participate in either OFH1 or ISH1 or both, and whether you will participate virtually or in person
- The Examination Library reference number (with paragraph/ page number where appropriate) of any documents you wish to refer to

It may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **Monday 9 March 2026**.

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.

If you simply wish to observe the hearings virtually then you do not need to register as you will be able to 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. You will also be able to watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished.

Hearing agendas

For OFH1 scheduled for the afternoon of **Tuesday 21 April 2026**, an agenda will be published at least five working days before the event confirming a speaking order and time slots for registered participants to make their oral submissions. Depending on the number of requested participants, the OFH may run into the evening.

Additional time has been reserved later in the examination for a further OFH if requests are made by IPs who are unable to participate on Tuesday 21 April.

For ISH1 scheduled for **Wednesday 22 April 2026**, the notice of hearing above specifies that its purpose will be to consider the scope of the proposed development and how the site selection was made along with other overarching matters. This is intended to be a high level hearing in which the ExA will seek updates from (and direct questions to) the applicant only. This does not mean that IPs are not welcome to participate, but if the ExA considers it beneficial for any specific IPs to attend ISH1, including relevant local authorities, they will be listed in the forthcoming agenda, which again will be issued at least five working days before the event.

For subsequent ISHs and/ or CAHs, the ExA will also publish a detailed draft agenda on the [project webpage](#) at least 5 working days in advance of the hearing date(s). 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 EXA

The ExA has made the following procedural decisions:

1. Use of artificial intelligence in submissions

The Planning Inspectorate understands the benefits that artificial intelligence (AI) can bring to the planning system when it is used ethically and transparently. To aid the beneficial use of AI in casework evidence, all participants in the examination are directed to [guidance](#) for information that has been generated or altered by AI.

If any party uses AI to create its submission, it is important to let us know if you have used AI in any way. This does not include basic spell-checks or grammar tools.

All parties should specify which AI systems or tools have been used, the source of the information that the AI system has based its content on, and what parts of the submitted information or representation AI has been used to create or alter.

Where you have used AI systems to summarise, substantially rewrite or add commentary to information which goes beyond a simple factual description, this can affect the accuracy and interpretation of the underlying data. In addition to telling us that you have used AI, as with all other information submitted to us, it is your responsibility to ensure that it is fit for purpose, accurate, complete and not misleading.

By following this guidance, you will help the ExA to understand the origin and accuracy of the information submitted, thereby supporting our fair and impartial examination of the application.

If you do not declare the use of AI in any evidence submission where it has been used or remove evidence such as watermarks, the ExA reserves the right to reject the submission.

2. Statements of common ground (SoCGs)

Purpose of SoCGs

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 IPs.

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.

In particular, the SoCG should identify where the differences between parties

lie and the reasons for any disagreement or outstanding matters. Where disagreement exists, it would assist the ExA for the SoCG to specify what actions could be taken to address the matters in contention.

The content and status of SoCGs will help to inform the ExA about the need to hold any issue specific hearings during the examination, and to enable the ExA and the applicant to give notice of such hearings in advance of them taking place.

If there is documented agreement between the applicant and any party listed below in respect of protective provisions and no other matters of disagreement remain, then a statement to this effect would suffice and no SoCG is required. In the absence of such agreement, and even if agreement is expected to be reached, then a SoCG should be provided and submitted by the Applicant in the first instance.

Initial SoCG request

SoCGs are requested to be prepared between the applicant and the following parties:

- a) Wiltshire Council
- b) South Gloucestershire Council
- c) Environment Agency
- d) National Highways
- e) Natural England
- f) Historic England
- g) Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd
- h) National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc
- i) National Grid Electricity Distribution (South West) plc
- j) Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
- k) Defence Infrastructure Organisation
- l) Cotswolds National Landscape Board
- m) The British Horse Society (Wiltshire Access Team)
- n) Wiltshire Bridleways Association
- o) Wessex Water
- p) Bristol Water
- q) Any Internal Drainage Board whose District is in/ adjacent to the Order limits (if applicable)

Depending on matters arising during the examination, the ExA may identify additional parties with whom SoCGs are required.

Matters to be covered in SoCGs

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

- as appropriate for its area of responsibility, the matters listed under the relevant headings in the ExA's Initial Assessment of Principal Issues (see **Annex C** of this letter)

- all matters raised in its RR (where one has been submitted)
- relevant policy, legislation and guidance
- the articles and requirements of the draft DCO [\[APP-016\]](#). Any IP seeking an article or requirement to be reworded should provide the form of words which are being sought
- mitigation, monitoring and management plans
- a summary of matters agreed and matters not agreed or outstanding
- details of any supplementary agreements, such as draft Section 106 agreements or commercial side agreements
- any other matters upon which agreement might aid the running of the examination and assist the ExA's recommendation to the SoS

The suggested content of the SoCGs is indicative and does not preclude the inclusion of other matters considered to be important and relevant to either of the parties.

Submission of SoCGs

The draft examination timetable at **Annex D** to this letter establishes **deadline 1 (Friday 1 May 2026)** for submission of initial SoCGs.

If an initial 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, then draft versions are requested to be submitted by the applicant at that deadline. The position of the relevant interested party should then be confirmed during the examination.

The draft examination timetable makes provision for updated SoCGs to be submitted at each deadline if there have been changes since the last submission date. Final versions must be submitted by **deadline 7 (Friday 2 October 2026)**.

3. Comments on relevant representations (RRs)

Rule 3(2) of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 requires written comments on any RRs to be submitted either on the date of the PM, or a date specified in the Rule 8 letter, which follows as soon as practicable following the PM, whichever is the later.

The ExA has noted from experience that applicants generally respond as quickly as possible following the close of the RR period, and given the notable period of time between the close of RRs (12 January 2026) and the scheduled PM (21 April 2026), it would be helpful to all parties and the examination overall if the applicant's comments on RRs could be submitted by **procedural deadline A (Monday 9 March 2026)**. Early response would aid the subsequent early submission of WRs and LIRs in the examination at **deadline 1 (Friday 1 May 2026)**.

Comments on RRs should:

- specify the names of the parties making the representation and the relevant Examination Library reference in order to demonstrate that all RRs have been responded to
- representations made by statutory consultees should be listed separately or highlighted so that they are easily identifiable
- where representations have been made by affected persons who are listed in the book of reference [[APP-020](#)], this should be specified, and cross referenced to the Land Rights and Negotiations Tracker
- where a detailed or tabular representation has been submitted, responses should be presented in a comparable manner in order to ensure that all points are responded to in similar terms

4. Accompanied site inspections (ASIs) – suggested locations

ASIs 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 draft examination timetable at **Annex D** to this letter includes dates reserved for ASIs during the week of 8 June 2026, as well as a potential additional day during the week of 14 September 2026.

Interested Parties are therefore invited to submit suggested locations for the ExA to visit as part of an ASI by **Procedural Deadline A (Monday 9 March 2026)**.

It would be helpful if nominations could be sent separately from any other written submission. Nominations must include:

- sufficient information to identify the location
- the issues to be observed at the location
- the reason why the location has been suggested
- information on whether the site can be accessed via public land
- the reason why an unaccompanied site inspection would not suffice

The applicant is requested to prepare a draft itinerary for the ASI to be submitted by **procedural deadline B (Wednesday 1 April 2026)**. This should focus on private land to which access is required, taking account of:

- 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 1 (Friday 1 May 2026)**.

The ExA will consider each suggested site location, including those provided in the applicant's draft itinerary, to determine if it could be viewed from public land on an unaccompanied basis or if it is necessary to view it on an accompanied basis. The ExA will also consider if it would be appropriate to make arrangements for access only to be provided to specific sites such that they could be inspected as part of an unaccompanied site inspection on an access required basis.

The ExA will publish its final itinerary at least 5 working days before the date of the ASI.

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.

5. Deadline for the submission of local impact reports (LIRs) and written representations (WRs)

A LIR is a report in writing giving details of the likely impact of a proposed development on a local authority's area (or any part of that area). For more information about the importance and content of LIRs, see our [Advice for Local Authorities](#).

The ExA requests LIRs from the host and neighbouring local authorities and welcomes LIRs from any other relevant local authorities defined in section 56A of the Planning Act 2008 who may wish to submit one.

In order to maximise the time available to examine the Application, we have made the procedural decision to request LIRs by **deadline 1 (Friday 1 May 2026)**.

We have similarly made the procedural decision to request WRs from local authorities and all other IPs by the same deadline (**Friday 1 May 2026**).

We acknowledge that this deadline comes soon after the PM, however, by providing this early notice, we are ensuring that all IPs will have a reasonable time period in which to draft these documents before the deadline for submission.

For the avoidance of doubt, we wish to make clear to local authorities that LIRs and WRs are two separate documents and must be submitted separately and independently of each other. Any WRs that exceed 1500 words should also be accompanied by a summary; this summary should not exceed 10% of the original text.

6. Document updates

a) Land Rights and Negotiations Tracker

The ExA notes the applicant's submission of a Land Rights and Negotiations Tracker (Examination Library reference [[APP-021](#)]). The submission of this document is useful to the ExA, however, the ExA would benefit from the table being expanded to include additional columns to identify the following information:

- the category of each affected person listed, taken from the Book of Reference (Cat 1, Cat 2)
- the interest of each affected person in the land (freehold owner, tenant, lessee, occupier)
- a brief description of the works proposed over the affected land parcels in a new column alongside the 'works no(s)' column (for example ancillary works, grid connection cable, highway works, and so on)
- 'status of objection' column showing either 'yes', 'no' or 'withdrawn', and if 'withdrawn' provide the date
- the likely duration of any temporary rights sought

The Land Rights and Negotiations Tracker should enable the ExA and SoS to easily interrogate the information and isolate those persons who have objected to the CA or TP of their rights and interests and who maintain an objection.

The Applicant should therefore submit a duplicate copy of the PDF Tracker in readable Excel spreadsheet format each time it is updated.

The ExA requests that the updated Land Rights and Negotiations Tracker in PDF and Excel formats is submitted into the examination at **procedural deadline A (Monday 9 March 2026)** and then at the subsequent deadlines set out in **Annex D** to this letter if changes are made to a previous version. A final version of the Land Rights and Negotiations Tracker should be provided at **deadline 7 (Friday 2 October 2026)**.

b) Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment Appendix

The ExA requests that the statutory biodiversity metric, which is included in the BNG Assessment Appendix [[APP-274](#)], is submitted by the applicant in an unlocked Excel spreadsheet format at **procedural deadline A (Monday 9 March 2026)**. If any changes are made to the metric during the examination, an updated copy should be submitted at the subsequent deadlines set out in **Annex D** to this letter.

c) Guide to the Application

The ExA requests that the applicant provides, at each deadline, an updated 'Guide to the Application' document in both clean and track change versions, which provides a list of the most up-to-date status of the documents submitted, including which copies (and Examination Library reference numbers) have been superseded in whole or in part. A final version must be

by **deadline 7 (Friday 2 October 2026)**. All examination documents submitted should include a version number and date.

d) Amendments to the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO)

Where the Applicant submits an amended dDCO at any deadline, the submission should include a new version number identifying that the submitted dDCO is an amended version. **Amended dDCOs submitted by the applicant must always be in clean and track change versions** and accompanied by:

- a) versions submitted in Microsoft Word
- b) an amended Explanatory Memorandum
- c) a consolidated schedule of changes listing all changes to the dDCO since the application version **[APP-016]**, when (including the version number) and for what purpose each change was introduced

At **deadline 7 (Friday 2 October 2026)** the applicant must provide the email notification from <https://publishing.legislation.gov.uk/validation> confirming the document has successfully passed validation, along with 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 dDCO, with no header or cover page.

e) Environmental Statement (ES) and other documents

In the event of revised versions of documents such as the ES (individual chapters or appendices) or other documents in the series numbered 7.1 to 7.26 being submitted, clean copies and copies showing tracked changes highlighting the changes made to the previous version of the document should be submitted. In instances of changes (other than minor typographical corrections) being made, a summary explanation of the reason(s) for those changes being made should also be provided.

7. Requests for a future open floor hearing (OFH)

IPs who wish to be heard at an OFH later in the examination should submit their request in writing to the Planning Inspectorate by **deadline 1 (Friday 1 May 2026)**. If the ExA decides to hold a further OFH, adequate notice to all parties will be provided in line with Rule 13 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (EPR).

8. Requests for a compulsory acquisition hearing (CAH)

Affected persons who wish to be heard at CAH later in the examination should make their requests to the Inspectorate by **deadline 1 (Friday 1 May 2026)**. The ExA may choose to hold a CAH even if it receives no requests. If the ExA decides to hold one or more CAH then it will give adequate notice to all parties, in line with Rule 13 of the EPR.

9. Acceptance of additional submissions

Since the application was accepted for examination, the ExA has exercised its discretion and made procedural decisions to accept the following additional submissions from the applicant:

- Corrected version of Environmental Statement Figure 8-14 Baseline Photography and Photomontages – Viewpoint 45 [\[AS-001\]](#)
- Response [\[AS-002\]](#) to the Planning Inspectorate's [s51 advice](#) following acceptance of the application for examination

The ExA has also exercised its discretion to accept additional submissions from other parties following the close of the relevant representations period [\[AS-003\]](#), [\[AS-004\]](#), [\[AS-005\]](#) and [\[AS-006\]](#).

As we move into the examination, 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.

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 the [documents page](#) 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 limedown@planninginspectorate.gov.uk or contact us on 0303 444 5000.

The Examination Library

For ease of navigation, please refer to the [Examination Library](#) which is accessible by clicking the link at the top of the [documents page](#). The Examination Library is updated regularly throughout the examination.

The Examination Library records and provides a hyperlink to:

- each application document
- each representation made to the examination
- each procedural decision made by the ExA

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 Examination Library when referring to any examination documents in any future submissions that you make.**

INFORMATION ABOUT THE ‘HAVE YOUR SAY’ PAGE

The [Have your say page](#) is available on the [project webpage](#).

You will need to enter your unique reference number (‘Your ref’ found at the top your letter or email from the Planning Inspectorate). If you are making a submission on behalf of another person or organisation, and do have not 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 ExA whether or not your submission is accepted.

Submissions will be published on the [project webpage](#) as soon as practicable following the close of the relevant deadline. For further information about publishing submissions please view our [Privacy Notice](#).

You will be able to submit a document (upload file), make a text representation or both. It is possible to upload multiple files for each individual submission item. Electronic attachments should be clearly labelled with the subject title and not exceed 50MB.

Submissions **must not include hyperlinks** to documents/ evidence hosted on a third party website (for example technical reports, media articles and so on). See The Planning Inspectorate’s [Advice for members of the public: Advice for submitting representations or comments](#) for important information about making written submissions. All submissions must be made in a format that can be viewed in full on the Find a National Infrastructure Project website. Any submissions that exceed 1500 words should also be accompanied by a summary; this summary should not exceed 10% of the original text.

You should select the relevant deadline for your submission and then, on the next webpage, select the appropriate submission item as described in the examination timetable at **Annex D** to this letter. Please ensure you make a separate submission for each submission item and **do not duplicate your submission**. If you consider that your submission does not fit the description of any of the submission items then please select the submission item ‘Other’ and ensure that it is titled appropriately.

If you experience any issues when using the [Have your say page](#) please contact the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter and they will assist.