



Preliminary meeting note

Application: Lime Down Solar Project
Reference: EN010168
Time and date: 10:00am, 21 April 2026
Venue: Neeld Community & Arts Centre, Chippenham, SN15 3WL

This meeting note is not a full transcript of the preliminary meeting. It is a summary of the key points discussed.

1. Welcome and Introduction

Janine Laver (JL) welcomed those present and introduced herself as the lead member of the panel of examining inspectors and David Love and Ben Northover as panel members to examine the Lime Down Solar Project application.

JL explained the appointments were made by delegation from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

JL explained that the ExA would be examining the application made by Lime Down Solar Park Limited ('the applicant') before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State who will decide whether an order granting development consent for the proposed project, which is a nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP), should be made.

JL explained the purpose of the preliminary meeting (PM) and noted that the examination will commence after the PM closes.

The ExA confirmed that all documents and submissions received and accepted during the examination will be published on the project-specific page of the National Infrastructure Planning website.

2. Audio recording

The video recording of this PM is available on the National Infrastructure Planning website and can be accessed through this link: [Documents | Lime Down Solar Project](#)

3. General Data Protection Regulation

The ExA explained The Planning Inspectorate's duties under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Further info relating to the GDPR can be found in the Planning Inspectorate's [Privacy Notice](#).

4. Examination process

The ExA briefly explained the examination process under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). Further info can be found on the following webpages:

- ['Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: What to expect at a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project event'](#)
- ['Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Registering to speak at, or attend, an event'](#)

5. Initial assessment of principal issues

The ExA explained the purpose of the initial assessment of principal issues (section 88 of the PA2008), which can be found in annex C of the [Rule 6 letter](#) of 9 February and asked for any observations on them.

The following observations were made:

Stop Lime Down requested clarification that the list of issues in annex C are relevant to both the solar areas and also the cable route, and that both aspects of the scheme will be examined against the list. The ExA confirmed this is correct.

6. Examination Timetable

The ExA noted requests, already received in writing to amend the draft examination timetable contained in annex D of [Rule 6 letter](#) and also welcomed further suggestions from the parties in attendance.

All comments received were noted by the ExA and considerations will be reflected in the Rule 8 Letter.

Wiltshire Council requested at least 6 weeks to comment on written representations, a minimum of fifteen working days to respond to the Examining Authorities' first written questions (ExQ1), and an additional 5-day block of hearings in August to cover highways and transport, landscape and visual impact, ecology, flood risk, and drainage.

The ExA noted the request for further hearings but also that it had the right to amend the timetable during the examination (via a rule 8(3) letter) to add further hearings if necessary.

All comments received were duly noted by the ExA and considerations will be reflected in the Rule 8 Letter.

The examination timetable can be found in the [Rule 8 letter](#) published on 24 April 2026.

7. Hearings and site inspections

The ExA stated that interested parties can make suggestions for topics to be discussed at an issue specific hearing in their written or oral representations at the Preliminary Meeting. The ExA also said if IPs wish to attend any hearings, they are recommended to read Annexes B and E of our Rule 6 letter (9 February 2026) thoroughly, so that they understand the different types of hearings, the reasons behind the hearings and procedures around each. The ExA confirmed that they would be holding an ASI in the week of 8 June.

Further information relating to hearings and site inspections can be found:

- ['Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: What to expect at a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project event'](#)
- ['Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Registering to speak at, or attend, an event'](#)

8. Procedural decisions

The ExA clarified the procedural decisions made in annex F of the [Rule 6 Letter](#) under section 89(3) of the PA2008 and asked for any observations.

The ExA also clarified the additional submissions accepted since the publication of the Rule 6 letter and made some additional procedural decisions at the preliminary meeting, relating to statements of common ground (SoCGs), the land rights tracker, and additional plans required.

Statements of Common Ground

Wiltshire Council raised their concerns regarding the deadline for the initial SoCG between the applicant and Wiltshire Council and requested an extension to the deadline until deadline 2 due to a delay in receiving the initial draft SoCG from the applicant.

The applicant confirmed it was satisfied with the submission of the initial draft of the SoCG to be pushed back to deadline 2.

Stop Lime Down also requested a SoCG with the applicant. The ExA noted that it was unusual for an applicant to produce a SoCG with an action group and asked the applicant whether they felt that one would be beneficial. The applicant confirmed they will work on drafting a SoCG with Stop Lime Down on specific, rather than general topics. The applicant agreed that it could produce an initial draft by deadline 2.

The applicant also confirmed they have contacted the parties noted in annex F of the [Rule 6 letter](#) and are waiting for a reply as to whether they wish to enter into a SoCG.

The ExA agreed to issue a procedural decision for a SoCG between Stop Lime Down and the applicant and for initial SoCGs with all relevant parties to be provided by deadline 2, rather than deadline 1 of the timetable.

The applicant confirmed they would consider entering into SoCG with Parish Councils, as long as the SoCGs concentrate on the local issues for those parish councils rather than any generic issues. The ExA did not issue a procedural decision to require SoCGs between the applicant and Parish Councils, rather left it to Parish Councils to decide whether they wished to request SoCGs with the applicant.

Land Rights Tracker

The applicant stated in terms of its land rights tracker, it is not possible at this stage to specify the duration for temporary rights sought for each plot, instead it would include the overall construction dates. The applicant explained an explanatory note was added to the tracker submitted at procedural deadline A to explain why this information was not available. The ExA requested additional information about the entire duration of temporary rights in subsequent iterations of the Land Rights Tracker. This will be outlined in the ExA's [Rule 8 letter](#).

Additional Plans

The ExA advised it required winter year 15 photomontages from the applicant to be submitted by deadline 3 at the latest, although deadline 2 would be preferred. The purpose would be to understand the effectiveness of screen planting in the future, during winter when foliage is reduced.

The ExA also requested updated landscape and ecological plans [APP-084] from the applicant by deadline 2, showing 'guide lines' on each of the plans to enable them to be pieced together, and for the proposed site features to be provided on all overlapping plans.

9. Any other matters

The applicant addressed concerns about its approach to responding to relevant representations. It explained its approach was to respond by theme rather than to every individual due to the number of representations received. The ExA stated it agreed with the approach, although it noted that where interested parties raised discrete issues (for example something about impacts on their individual property or business) then it was not unreasonable for those parties to expect a discrete response to that issue. The ExA requested that the applicant looks at subsequent written representations more closely in that regard.

The applicant agreed that if more detailed submissions are received it will note any specific points raised.

Stop Lime Down requested provisions are made to enable the press to attend future hearings without the need to register. Wiltshire Council supported these suggestions.

10. Close

The PM closed at 11:55am and the ExA confirmed the examination would begin after the close of the PM, as well as confirming the remaining events for the week.