

Application by Meridian Solar Farm Limited for an order granting development consent for the Meridian Solar Farm project.

Agenda for Issue Specific Hearing 1: Strategic Matters

Hearing	Date and Time	Location
Issue Specific Hearing 1 on Strategic Matters	Wednesday 09 September 2026 Hearing starts at 10:00am Registration and seating available at venue from 09:30am and virtual registration process from 09:30am	Allia Future Business Centre Peterborough, Peterborough Conference Room, Peterborough United Football Club, London Road, Peterborough, PE2 8AN and by virtual means using Microsoft Teams

Agenda

Item 1	Welcome, Examining Authority (ExA) introductions and arrangements for the hearing
Item 2	Purpose of Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) and ExA opening remarks
Item 3	Introduction of participants
	Discussion points
Item 4	Scope of the proposed development - The applicant is to provide an overview of the proposed solar array, pylon transmission route, siting of new substations and battery energy storage system, cable sealing ends, and the main construction compounds. - The applicant is to provide an overview of their approach to limits of deviation. - The applicant is to provide an overview of the choice of mainly overhead cabling verses underground cabling, and the proposed methods of installation. Where relevant, the applicant will be asked to display plans to illustrate the proposals.

	The ExA may ask questions of the applicant in relation to the above and other matters relating to the scope of the proposed development.
Item 5	Assessment of alternatives • The applicant is to provide an overview of its approach to alternative methods of design of solar panels and electricity transmission (during all pre-application stages of project design development) and reasons for discounting them, signposting to the relevant sections of Environmental Statement, the EIA regulations, national policy requirements, and National Grid and National Electricity System Operator guidelines. • The above shall include a summary of its reasoning for the choice of, and orientation of, solar panels, overhead transmission lines instead of underground cables, choice of pylon size and design, including costings. The applicant will be asked to display plans to illustrate any points made. The ExA may ask additional questions of the applicant in relation to the above and other matters relating to alternatives. Attendees should note that this agenda item will mainly be at a high level, relating to the approach taken by the applicant prior to submission of the application. The ExA may however ask questions on some site-specific parts of the proposed development. More detailed site-specific matters will be dealt with by the ExA in future issue specific hearings and/or written questions. However, the applicant is expected to have reviewed the relevant representations submitted by interested parties (IPs) so as to target those areas of most concern in relation to alternatives.
Item 6	Interrelationships with other projects The applicant is to provide an update on the status of other projects which interrelate with the proposed development including: • A summary of the approach to continuing dialogue with the promoters or operators of those projects with regard to any provisions to be included in the draft Development Consent Order and surveys and/ or mitigation to be shared between projects. The applicant will be asked to display plans to illustrate any points made. The ExA may ask questions of the applicant in relation to the above and other matters relating to interrelationships with other projects.
Item 7	Flood risk, water quality and resources

	• The applicant is to provide an overview of its application of the Sequential and Exception Tests, including an explanation of how it is ensured that the project will be safe for its lifetime, taking into account the users. • The applicant is to provide an update on their discussions with the Environment Agency. This should include justification for scoping out fish and aquatic invertebrates from the Water Framework Directive assessment, and the adequacy of the assessment of effects on geomorphology. • The applicant is to provide an update on their discussions with Anglian Water Services, including sourcing of water for both construction and operation. Where relevant, the applicant will be asked to display plans to illustrate the proposals. The ExA may ask questions of the applicant in relation to the above and other matters relating to flood risk, water quality and resources.
Item 8	Habitats Regulations Assessment and Biodiversity • The applicant is to provide an update on their discussions with Natural England, including the process of identification of Functionally Linked Land in the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Report and the effect on ornithology from overhead lines. Where relevant, the applicant will be asked to display plans to illustrate the proposals. The ExA may ask questions of the applicant in relation to the above and other matters relating to the HRA and biodiversity.
Item 9	Socio-Economics • The applicant is to provide an overview and justification of the potential community benefits of the proposed development. The ExA may ask additional questions of the applicant in relation to the above and other matters relating to socio-economics.
Item 10	Aviation safety • The applicant is to provide an update in respect of dialogue with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation following the content of its relevant representation [RR-040]. • The applicant is to provide an update in respect of the position with Fenland Aero Club and Peterborough and Spalding Gliding Club.

	If relevant, the applicant will be asked to display plans to illustrate any points made. The ExA may ask additional questions of the applicant in relation to the above and other matters relating to aviation safety.
Item 11	Any other matters
Item 12	Review of actions and closing

Please note that the above agenda is indicative and may be amended by the ExA at the start of the hearing. The ExA has sought to provide sufficient detail in this agenda to assist the parties to prepare for the hearing.

Notification of the date, time and attendance instructions for ISH1 was provided in the ExA's Rule 6 letter dated 23 July 2026 [\[PD-006\]](#). IPs who wish to speak at this event were required to provide notification by 24 August 2026. If you haven't notified us that you wish to attend or to speak, you must contact the case team as soon as possible.

Attendees

The ExA would find it helpful if the following parties could attend this hearing.

- Applicant
- Lincolnshire County Council
- South Holland District Council
- Environment Agency
- Anglian Water Services
- Natural England
- Fenland Aero Club
- Peterborough and Spalding Gliding Club
- Defence Infrastructure Organisation
- National Grid Electricity Transmission

The ExA will mainly be directing its questions to the applicant on the matters as set out in this agenda, and there will be limited time available for IPs to make submissions on the items in the agenda.

However, this does not mean that other parties will not be able to contribute. All IPs are invited to attend and make oral representations on the matters set out in the agenda, subject to the ExA's discretion.

Any IP making oral submissions on any of the agenda items or in response to the applicant's submissions at the hearing, should submit theses in writing at **deadline 1 Tuesday 22 September 2026**.

The ExA has sought to provide sufficient detail to assist the parties to prepare for the hearing. The details set out above are indicative and the ExA may find it necessary to include additional agenda items or to amend the order in which the items are dealt with.

The event will be livestreamed and a link for watching the livestream will be posted on the [project webpage of the National Infrastructure Planning website](#) closer to the hearing date. IPs and members of the public who wish to observe the hearing can therefore view and listen to the hearing using the livestream, or view and listen to the recording, after it has concluded.

Registration process

Parties who have registered to speak (both in person and virtually) will receive a joining instruction email shortly before the hearing which will include a link to the virtual event on Microsoft Teams, and a telephone number should they need to participate by telephone. To enable the hearing to start on time at 10:00am those attending virtually should join promptly at 09:30am to ensure that all virtual attendees can complete the registration process in good time.

Procedure at Issue Specific Hearings

Guidance under the Planning Act 2008 and the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 provides that it is for the ExA to probe, test and assess the evidence through direct questions of persons making oral representations at hearings. Questioning at the hearing will be led by the ExA. Cross questioning of a person giving evidence by another person will only be permitted if the ExA decides it is necessary to ensure representations are adequately tested or that an IP has had a fair chance to put its case.