



Planning Inspectorate

Planning
Inspectorate
c/o QUADIENT
69 Buckingham
Avenue
Slough
SL1 4PN

Customer
Services: 0303 444 5000

email: lightvalleysolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

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

Our Ref: EN0110012

Date: 19 June 2026

Dear Sir/ Madam

**Planning Act 2008 – section 88 and 89 and The Infrastructure Planning
(Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – rules 4, 6, 9 and 13**

**Application by Light Valley Solar Limited for an order granting development
consent for the Light Valley Solar project**

**Appointment of the Examining Authority, and invitation to the preliminary
meeting and notification of hearings**

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 Matt Tandy and the other members of the ExA are Jonathan Medlin and Marc Willis. A copy of the appointment notice can be viewed on the [documents](#) page on the project webpage of the Find a National Infrastructure Project website ([project webpage](#)).

I would like to thank those of you who submitted relevant representations. These representations have assisted the ExA in considering how to examine this application.

Invitation to the preliminary meeting

As a recipient of this letter you are invited to the preliminary meeting to discuss **the procedure** for the examination of the above application.

| Date | Start time | Venue and joining details |
|--|---|--|
| Tuesday 28 July 2026 | Registration and seating available at venue from: 9.30am Virtual registration process from: 9.30am Preliminary meeting starts: 10.00am | The Parsonage Hotel & Spa, Escrick, York YO19 6LF 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 |
| <p>IMPORTANT: The preliminary meeting should be completed before 1.00pm on Tuesday 28 July 2026. However, a reserve period has been scheduled for 2.00pm on the same day to allow for the meeting to be resumed in exceptional circumstances, for example to account for a failure of technology. Normally the reserve period will not be required and confirmation of this will be provided by the ExA at the end of the preliminary meeting and subsequently notified on the project webpage.</p> | | |

You must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by procedural deadline B, Tuesday 7 July 2026, if you intend to participate in the preliminary meeting and provide all the information requested (see below).

If you simply wish to observe the preliminary meeting, then you do not need to register as you will be able to either:

1. 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
2. watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished

Alternatively, you can attend the physical event at the venue to observe the proceedings; however, to ensure there is adequate seating capacity at the venue the ExA request that you register your attendance to **observe only** by **Tuesday 7 July 2026** using the [event participation form](#). Please note that it may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **Tuesday 7 July 2026**.

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. The ExA will therefore limit the scope of the

preliminary meeting to consideration of **how the application will be examined**. See **annex B** to this letter and 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 preliminary meeting is not an opportunity for you to give your views about what you like or don't like about the application. The merits or disadvantages of the application will only be considered once the examination starts, which is after the preliminary meeting has closed. All relevant and important matters will be taken into account when the ExA makes its recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, who will take the final decision in this case.

The agenda for the meeting is at **annex A** to this letter. This has been set following the initial assessment of principal issues arising from the ExA's 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 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**.

The ExA is now requesting written submissions from recipients of this letter about how the application should be examined. The ExA particularly wishes to hear from you if either:

1. consider changes need to be made to the draft examination timetable set out at **annex D** to this letter
2. wish to comment about the arrangements for future examination hearings, including the use of virtual methods

You are invited to make a written submission about how the application is to be examined by **procedural deadline B** (Tuesday 7 July 2026 at 11:59pm) (see **annex D** to this letter).

The ExA requests that all submissions are made using the ['Have your say' page](#) on the project webpage on or before **procedural deadline B**. **Annex H** to this letter provides further information about using the ['Have your say' page](#).

Requests to participate at the preliminary meeting

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, you can make a written representation and comment on the written representations made by other interested parties during the examination. You will also be able to participate in any hearings that are arranged.

If you wish to participate at the preliminary meeting, you are required to notify the ExA in writing on or before **Tuesday 7 July 2026** (see **procedural deadline B**).

Any request to participate in the preliminary meeting must include the following information:

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

Requests to participate should be made using the [event participation form](#) on or before **procedural deadline B**.

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.

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. The ExA will remain flexible and will confirm the format of any hearings to be held during the examination stage when providing a formal notification of each hearing in advance of it taking place.

The ExA is providing formal notification that the preliminary meeting will be a blended event and that the open floor, compulsory acquisition and issue specific hearings referred to in **annex E** to this letter will also be blended events.

After the preliminary meeting

After the preliminary meeting the ExA 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

The ExA has made a procedural decision to hold the following initial hearings:

- Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 on Tuesday 28 July 2026 (Blended event)
- Open Floor Hearing 1 on Wednesday 29 July 2026 (Blended event)
- Issue Specific Hearing 1 – Scope of the proposed development, environmental matters and the draft Development Consent Order on Thursday 30 July 2026 (Blended event)

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 Examining Authority

The ExA has made some further procedural decisions which are set out in detail at **annex F** to this letter. They are summarised as follows:

- use of artificial intelligence in submissions
- deadline for the submission of local impact reports and written representations
- statements of common ground
- accompanied site inspection – suggested locations
- application document updates
- report on the interrelationships with other nationally significant infrastructure projects
- advice provided by the Health and Safety Executive
- the applicant's response to relevant representations

Changes to land interests

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 interested party under

<https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>



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](#). The examination timetable includes various deadlines for the submission of an updated book of reference and schedule of changes to the book of reference, which should include confirmation that relevant persons have been informed of their rights under section 102A.

Managing examination correspondence

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

If you have received a letter but are able to receive communications by email, please inform the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter as soon as possible.

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 which provides a portal through which parties should make written submissions at relevant deadlines during the examination. Further information about the '[Have your say](#)' page is provided at **annex H** to this letter.

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](#).

<https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>



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](#).

Please note that in the interest of facilitating an effective and fair examination, it is necessary to publish some personal information. To find out how the Planning Inspectorate handle your personal information please view our [Privacy Notice](#).

The ExA looks forward to working with all parties in the examination of this application.

Yours faithfully

Matt Tandy

Lead Member of the Examining Authority

Annexes

- A** Agenda for the preliminary meeting
- B** Introduction to the preliminary meeting
- C** Initial assessment of principal issues
- D** Draft examination timetable
- E** Notification of initial hearings
- F** Other procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority
- 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.

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Agenda for the preliminary meeting

You must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by procedural deadline B, Tuesday 7 July 2026, if you intend to participate in the preliminary meeting and provide all the information requested (see below).

If you simply wish to observe the preliminary meeting then you do not need to register as you will be able to either:

1. 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
2. watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished.

Alternatively, you can attend the physical event at the venue to observe the proceedings; however, to ensure there is adequate seating capacity at the venue we request that you register your attendance to **observe only** by **Tuesday 7 July 2026** using the [event participation form](#). Please note that it may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **procedural deadline B, Tuesday 7 July 2026**.

Please note that by attending 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.

Date: **Tuesday 28 July 2026**

Registration process: **9.30am**

Meeting start time: **10.00am**

Venue: Blended event at:

**The Parsonage Hotel & Spa,
Escrick,
York
YO19 6LF**

and by virtual means using 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 | |
|---|---|
| 9.30am | Registration and seating available at venue for in-person attendees |
| 9.30am | <p>Virtual registration process</p> <p>Please arrive at 9.30am 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 9.30am. 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 The preliminary meeting will formally open at 10.00am. The Examining Authority will join, welcome participants and lead introductions.</p> |
| Item 2 | The Examining Authority's remarks about the examination process |
| Item 3 | Initial assessment of principal issues – annex C to the Rule 6 Letter |
| Item 4 | Draft examination timetable – annex D to the 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 any late arrivals, for whom access may not be possible.

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 Examining Authority, although in making changes the Examining Authority 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)

- Email address (if available) and contact telephone number
- Name and unique reference number of any person/ organisation that you are representing (if applicable)
- For blended events, 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

Introduction to the preliminary meeting

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 Examining Authority (ExA) is conscious of videoconferencing fatigue and will aim to keep the proceedings focussed 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 in order to ensure that the time available for participants to speak is maximised.

The Examining Authority and the Case Team

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

The ExA will be supported 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:

lightvalleysolar@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 Light Valley Solar, which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), and which will generally be referred to in the PM and examination as 'the proposed development.' The application has been made by Light Valley Solar 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 Find National Infrastructure Project website. The project webpage has links to the examination timetable, relevant representations and examination documents and examination procedure.

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 main purpose of the PM is to discuss the arrangements for the examination of the application. It focuses on the process only, and it will not be looking at 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 after the close of the PM.

The PM will be your opportunity to influence the process that the ExA intends to follow. The agenda for the PM is attached to this Rule 6 Letter at **annex A**. It is important to have the letter and the agenda in front of you and to refer to them during the course of the PM. You may wish to print these in advance of the PM for reference.

Government guidance and policy

The application is an NSIP under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) as a consequence of sections 14 and 15 of the PA2008 because it includes a generating station that would have a capacity of more than 100 megawatts (MW).

The designated National Policy Statements (NPS) for Energy Infrastructure, specifically the Overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1), Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) and Electricity Network Infrastructure (EN-5) all dated December 2025, and which came into force in January 2026, apply to this examination and to decision-making relating to this application.

The ExA will consider the proposed development in accordance with the above 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 relevant Secretary of State (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 NPS. 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 disadvantages 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.

In summary, the PM will establish the procedures and timetable for the examination of the Proposed Development. It will set a framework for the ExA to enable the SoS to consider and decide the application. In doing so, the ExA will have regard to:

- the positions and representations of all interested parties (IP)
- any local impact reports (LIR) prepared and provided by relevant local authorities
- other prescribed matters
- any other matters that appear to be both relevant and important to the relevant SoS’s decision

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 interested party (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 relevant representation by notifying the ExA in writing.

The ExA 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 ExA estimate that the PM will take approximately 2 hours to complete.

During the PM participants may have to make allowances and be patient if there are delays associated with the technology used. In recognition of the fatigue associated with on-screen communication, 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. The making and publication of these recordings are a means by which the ExA meets the legal requirement to hold the PM (and any other hearings) in public. 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. Although this will also be published, personal and private content can be redacted or removed 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 at least 6 weeks 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 we handle 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. If you prefer not to have your image recorded, you can switch off your camera at any point.

The examination process

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 NSIPs are primarily a written process and hearings take on an inquisitorial approach as opposed to an adversarial one.

This means that the ExA will probe, test and assess the evidence primarily using written questions. While some hearings are held to provide supplementary evidence, 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 provided, 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 (WR) and comment on WRs made by other parties.
- IPs can respond to the ExA's written questions (ExQs) and comment on responses to these written questions provided by others.
- IPs may be asked to contribute to the making of statements of common ground (SoCG) if it appears that there are matters on which they and the applicant agrees, 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.

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

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 ExA has discretion to make amendments to the examination timetable for the wider benefit of the examination. If possible, events will be arranged for times when all relevant parties are available, but 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 try to rearrange event dates to accommodate all relevant parties, 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.

Any registered IP may request an **open floor hearing** (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 may be requested of any 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 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 speakers 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 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 **compulsory acquisition hearing** (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 along with deadlines by which requests to be heard must be submitted.

The ExA has the discretion to hold **issue specific hearings** (ISH) if it would aid in the examination and there is a specific reason this would be more helpful than reliance on written evidence only. The lack of an ISH on one or more topics does not suggest that that topic is less important 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 draft examination timetable includes a number of dates reserved for ISHs and IPs may make suggestions for topics to be discussed at an ISH in their written or oral representations to the PM.

It may be necessary for the ExA to hold more than one ISH on the draft DCO. This is normal practice, and they are held on a without prejudice basis. Parties can suggest modifications and amendments to the draft DCO provided by the applicant with the application, without prejudicing their overall position on the application.

Holding such hearings does not imply that the ExA has reached any judgements on the merits of the application. Whatever the ultimate recommendation is, the ExA must make sure that the draft DCO is fit for purpose if the SoS decides to grant consent, as any consent will be subject to requirements (similar to planning conditions) set out in the draft DCO.

At hearings it will not normally be necessary for parties to make long and detailed submissions that require, for example, PowerPoint presentations. Any supporting detail/ information can be provided in writing following the event by the relevant deadline.

The draft examination timetable includes a deadline (**Tuesday 11 August 2026**) for participants to notify the ExA that they wish to speak at an OFH or a CAH.

Site inspections

As part of the examination process the ExA may undertake site inspections. These can be either unaccompanied or accompanied. The purpose of site inspections is for the ExA to see features of the proposals within the context of the evidence put forward.

Accompanied site inspections (ASI) 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 purpose of ASIs is familiarisation only and no discussion of the merits of the proposed development will be entertained during an ASI.

The ExA may decide to hold unaccompanied site inspections (USI) to relevant nominated locations, supported by the submission of additional written, photographic, video or even drone material if this would be preferable to not visiting sites or holding ASIs in circumstances which could make them difficult and unduly time-consuming to conduct (for example if public health restrictions are in place). The ExA may 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 a USI on an access required basis. Notes of USIs are published on the [project webpage](#).

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

Initial assessment of principal issues

This is the initial assessment of principal issues prepared as required under section 88(1) of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). It has been prepared by the Examining Authority (ExA) following its reading of the application documents, the relevant representations and other submissions received to date, and following its consideration of any other important and relevant matters.

This initial assessment has guided the ExA in forming a provisional view as to how the application is to be examined. 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 Secretary of State 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 principal issues. 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. Moreover, whilst matters relating to compulsory acquisition and the draft Development Consent Order are not listed as principal issues, they will form an integral part of the examination.

Consideration will 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.

The order of the issues listed does not imply any order of prioritisation or importance. The bulleted items under each issue are indicative and do not preclude other sub-items being considered.

| Principal Issue | Brief amplification, to include but not necessarily be limited to: |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Agriculture and land use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment of agricultural land classification including effects on best and most versatile land and the efficacy of mitigation • Green/ grey belt and whether the proposal represents inappropriate development • Proposed uses of the land during the operation phase and following decommissioning |
| Cultural heritage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on designated and non-designated heritage assets including their visual and functional settings • Effects on known and unknown archaeology receptors |

| | |
|---|--|
| Cumulative and in-combination effects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-combination effects arising from individual impacts associated with the proposed development • The identification and assessment of cumulative effects arising from the proposed development combined with other nearby projects, plans and developments |
| Ecology and biodiversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on species and habitats, including bird populations • Adequacy of the proposed bird mitigation area, and other mitigation • Effects on designated sites and habitats • Biodiversity net gain and how this would be secured |
| Landscape and visual effects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequacy of the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment • Effects on landscape character and visual amenity, and the efficacy of the proposed mitigation • The extent to which the proposed development would demonstrate good design |
| Noise and vibration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of effects on residential and other receptors, including operational effects from panel tracking system and battery energy storage system cooling apparatus • Efficacy of the proposed mitigation and how it would be secured |
| Other matters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of glint and glare effects including on aviation, road and rail receptors • Effects on population health and wellbeing • The proposed battery energy storage system including health and safety matters |
| Site selection and alternatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approach to site selection including location, scale, technology and alternatives |
| Socioeconomic effects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on employment, businesses, tourism and the local economy and the extent to which this has been assessed and mitigated |
| Traffic and transport including public rights of way | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access proposals, including alternative routes and proposed highway improvement works • Effects on communities and other sensitive receptors along the proposed heavy goods vehicles and abnormal indivisible load routes • Effectiveness of the proposed mitigation measures, including the contents and adequacy of the Construction Traffic Management Plan • Effects on public rights of way and bridleways, the proposed diversions and permissive paths including landscape and visual and socioeconomic effects • Effects on the strategic and local road network including cumulative effects • Effects on the rail network |

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| Water environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adequacy of the assessments, including the sequential and exception tests• Effects on flood risk in and outside the order limits• Effects on ground and surface waterbodies including the adequacy of the Water Environment Regulations Assessment• Efficacy of the proposed surface water drainage systems including firewater management |
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Draft examination timetable

The Examining Authority (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 any further information or submissions requested by the ExA in its letter dated 20 April 2026 [PD-003], under section 89(3) of The Planning Act 2008, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • updated, amended or expanded application documentation as detailed in the letter • comments from the applicant on relevant representations | <p>Thursday 4 June 2026</p> |
| 2. | <p>Procedural deadline B</p> <p>Deadline for receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written submissions on the examination procedure, including any submissions about the use of virtual methods • requests to be heard orally at the preliminary meeting and/ or attend at the venue in person 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 to speak at compulsory acquisition hearing 1 and/ or attend at the venue in person on Tuesday 28 July 2026 • requests to speak at open floor hearing 1 and/ or attend at the venue in person on Wednesday 29 July 2026 • requests to speak at issue specific hearing 1 and/or attend at the venue in person on Thursday 30 July 2026 • suggested locations for site inspections (accompanied or unaccompanied), including justification, and whether such locations can be seen | <p>Tuesday 7 July 2026</p> |

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| | <p>from public land or require private access, for consideration by the ExA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any further information requested by the ExA as set out at annex F | |
| 3. | Preliminary meeting (PM) | Tuesday 28 July 2026 at 10.00am |
| 4. | Compulsory acquisition hearing 1 (CAH1) | Tuesday 28 July 2026 at 2.00pm |
| 5. | Open floor hearing 1 (OFH1) | Wednesday 29 July 2026 at 9.30am |
| 6. | Continuation of open floor hearing 1 (OFH1) (if required) | Wednesday 29 July 2026 at 1.30pm |
| 7. | Issue specific hearing 1 (ISH1) | Thursday 30 July 2026 at 10.00am |
| 8. | Issue by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the examination timetable (Rule 8 Letter) | As soon as practicable following the preliminary meeting |
| 9. | Deadline 1 For receipt by the Examining Authority (ExA) of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> post hearing submissions any specific responses to actions or points raised in oral submissions at the hearings during week commencing 27 July 2026 written representations (WR) to include those parts of the application with which they agree and do not agree supported by evidence comments from interested parties on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relevant representations the applicant's responses to relevant representations | Tuesday 11 August 2026 |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comments on any further information or submissions accepted by the ExA • summaries of all RR and WR that exceed 1500 words (summaries should not exceed 10% of the original text) • local impact reports from local authorities • any further information requested by the ExA as set out at annex F or under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (the Examination Procedure Rules) • requests to be heard at any further open floor hearing requests by interested parties to be heard at any further open floor hearing, if not heard from at OFH1 • requests to be heard at any further compulsory acquisition hearing (CAH) requests by affected persons (defined in section 59(4) of the Planning Act 2008) to be heard at any CAH • notification by statutory parties of their wish to be considered as an interested party by the ExA • the applicant's suggested draft itinerary for an accompanied site inspection (if held) | |
| 10. | <p>Deadline 2</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the applicant's summary of matters raised in oral submissions at OFH1 and the applicant's responses • comments on the local impact reports • comments on written representations (WRs) • applicant's revised documentation updates to documents that reflect representations, including, but only as required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guide to the application • the draft DCO (dDCO) and a schedule of changes to dDCO • the explanatory memorandum • the outline control documents • the policy compliance document • drafts of any planning agreements and obligations if necessary • progress regarding protective provisions | <p>Tuesday 1 September 2026</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progress on securing other consents • the land and rights negotiations tracker • the Book of Reference (BoR), schedule of changes to the BoR, Statement of Reasons and land plans • comments on the applicant's suggested draft itinerary for an accompanied site inspection (if held) • any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (the Examination Procedure Rules) | |
| 11. | <p>Publication by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ExA's first written questions (ExQ1) including questions on the Implications for European Sites | Tuesday 22 September 2026 |
| 12. | <p>Deadline 3</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responses to the ExA's first written questions (ExQ1) • comments on any information received at deadlines 1 and 2 and accepted by the ExA • comments from affected persons on the applicant's updated land and rights negotiations tracker • statements of common ground between the applicant and interested parties and a list of matters not agreed – see annex F • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 | Tuesday 6 October 2026 |
| 13. | <p>Dates reserved (if required) for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any compulsory acquisition hearing • any issue specific hearing • any open floor hearing • accompanied site inspection | Week commencing 2 November 2026 |
| 14. | <p>Deadline 4</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • post hearing submissions (if held) | Tuesday 17 November 2026 |

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| | <p>any specific responses to actions or points raised in oral submissions at the hearings held week commencing 2 November 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comments on responses to the ExA's first written questions and any further information received and accepted by the ExA at deadline 3 • the applicant's revised documentation <p>Updates to documents that reflect representations, including, but only as required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guide to the application • the draft DCO (dDCO) and a schedule of changes to dDCO • the explanatory memorandum • the outline control documents • the policy compliance document • drafts of any planning agreements and obligations if necessary • progress regarding protective provisions • progress on securing other consents • the land and rights negotiations tracker • the Book of Reference (BoR), schedule of changes to the BoR and Statement of Reasons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 | |
| 15. | <p>Publication by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ExA's second written questions (ExQ2) including questions on the Implications for European Sites (if required) • a summary table setting out the ExA's understanding of the applicant's HRA conclusions and the position of the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Body (if required, see annex D) • the ExA's schedule of proposed changes to the draft Development Consent Order (if required) | Tuesday 1 December 2026 |
| 16. | <p>Deadline 5</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responses to the ExA's second written questions (ExQ2) • comments on the ExA's understanding of HRA matters | Tuesday 15 December 2026 |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responses to ExA's proposed schedule of changes to the draft Development Consent Order (if issued) • comments on the applicant's revised documentation and any further information received and accepted at deadline 4 • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 | |
| 17. | <p>Deadline 6</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • closing summary statements to signpost and summarise matters that have previously been raised during the examination and are considered to have not been resolved • comments on any additional information or submissions received at deadline 5 and comments on responses to the ExA's second written questions • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 • Final updated documents from the applicant (in clean and tracked versions): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the final draft DCO to be submitted by the applicant in the SI template The applicant to provide the email notification from https://publishing.legislation.gov.uk/validation confirming the document has successfully passed validation, and the PDF version of the SI validation report obtained from the link in the notification email. The applicant should also provide a clean standalone MS Word version of the draft DCO, with no header or cover page • Book of Reference (BoR) and a schedule of changes to the BoR • land rights and negotiations tracker • final statements of common ground and a list of matters not agreed (if significant progress has been made since deadline 3) | <p>Thursday 7 January 2027</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any signed and dated planning agreements and obligations (if required) • guide to the application • Environmental Statement and other documents including management plans and control documents (if required) | |
| 18. | <p>Close of examination</p> <p>The ExA intends to close the examination on this date. See 'Note about the close of examination date.'</p> | Thursday 14 January 2027 |

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 and on the date specified in the timetable 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 in the timetable is 11.59pm on the relevant deadline date, unless instructed otherwise by the ExA.

Publication dates

All information received will be published on the [project webpage](#) as soon as practicable after the deadlines for submissions.

Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES)

For examinations commencing in June 2026 or later, Reports on the Implications for European Sites (RIES) will be discontinued and will no longer be produced by Examining Authorities. In place of a RIES, the ExA may include Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) related questions within its written questions. These questions will be included in a dedicated section titled 'Habitats Regulations Assessment,' to clearly distinguish HRA matters from other environmental assessment regimes.

Where relevant, the written questions will also include a summary table setting out the ExA's understanding of the applicant's HRA conclusions and the position of the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Body or Bodies (SNCB(s)) as at the date of issue. A Microsoft Word version of the table will be provided to applicants and SNCB(s) to enable them to propose amendments using tracked changes and to return the amended table within their responses to written questions, supporting a clear and efficient understanding of their respective positions.

For the avoidance of doubt, the ExA may continue to use ISH, requests for further information under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010, and any other appropriate examination procedures to address HRA-related matters.

Notification of initial hearings

The Examining Authority (ExA) provides notice of the following initial hearings:

| Date | Hearing | Start time | Venue and Joining details |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Tuesday 28 July 2026 | Compulsory acquisition hearing 1 (CAH1) | Registration and seating available at venue from: 1.30pm Virtual registration process from: 1.30pm Hearing starts: 2.00pm | The Parsonage Hotel & Spa, Escrick, York YO19 6LF 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 29 July 2026 | Open floor hearing 1 (OFH1) | Registration and seating available at venue from: 9.00am Virtual registration process from: 9.00am Hearing starts: 9.30am | The Parsonage Hotel & Spa, Escrick, York YO19 6LF 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 29 July 2026 | Continuation of open floor hearing 1 (OFH1) (if required) | Registration and seating available at venue from: 1.00pm Virtual registration process from: 1.00pm | The Parsonage Hotel & Spa, Escrick, York YO19 6LF and By virtual means using Microsoft Teams Full instructions on how to join online or by |

| Date | Hearing | Start time | Venue and Joining details |
|---|---|---|--|
| | | Hearing starts: 1.30pm | telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered |
| Thursday 30 July 2026 | Issue specific hearing 1 (ISH1) – Scope of the proposed development, environmental matters and the draft Development Consent Order | Registration and seating available at venue from: 9.30am Virtual registration process from: 9.30am Hearing starts: 10.00am | The Parsonage Hotel & Spa, Escrick, York YO19 6LF 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 |
| <p>NOTE: 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.</p> | | | |

If you intend to participate in any of the hearings notified above, you must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by procedural deadline B, Tuesday 7 July 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 OFH1, CAH1 or ISH1, 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
- For CAH1, the plot number(s) of the relevant land provided in the [Book of Reference](#) and the [Land Plans](#)

It may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by procedural deadline B, Tuesday 7 July 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.

Alternatively, you can attend the physical hearing at the venue to observe the proceedings; however, to ensure there is adequate seating capacity at the venue we request that you register your attendance to **observe only** by **procedural deadline B, Tuesday 7 July 2026** using the [event participation form](#). Please note that it may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **procedural deadline B, Tuesday 7 July 2026**.

Hearing agendas

For issue specific hearings and compulsory acquisition hearings the ExA will publish a detailed draft agenda on the project webpage at least 5 working days in advance of the hearing date. However, the actual agenda on the day of each hearing may be subject to change at the discretion of the ExA. For open floor hearings an agenda may not be published.

For OFH1 scheduled for Wednesday 29 July 2026, the notice of hearing above specifies the ExA intends to hold a morning and afternoon session, if required. An IP can indicate their preferred session using the [event participation form](#). This preference will be accommodated where possible but cannot be guaranteed. The Case Team will confirm which session an IP has been allocated at least 5 days before the hearing date.

For ISH1 scheduled for Thursday 30 July 2026, the notice of hearing above specifies that its purpose will be to consider the scope of the proposed development, environmental matters and the draft Development Consent Order. The ExA will seek updates from, and direct questions primarily to, the applicant. 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, they will be listed in the forthcoming agenda, which again will be issued at least 5 working days before the event.

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 Examining Authority

The Examining Authority (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 submitting 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. 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 [the Planning Inspectorate 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, the ExA has made the procedural decision to request LIRs by **deadline 1 (Tuesday 11 August 2026)**.

The ExA has similarly made the procedural decision to request WRs from local authorities and all other IPs by the same deadline (**Tuesday 11 August 2026**).

It is acknowledged 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, the ExA 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.

3. Statements of common ground (SoCG)

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 interested parties. The draft examination timetable at **annex D** to this letter therefore establishes **deadline 3 (Tuesday 6 October 2026)** for submission of SoCGs by the applicant.

SoCGs are requested to be prepared between the applicant and:

- the Environment Agency
- Historic England
- National Highways
- National Grid Electricity Transmission PLC
- National Gas Transmission PLC
- Natural England
- Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd
- North Yorkshire Council
- Sherburn Aero Club
- SSE Hydrogen Developments Ltd

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 principal issues (see **annex C** of this letter)
- all matters raised in its relevant representation
- relevant policy, legislation and guidance including methodology and assumptions used in environmental statement relevant to the matters of interest to the party
- relevant mitigation, monitoring and management plans
- the articles and requirements of the draft DCO. Any interested party seeking an article or requirement to be reworded should provide the form of words which are being sought
- 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.

Where a particular SoCG cannot be agreed between the parties by **deadline 3 (Tuesday 6 October 2026)**, or if any local authority position needs to be signed off at a higher level, draft versions of that SoCG are requested to be submitted **by the applicant at deadline 3**. The position of the relevant interested parties should then be confirmed in the course of the examination. The draft examination timetable makes provision for updated SoCGs to be submitted at **deadline 6 (Thursday 7 January 2027)** if significant progress has been made to resolve matters not agreed at deadline 3, or to obtain local authority sign off.

4. Accompanied site inspection – suggested locations

The draft examination timetable at **annex D** to this letter includes a date reserved for an accompanied site inspection (ASI) on week commencing **2 November 2026**, should the ExA decide to hold one.

The ExA requests that interested parties submit suggested locations for the ExA to visit as part of an ASI by **procedural deadline B**. The request must include:

- sufficient information to identify the location
- the issues to be observed at the location
- information on whether the site can be accessed via public land
- the reason why the location has been suggested.

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.

The applicant is requested to prepare a draft itinerary for the ASI to be submitted by **deadline 1**. This should include:

- relevant 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 B**

Comments by interested parties on the applicant's draft itinerary must be submitted by **deadline 2**.

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.

5. Application document updates

a. Guide to the application documents

The ExA requests that the applicant provides, at each relevant deadline, an updated 'Guide to the application documents' document which provides a list of the most up-to-date status of the documents submitted, including which copies have been superseded in whole or in part. A final version must be submitted before the close of the examination. All examination documents submitted should include a version number and date.

b. Land rights and negotiations tracker

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 compulsory acquisition or temporary possession of their rights and interests and who maintain an objection.

The applicant should therefore update the tracker with this information and submit a duplicate copy of the PDF tracker in a 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 B** and then at the relevant 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 6**.

6. Report on the interrelationships with other nationally significant infrastructure projects

The ExA requests the applicant prepares a report on the interrelationships with other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, to be submitted at **deadline 1** and to include:

- An overview of the proposed development and the other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects identified on the Locations of Short

List Cumulative Schemes figure [\[APP-142\]](#), including the timings, construction phasing, grid connection and start of operation.

- The approach taken by the applicant to coordinate the proposed development with the other projects, including during the examination.
- A plan showing the order limits for the proposed development and the other projects and the locations of the main features of each, including solar arrays, energy storage facilities, substations, electrical cable routes, grid connection, environmental mitigation areas, temporary construction and decommissioning areas, and construction haulage routes.
- The development consent order provisions required for the proposed development to be implemented satisfactorily in relation to other projects.
- Mitigation measures shared with other projects, the specific measures included in those for the proposed development, and how they are secured.
- Any other information on the other projects relied on for the cumulative impact assessment, the level of detail, and any changes since the application.
- A summary of the matters coordinated with the other projects, setting out the matters that have been agreed, any inconsistencies or outstanding matters, and the next steps to be taken to resolve them.

7. Advice provided by the Health and Safety Executive

In its relevant representation [\[RR-0529\]](#), the HSE explained it had no further comment to make in addition to the advice it issued on 4 November 2025. The ExA requests the applicant and the HSE provide a copy of the advice, and the applicant explains how that advice has been followed at **procedural deadline B**.

8. The applicant's response to relevant representations

The ExA has observed errors with the examination library references provided in tables 1.2 and 1.3 of The Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations (Part 1) document [\[PDA-014\]](#). The ExA requests the applicant reviews the entirety of this document to identify any errors and provide an updated version at **procedural deadline B**. The updated version should include a reference number for each row in the tables set out in sections 2 to 4.

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 on 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 lightvalleysolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk or contact us on 0303 444 5000.

The Examination Library

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

The EL records and provides a hyperlink to:

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

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 EL 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 not have 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 Examining Authority 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.