



Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Hearing Transcript

Project:	Light Valley Solar
Hearing:	Recording of Preliminary Meeting (PM)
Date:	29 July 2026

Please note: This document is intended to assist Interested Parties.

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The video recording published on the Planning Inspectorate project page is the primary record of the hearing.

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:09:24 - 00:00:17:28

Good morning. I'd like to welcome you all to this preliminary meeting for the Light Valley Solar project. Can I just confirm that everyone in the room can hear me clearly?

00:00:19:26 - 00:00:22:06

Can I confirm everyone online can hear me clearly?

00:00:26:14 - 00:00:49:14

Okay. That seems to be good. Can I also confirm that the live streaming and recording of this event has commenced? Thank you. My name is Matt Tandy. I'm a chartered water environmental manager, civil engineer and planning inspector. I have been appointed by the Secretary of State to be the lead member of the examining authority for this application. I'm now going to ask the other inspectors to introduce themselves.

00:00:50:26 - 00:01:02:03

Good morning. My name is Jonathan Medlin. I'm a chartered town planner and planning inspector, and I have been appointed by the Secretary of State to be a member of the panel to examine this application.

00:01:05:00 - 00:01:15:20

Good morning everybody. My name is Mark Willis. I am a chartered town planner and a planning inspector, and I've also been appointed by the Secretary of State to be a member of the panel to examine this application.

00:01:18:08 - 00:01:54:04

Thank you. Together, we constitute the examining authority for this application. I'd also like to introduce other members of the Planning Inspectorate accompanying us today, Spencer Berryman and Harrison Coles. Please approach them if you have any questions. So for those of you here in the room, they are located to the to my left in the corner. And for those of you online, you will need to email them using Light Valley Solar at Planning Inspectorate UK. With Light Valley Solar being a single word. We also have another inspector attending the venue today who who is observing for the purposes of training only.

00:01:55:24 - 00:02:04:16

I will now deal with a few housekeeping matters for those attending in person. Can everyone please set all mobile phones and devices to silent?

00:02:06:03 - 00:02:19:18

There are toilets situated to the entrance where you arrived on my right today, near where you registered. And for those of you watching in the overspill room, there are also facilities in that block. Exit the room and take a left.

00:02:21:08 - 00:02:35:28

There are no emergency alarms planned for today, so should an alarm sound, please make your way to the nearest fire doors. So again, for those in this room that is to my left or your right, and the fire evacuation assembly point is by the flagpoles at the front of the hotel.

00:02:38:16 - 00:02:48:12

And I please check whether anyone here today has made a request or requires any special measures or arrangements to enable participation in this meeting today, for example, a hearing aid loop system.

00:02:53:02 - 00:03:00:12

No thank you. If that does change, please speak with Spencer or Harrison. who in the corner of the room. And they'll be able to help.

00:03:02:26 - 00:03:24:21

You know. I aim to keep the proceedings focused and efficient today, too. So to assist with this, we issued an NXP to our letter which arrived which invited you to this meeting. We refer to this as the rule six letter. That annex sets out an introduction to the preliminary meeting process. And we trust that you have all read this in advance, as only as I will only be providing a summary now.

00:03:26:26 - 00:03:59:13

You will find information about this application on the Planning Inspector, its National Infrastructure Planning website, and we would strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with this website, because the examining authority will use it to communicate with you and to provide access to documents throughout the examination. Today's meeting is being undertaken in a hybrid way, meaning some of you are present with us in the venue and some of you are joining us virtually using Microsoft Teams. We will make sure that however you decide to attend today, you will be giving a fair opportunity to participate.

00:04:01:29 - 00:04:16:08

A recording of today's meeting will be made available on the Light Valley Solar Project section of the National Infrastructure Planning website, as soon as practicable after this meeting is finished. With this in mind, please ensure that you speak clearly into the microphone

00:04:17:24 - 00:04:47:11

and stating your name and who you represent every time before you speak, please. So for those of you who sat around the front table, you'll see there's a button on the microphone. You need to press that once to turn it on, and you'll have a red light, which means that it's working and you press it again and it goes to a white light. So I mean, it's then off, if you could do that if you're not at the front table today we have a roving, we have a roving microphone. So just please wait for one of those to be brought to you before you speak.

00:04:49:19 - 00:05:03:15

If you are participating virtually and you wish to speak at the relevant point in the proceedings, please use the hand function in Microsoft Teams. Please be patient as you may not get to you immediately, but we will invite you to speak at the appropriate time.

00:05:07:05 - 00:05:23:09

If you are attending virtually and don't want your image to be recorded, you can switch off your camera. And for those in the room, you don't want to be recorded. There is an area at the very back of the room out of the camera shot. Please use that area and if you're unsure again, please speak to Spencer or Harrison and they can help you in that regard.

00:05:25:27 - 00:05:43:17

I'll link to the planning inspector's privacy notice was provided in our rule six letter. We assume that everybody here today is familiarize themselves with this document, which establishes how personal data is handled in accordance with the principles set out in data protection laws. Again, please speak to Harrison Spence if you have any questions.

00:05:45:16 - 00:05:57:12

This meeting will follow the agenda as we set out in annex A of our rule six letter. And it would be helpful if you had a copy of this in front of you for this morning. And if we could also have the agenda on screen, please, that would be helpful.

00:06:07:16 - 00:06:45:09

Of that letter. Thank you. Let me briefly explain the purpose of this preliminary meeting. The purpose of this morning's meeting is to focus on the way in which this application is proposed to be examined. On that basis, we will only be inviting discussion about the procedural aspects of this examination. The purpose of this meeting is not to discuss either the merits or any concerns that you have regarding the application. The merits or concerns can only be discussed and considered once the examination of this application begins, which happens following the close of this preliminary meeting.

00:06:45:24 - 00:06:47:15

Is that clear to everybody?

00:06:50:11 - 00:07:21:05

Thank you. I'm now going to ask those of you who are participating in today's meeting to introduce yourselves. When I state your organization's name, could you introduce yourself stating your name and who you represent and which agenda item you wish to speak on? If you are not representing an organization, please confirm your name. Summarize your interest in the application and again confirm the agenda item which you wish to speak on. If you could also confirm how you wish to be addressed, for example Mr. or Mrs. miss, etc. that would also be helpful.

00:07:27:02 - 00:07:30:11

If we can start with the applicant please and their advisors.

00:07:32:02 - 00:07:42:24

Thank you sir. Mr. Matt Fox, Legal Director at Pinsent Masons, speaking on behalf of the applicant this morning. Um, for the purposes of today's this morning's hearing, it will just be me speaking.

00:07:48:05 - 00:07:49:24

Thank you, Mr. Fox.

00:07:52:27 - 00:07:57:04

I'll now move on to the local authority. So we've got North Yorkshire Council, please.

00:07:58:14 - 00:08:10:22

Hello. My name is Diane Holder and principal planning officer, North Yorkshire Council, standing in for Linda Drake who's our case officer. Um, we have one comment. Minor comment on item four. Thank you.

00:08:19:14 - 00:08:20:03

Thank you.

00:08:26:26 - 00:08:28:28

I just checked at Diane Wilson.

00:08:31:20 - 00:08:33:12

If you'd like to introduce yourself, please.

00:08:36:08 - 00:08:45:10

Thank you. Sir. Diane Wilson, a principal conservation officer for the North Yorkshire Council. Uh, I'll just be observing today. And speaking of Thursday.

00:08:53:24 - 00:08:54:16

Thank you.

00:08:57:06 - 00:08:58:27

I'll now turn to the.

00:09:01:00 - 00:09:04:14

Counselor Michael Jordan available.

00:09:12:06 - 00:09:17:16

If you could just wait one second, please. Which is why we bring you a microphone. That would be great. Thank you.

00:09:21:20 - 00:09:26:27

Yeah. Counselor. Mike Jordan, representing Campbell Smith and Carlton Ward.

00:09:27:06 - 00:09:40:25

Uh, I'm also a counselor at Sherburne Town Council. Um. I'm here. I'm going to observe rather than speak, simply because I'm aware that we're just dealing with how we're doing the examination today. Thank you.

00:09:51:01 - 00:09:54:29

Thank you. I'll now turn to the parish councils,

00:09:58:09 - 00:10:00:20

I believe. Hambleton parish council.

00:10:02:12 - 00:10:08:18

Good morning. I'm Maria Ferris, I'm Hambleton parish council. I'm observing today and speaking tomorrow on Thursday.

00:10:21:07 - 00:10:34:07

I just want to check with the parish councils here in the room. I have you down as only observing today. Is that your intention? In which case I won't ask you to introduce yourself now. But I will come to you. Future hearings where you do wish to speak.

00:10:43:11 - 00:10:47:05

Can I ask whether the British Horse Society is in attendance?

00:10:51:14 - 00:10:52:29

Yes we are. Thank you.

00:10:53:23 - 00:11:00:09

Would you like to introduce yourself, please, and explain your interest in the application and the item on the agenda which you wish to speak to?

00:11:00:20 - 00:11:25:19

Yeah. My name is Mark Corrigan. I'm the access field officer for the British Health Society covering Yorkshire. I believe it's item, um, for the draft examination timetable. Uh, it was simply public rights of way that I wish to speak on. And the lack of engagement with the, um, Light Valley Solar Company to ourselves. Thank you.

00:11:51:28 - 00:11:55:10

Could I check whether Claire Hotchkiss is in attendance?

00:12:13:25 - 00:12:29:17

Okay. I don't have anyone else down who was registered to speak today and has arrived and is in attendance, whether in person or online, but I will just offer the opportunity for anyone else in the room initially who thought they had registered and were wishing to speak.

00:12:33:18 - 00:12:34:05

No.

00:12:34:12 - 00:12:38:07

Again, I'll just open it up to anyone who's joined us virtually online.

00:12:42:21 - 00:12:44:12

Nope. Don't see any hands.

00:12:50:28 - 00:12:59:04

That concludes our comments and remarks on agenda item one. Is anyone else who would wish to speak on item one before I move on?

00:13:02:21 - 00:13:03:07

No.

00:13:04:15 - 00:13:35:17

So now turn to item two on the agenda, which is the examining authority's remarks about the examination process. In order to streamline the running of this event in annex B of our rule six letter, we provided an introduction to the preliminary meeting and the examination process, explaining how it will be conducted and how you can participate. For expediency, I'm assuming that everyone has read this, and therefore I don't propose to spend time reading it out now. It is important that you are clear in your understanding of the process.

00:13:35:19 - 00:13:50:04

Therefore, if there is anything you're unclear about or on which you need clarity, then this is your opportunity to ask. So on that basis of the information set out in annex B, are there any questions about the way in which we propose to examine this application?

00:13:55:12 - 00:13:59:23

No thank you. I will now hand over to Mr. Willis, who will do with item three.

00:14:02:18 - 00:14:21:21

Thank you, Mr. Sandy. Okay, so, um, item three on the agenda is the initial assessment of principal issues. Or as you may hear, it referred to the IRP. Uh, it may be helpful to have an XC of our rule six letter in front of you. However, can I again ask the applicant's team to present that on the screen, please?

00:14:32:11 - 00:15:03:21

Okay. Thank you. So firstly, I will point out that the principal issues are listed in alphabetical order and so not in any order of importance. The issues and matters listed have been compiled taken into account. The application documents. The comments in relevant representations and submissions we've received to date, and consideration of other important and relevant matters. The list provides our initial framework of the issues and broad subject matters, which we will use to guide us in informing a provisional view as to how the application is to be examined.

00:15:04:10 - 00:15:42:26

This list is not intended to be exhausted or exhaustive and not set in stone, and we will have regard to all other important and relevant matters that may emerge during the examination process. Therefore, the initial assessment of principal issues will not constrain the examination, and we may decide to remove or add to the principal issues for consideration at later stages in the process. That said, the list is not routinely updated as it's only initial assessment. It's also important to note that some issues may be related and overlap, and we're aware of this, and this will be taken into account and be reflected in our consideration and examination of the application.

00:15:44:03 - 00:16:22:20

To turn into the purpose of this agenda item. This is the opportunity for us to hear any comments that parties may have about the initial assessment of principal issues identified. So to repeat, we are not looking for submissions on concerns or the merits of the proposals at this stage, as these will be considered once the examination has started. Instead. And for now, we are only considering comments on the broad principal issues that we've identified now, have not received, or we've not received any written submissions about the initial assessment of principal issues ahead of this meeting and when registering, no parties indicated that they wish specifically to speak on this item either.

00:16:22:22 - 00:16:32:02

So before I move on, can I just check? Is there anybody in the room or online that does wish to speak to this item before we move forward? Yes. Mr. Fox.

00:16:32:07 - 00:16:59:14

Mr. Fox applicant. It was just a quick one really. It was just, um, I had noticed following submission of our letter that, um, as a reference in other matters to assessment of glint and glare Impacts to rail users. But then there is also a reference to impacts to rail users in the transport row. And we just wanted to check because, well, essentially we didn't think there was any, um, if that was meant, if that was covering the same point or something different.

00:17:00:16 - 00:17:26:15

Okay. Thank you. Um, yeah. I'll just ask you to turn the microphone. Sorry. Thank you. Um, yeah. I think the intention is there's two distinct issues. There's the glint and glare with regard to the effect on the railway, but there's also proposals for crossing of a railway line as part of the traffic assessment. So there's the aspects about potential traffic impacts on the use of crossing of the traffic over there. So that's the distinction.

00:17:28:06 - 00:17:30:03

Was there anything else you wish to raise.

00:17:31:22 - 00:17:34:00

Talks about that? Uh, no, not this session.

00:17:36:21 - 00:17:40:15

Anybody else wish to raise anything about the initial assessment of principal issues?

00:17:55:20 - 00:18:06:02

We're just discussing the British Horse Society. Mr. Corrigan, I think you mentioned item three in your opening, but I think we just checked there was anything specific at this item. Was it more to do with the timetable? Which is the next item?

00:18:12:08 - 00:18:14:09

I think you're on mute, Mr. Corrigan.

00:18:15:08 - 00:18:21:26

Yeah. Sorry. I think it might be more appropriate for me to speak on the open floor hearing on Wednesday.

00:18:25:03 - 00:18:26:11

Okay. Thank you.

00:18:30:05 - 00:18:49:21

In that case, if I'm seeing no other request to speak on this item, I'll move on to agenda item four, which is the draft examination timetable. So for this agenda item, I'll be referring to NXT. So again, it'd be helpful if you could have that in front of you and also ask that it'd be displayed on screen.

00:18:53:06 - 00:19:23:10

So as I explained in that NXT, the Examiner Authority is under statutory duty to complete the examination of the application by no later than the end of six months, beginning with the day after the close of this meeting. Now, you see from the proposed timetable set out in NXT, that the Examining Authority has proposed that the application for this examination closed on the 14th of January, 2027, which is a period of roughly five and a half months and so slightly shorter than the six months set out in the legislation.

00:19:24:21 - 00:19:45:18

However, it's important to note that we may decide to close the examiner earlier earlier than that date if we consider the application and all relevant matters have been examined adequately or equally, we may decide to close the examination by reverting back to the six month statutory period if we feel it is necessary and beneficial to the examination.

00:19:47:17 - 00:20:22:21

Now, as I said, the timetable is provisional at this moment and we appreciate and recognise that the dates and deadlines identified may not suit all parties or be ideal for all parties. We also appreciate the timetable for this project spans school holidays and the Christmas and New Year holiday period. We have received written submission from the applicant about the draft timetable, and I understand that North Yorkshire Council would also wish to speak on this agenda item. So I'll come to those in a minute and we will of course take any comments made to take provided today into account before finalising the timetable.

00:20:23:16 - 00:20:37:27

However, as I said, please note that we do have an obligation to complete the examination on time and therefore we will consider all comments and views carefully. However, we may not be able to accommodate all parties. Requests and compromises may need to be made.

00:20:39:27 - 00:21:03:05

So in terms of the draft timetable itself, this includes dates for potential future hearings, site inspections and importantly, the deadlines for submission of written submissions and documented documents by the applicant and interested parties. It also includes the date upon which we propose to issue documents, such as our written questions and the proposed schedule of changes to the Draft Development Consent Order.

00:21:05:04 - 00:21:38:17

You will see from the timetable that we provide proposed six deadlines at which each of these. We have set out what information we require, submissions received by the relevant deadline, and which address the matters for which we requested will be accepted. Conversely, documents or submissions that have not specifically been requested may not be accepted and will only be considered at our discretion. By way of example, the examiner authority made a procedural decision not to accept certain updated documents and submissions that were submitted by parties that procedural deadline be.

00:21:39:20 - 00:22:03:06

Whilst we understood the intentions and the reasons behind those submissions, those documents were not specifically requested at that deadline as set out in the published draft. This therefore emphasized the importance of adhering to the timetable. It's also important to note that the time for submission of documents at each stated deadline is 2359, which is one minute to midnight unless it's otherwise stated.

00:22:07:05 - 00:22:42:27

I don't intend to go through the timetable details. I trust again, people will have had an opportunity to look at that prior to today's meeting. However, I will highlight some key points before inviting comments. First off, and again as soon as practicable following today's meeting, we will issue our rule eight letter which sets out the final timetable. This afternoon, starting at 2 p.m., we'll be holding a compulsory acquisition hearing and tomorrow morning at 930, the session, the first session of an open floor hearing will take place. There we will hear oral representations from registered interested parties about the proposal.

00:22:42:29 - 00:22:48:08

And in the afternoon, starting at 1:30 p.m., we will hold a second session.

00:22:51:10 - 00:23:26:22

On Thursday. There is an issue specific hearing relating to the scope of the proposed development, environmental matters and the Draft Development Consent Order. This will focus on a range of different topics as set out in the published agenda for that hearing. Deadline one is currently timetabled for Tuesday the 11th of August and amongst other items, we want to receive responses to any specific action points that are raised in the hearings held this week. Written representations from all parties, local impact reports, as well as requests to be heard at further open floor and compulsory acquisition hearings.

00:23:28:03 - 00:24:00:26

Our first written questions are to be published on the 22nd of September and, if required, a second set is to be published on the 1st December 2026. Now, our written questions will also include questions on the implications for European sites, which, as is explained in Alex D of the rule six letter, replaces the report on the implications for European sites or which is known as the rese, which examiner authorities previously produced. The more information about that is contained in the annex of the rule six letter.

00:24:02:28 - 00:24:23:28

Finally, we reserve the week commencing the 2nd of November for future hearings and an accompanying site inspection, should these be required. And we've asked for closing summary statements and final versions of documents on the 7th of January, with the draft timetable indicating that we propose to close the examination on the 14th of January, as I said earlier.

00:24:25:14 - 00:24:57:15

So, turning to the comments we received to date and request to speak on this item. As I've said, we've received a submission from the applicant about the timetable that precedes the deadline B, which essentially requested that the date for the submission of documents at deadline six be pushed back to Friday, the 8th of January. This is requested to allow more time for responses to submissions made at deadline five. This is noted, but before I invite any other contributions, does the applicant have anything else wishes to add or raise regarding timetable at this stage?

00:24:59:02 - 00:25:06:24

Thank you sir. Mr. Fox, on behalf of the applicant note, it was just that that comment on um, deadline six.

00:25:08:11 - 00:25:19:00

Okay. Thank you. In that case, I'll now open it up to other parties who have requested to speak on this agenda. So I think, um, we've got North Yorkshire Council, which is, uh, Miss Holgate.

00:25:20:07 - 00:25:49:00

Yes. Thank you. Um down Holgate. North Yorkshire council. Um, my colleague raised our brought to your attention that the council has a mandatory closedown period over the Christmas period. Um, and that the deadline six will be pretty tight for the council to bring forward their final comments, and the council closes from the 24th of December until the 4th of January. Thank you.

00:25:51:15 - 00:25:58:05

Okay. Thank you. So. Was there a suggested alternative date you were looking to put forward to us for us to consider?

00:25:58:15 - 00:26:11:14

No, there was no suggested date. It's just mindful that during that time that the council, we won't be working during that period. And we're obviously mindful as well that you need to keep to the timetable.

00:26:16:05 - 00:26:18:23

Okay. Thank you. Um,

00:26:20:09 - 00:26:33:13

is there anybody else that would like to comment on the time? So before I move forward, I think Mr. Corrigan suggested he didn't need to today now. So I gotta check if there's anyone else online or in the room wishes to comment.

00:26:35:22 - 00:27:05:27

I'm not seeing anybody in that case. Thank you for those contributions. Um, as I say, we will we will take those away and give them some consideration before we confirm our decision. Um, we will issued our final timetable, as I've said, which will confirm those dates in our rule eight letter. And we propose to issue that as soon as practicable following this meeting. Um, in that case, I think that really concludes the item for this agenda.

00:27:05:29 - 00:27:12:29

Um, so we'll now move on to agenda item five, which is Procedural decisions, which is being led by Mr. Medlin.

00:27:16:12 - 00:27:30:07

Thank you, Mr. Willis. I'll now ask you to turn to annex F of the room six letter, where you'll see that the examining authority has made a number of procedural decisions. If we could have that up on the screen. Okay. Thank you.

00:27:32:17 - 00:28:02:29

Annex F explains in detail the reasons for the procedural decisions. Again, I will assume that you've all read the annex, and so I'm not going to propose to go through them all in detail. But I do have a number of comments on a number of the procedural decisions which are worth explaining. Firstly, on the use of artificial intelligence in submissions. The planning inspector understands the benefits that artificial intelligence or AI can bring to the planning system.

00:28:03:27 - 00:28:37:09

This is when it is used ethically and transparently to aid the beneficial use of AI in casework evidence. Participants in the examination are directed to the guidance, which is available on the Gov.uk website, and it covers the submission of 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 or grammar checks.

00:28:38:26 - 00:28:55:00

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.

00:28:57:03 - 00:29:01:02

Just pause and see if there are any comments on AI before moving on.

00:29:03:24 - 00:29:17:03

Note. So it looks like that is understood. The next procedural decision is the deadline for written. The deadline for the submission of local impact reports and written representations.

00:29:18:21 - 00:29:34:25

The examining authority requested local impact reports from the host and neighbouring local authorities. Local impact reports from any other relevant local authorities defined in section 56 A of the Planning Act 2008, who may wish to submit one are also welcomed

00:29:36:21 - 00:30:16:14

in order to maximise the time available to examine the application. The request for submission of local impact reports is deadline one, which is Tuesday the 11th of August 2026. Written representations from local authorities and all other interested parties are also requested by the same deadline. Deadline one. That's the 11th of August. Now, this deadline comes fairly soon after this preliminary meeting. However, early notice has been given for this and it will ensure that all interested parties have reasonable time to draft these documents before the deadline for submission.

00:30:18:06 - 00:30:41:22

For the avoidance of doubt. The Examining Authority wish to make clear to local authorities that local impact reports and written representations are two separate documents. They must be submitted separately and independently of each other. Any written representation that exceeds 1500 words should also be accompanied by a summary, which should not exceed 10% of the original text.

00:30:45:25 - 00:30:53:26

Just see if any comments on written representations in local impact reports, either in the room or online.

00:30:58:27 - 00:31:24:10

In that case, the next sub item within procedural decisions is statements of Common Ground. The examining authority would be assisted by the preparation of statements of common ground between the applicant and interested parties. The draft examination timetable at annex D therefore establishes deadline three Tuesday, 6th of October, 2026 for submission of statements of common ground by the applicant.

00:31:26:02 - 00:31:58:19

I need to remind all parties that were a request such as this is made by the examining authority. It is very helpful if IP is interested. Parties would assume that it has already been given due consideration, and that the examining authority considers it to be necessary. A necessary requirement, otherwise it would not be requested in the rule six letter. The examining authority requested that statements of common grounds be prepared between the applicant and ten parties, which are identified in the rule six letter

00:32:00:12 - 00:32:31:01

Examining Authority notes. The applicant's procedural deadline will be submission the 7th of July. In this, the applicant explained that in its view, a statement of common ground with National Highways is not necessary. The applicant also commented on statements common ground with the following organisations. National Grid Electricity Transmission plc. National Gas Transmission plc. Network Rail Infrastructure Limited and Hydrogen Developments Limited.

00:32:31:03 - 00:32:41:06

For these, the applicant stated that Statement of Common Ground would simply report that matters raised remain under consideration until agreement would be reached.

00:32:42:24 - 00:32:52:02

The examining Authority has considered this, and remains of the view that the statements with all parties are required and will be expected at deadline. Three.

00:32:54:08 - 00:33:09:27

In those, obviously more information beyond under consideration would be extremely helpful. Statements of common ground should cover the matters set out in annexed of the rule six letter, to the extent that they are relevant to the particular interests of the party.

00:33:11:24 - 00:33:40:19

So this is suggested. Content within the rule six letter is indicative and does not preclude the inclusion of other matters considered to be important and relevant to either of the parties, whereas particular statement of common ground cannot be agreed between parties by deadline three. That's Tuesday, 6th of October. Or if any local authority position needs to be signed off at a higher level. Draft versions are requested to be submitted by the applicant at deadline. Three.

00:33:42:16 - 00:34:10:17

The position of relevant interested parties should then be confirmed within the course of the examination. The draft examination timetable makes provision for updated statements of common ground to be submitted at deadline. Six. Facts. Thursday 7th of January 2027. If significant progress has been made to resolve matters not agreed at deadline three or to allow local authority sign off if required.

00:34:12:21 - 00:34:22:29

I'll just pause there and see if the applicant or interested parties have any views on what I've said. On statements of common ground.

00:34:24:25 - 00:35:05:16

Mr. Fox, on behalf of the applicant. Understand your decision, sir. Just on on with the statutory undertakers. I do appreciate that some of the points that they have raised, um, cover a site wide array of issues, but ultimately the way that they will be resolved is through the protective of the reaching agreement on the set of protective provisions, because, for example, where they've raised concerns about land take as a sufficient land take, etc. would ultimately be resolved through. Are they content with the protections that they have through the peace and side agreements? So even if we had separate rows in the SCG, the ultimate in our column for applicant response will be reconsider.

00:35:05:18 - 00:35:44:25

This is able to be resolved through the provisions of the site agreement and protective provisions. That's why we said that because there's not there's nothing more that we can say because we're having those private discussions. Um, and it won't change any of the, um, documentation to the extent that it changes the DCO, its protective provisions themselves. Um, so I say, I've heard what you had to say. And we obviously have to do that. It's just I would just reinforce the kind of the value for yourselves and understanding where we are is that ultimately, we will all be able to say is that will be we'll be able to be resolved through the side agreement, which we're hoping to resolve as soon as possible.

00:35:45:08 - 00:36:00:03

Um, so it's just we were keen to avoid more papers before you than a, than a necessary and, you know, to aid and what will be a likely a large. What do you mean deadline. Um, so that was just emphasized why we did that. But if you still consider that necessary, then we will do that.

00:36:00:05 - 00:36:28:22

Thank you. Yes, I think that's noted at and was identified within the previous submission. I think the decision that the examining authority has come to is that it would be useful and if possible, more information, if relevant, if relevant to the consideration of the application. I will just see if any interested parties anyone in the room wishes to speak on this.

00:36:31:00 - 00:36:44:04

So we have not received representation from any other parties that are concerned with agreeing a statement. Common ground, therefore, remains the examining authority's view that statements of common ground are required and will be expected by deadline three.

00:36:45:23 - 00:37:25:26

I will now take this on to the next procedural decision, which is suggested locations for accompanied site inspection. So the draft examination timetable in the rule six letter includes a date reserved for an accompanied site. Inspection is timetabled for week commencing 2nd of November 2026. Should the examining authority decide to hold one. The examining authority requested that interested parties submit suggested locations to visit as part of an Accompanied sight inspection by procedural deadline B, which has now passed.

00:37:26:07 - 00:37:59:09

An examining authority, will be giving consideration to those submissions. Interested parties will have noted also the unaccompanied site inspection which the examining authority undertook during June. The applicant is requested to prepare a draft itinerary for accompanied by site inspection, to be submitted by deadline 1st August 11th. Comments by interested parties on the applicant's draft itinerary must be submitted by deadline two, which is the 1st of September.

00:38:01:06 - 00:38:36:05

The examining authority will consider each suggested site location, including those provided in the applicant's draft itinerary, to determine if it can be viewed from public land on an unaccompanied basis, or if it is necessary to view it on an accompanied basis. Examining authority 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.

00:38:38:01 - 00:38:47:26

If it decides to hold an accompanying site inspection, the examining authority will publish its final itinerary at least five working days before the date.

00:38:50:01 - 00:38:58:14

I've just pause and look around the room. Are there any comments on the accompanied site inspection and suggested locations?

00:39:02:20 - 00:39:12:15

And online doesn't appear so. So if that is understood, then I'll move us on to the next procedural decision, which is the report on interrelationships.

00:39:14:05 - 00:39:58:09

The report on interrelationships with other nationally significant infrastructure Projects Examining Authority requested that the applicant prepares a report on the. Interrelationships with other nationally significant infrastructure projects to be submitted at deadline one. The rule six letter sets out what this should include. The examining authority notes the applicant's submission at procedural deadline B, which in which it respectfully suggests that a report on interrelationships would likely add limited value to the examination, and that it would welcome discussion at the preliminary meeting as to how it can best assist the examining authority in providing additional information.

00:40:00:12 - 00:40:30:18

My view, and shared by the examining authority, is that a standalone interrelationship document would assist the examination and be of more than limited value. The examining authority notes the procedural deadline, the submission, and the view of the applicants That this may be limited or already assessed through cumulative assessment. If this is the case, then the document may be reasonably succinct, but at least it would all be in one place.

00:40:31:01 - 00:40:32:10

The rule six letter

00:40:34:03 - 00:40:38:09

also sets out what should be included and the need for more detail.

00:40:42:15 - 00:40:53:15

This interrelationship report was requested by deadline one, which is now two weeks away. So can I first ask the applicant whether or not this is achievable?

00:40:55:07 - 00:41:35:11

Mr. Fox, on behalf of the applicant, I think I can say this to say that we anticipated that you might say this. So we had been preparing something along these lines. Um, I would just, I suppose, ask and appreciate you've got your list, your list of bullet points in the rule six letter. But but mindful of what we did say in our particular deadline, be, um, I'm not asking this right now, but I wondered if in the rule eight letter, if appropriate, it might give some direction about what you're particularly concerned about because some of the points that are in your bullet point list aren't because of what we've said in the deadline in terms of the distance of the schemes, for example.

00:41:35:13 - 00:42:05:16

So where where there's reference to development consent order provisions, um, mitigation measures, etc.. Um, you know, as we said in our response that there's not much to say there. Um, so I think if there's if there are issues that are particularly concerning yourselves, um, and it'd be useful to get that so that our report can be focused on that, because I'm concerned that I should say so. Otherwise it would be quite succinct, because it would just say essentially, and then others may disagree. Not much to see here.

00:42:05:22 - 00:42:16:13

Um, so, um, I think that, yes, if we can have some kind of further direction, if at all possible, um, just so we can make sure it's a much value to yourselves. Um, then that would be helpful to.

00:42:17:28 - 00:42:27:20

Thank you. I think we'll we'll take that away. Noting what you've already submitted. Um, and.

00:42:31:10 - 00:42:39:16

The fact that there is an interrelationship report in at least preparation for deadline one is welcomed.

00:42:43:23 - 00:42:49:08

As any other interested party. Got comment on this interrelationship issues?

00:42:53:03 - 00:43:05:06

No. In that case, that concludes the discussion on the interrelationships report. I'll now move on to the next item errors in response to relevant representations.

00:43:06:27 - 00:43:42:08

So the examining authority observed a number of errors within the examination library references provided in the applicant's response to relevant representations. Part one document that was PDA Dash 014. As a result, the examining authority requested the applicant provide an updated version and procedural deadline B, which was received as PD B-005. However, the examining authority have observed that errors still remain within the references, and as such this should be again updated for deadline one.

00:43:45:08 - 00:44:05:11

Just a general point, examining authority would like to take this opportunity to remind all parties of the importance of submitting accurate information during the examination, where the quality or accuracy of submitted evidence is not clear. Examining authority may assign such evidence an appropriate weighting when making a recommendation on this application.

00:44:07:27 - 00:44:11:15

Are there any comments on this? Turning to the applicant?

00:44:12:04 - 00:44:21:19

Have the applicant said just to apologize that those errors have come up a second time. We'll liaise with the case officers to just ascertain exactly which errors, so that we can make sure that they're up to date.

00:44:22:28 - 00:44:23:25

Thank you.

00:44:26:21 - 00:44:57:07

I will now move on to the next procedural decision, which relates to an update on the response from the Marine Management Organization. This is seeking an update from the applicant on procedural decision PD 003 dated 20th of April 2026. The examining authority understands that the proposed

development would cross beneath a section of the River OOS, which is a water in or adjacent to England up to the seaward limits of the territorial sea.

00:44:57:27 - 00:45:33:20

Examining authority requested evidence that the Marine Management Organization had been consulted, or that the applicant undertakes targeted consultation with the Marine Management Organization and then submits an updated consultation report. The applicant responded at procedural deadline A. On the 4th of June, indicating that the Marine Management Organization had responded on the 21st of May. Within this, the applicant set out that the applicant considers that all matters will be able to be agreed with the Marine Management Organization.

00:45:34:27 - 00:45:47:25

So this item now I would ask examining authority would invite the applicant to provide a further update. Please update and advise when the response is expected from the Marine Management Organization.

00:45:48:07 - 00:46:29:11

Mr. Parks and the applicant. So I can confirm that since the previous submission on this from us, um, we have gone through procedural processes to help them get involved. Um, and we've had a very productive meeting with them. Um, which I think take away from that reflects what we said in that we think things are going to be able to be resolved. Um, we've just heard words in the last 24 hours that they will be submitting a response deadline to um. But I think we we are working to the position where, um, just to reassure you, given the implications, um, that we now need for a marine licence or anything of that sort because of relevant exemptions that apply.

00:46:29:20 - 00:46:38:07

Um, obviously that will come out in the wash. Um, but just to reassure you that that's kind of the direction of travel, so you won't suddenly be inserting a whole new schedule into the DCA.

00:46:39:09 - 00:46:40:01

Thank you.

00:46:41:21 - 00:46:47:13

Okay. Have any other IP's comments on.

00:46:50:02 - 00:46:54:21

This sub item within procedural decisions? I don't think so.

00:46:58:03 - 00:47:19:24

So, Mr. Fox, could you just confirm a little bit, uh, sort of clear on what will be submitted by the Marine Management Organization at deadline two, will that be clear on what their position is in terms of the proposed application and quite specific in terms of what the implications may be for the proposed development and this examination.

00:47:20:06 - 00:47:39:29

Mr. Fox applicant. Yes, I understand that to be the case. So the meeting we went through, what the interface is with the marine environment under their auspices were and they said that we had to comment on those relevant aspects, um, being to the assessments of ecological aquatic ecology and that marine licensing point.

00:47:48:18 - 00:47:49:11

Thank you.

00:47:51:19 - 00:47:58:24

So that brings us to the end of item five. I shall now move on to item six, which is any other matters.

00:48:01:12 - 00:48:12:21

So firstly, the examining authority would like to understand if the applicant anticipates submitting a change request in relation to the application. That's a question to the applicant.

00:48:14:10 - 00:48:17:04

Mr. Fox. The applicant? Not at this time.

00:48:25:07 - 00:48:26:10

Okay. Thank you.

00:48:28:25 - 00:48:37:11

I will now scan the room to see if any other interested party has any other matters.

00:48:39:23 - 00:48:47:25

And also on the line. And I think Mr. Fox used to have raised your hand.

00:48:48:03 - 00:49:20:14

Sorry if it's just just an additional point, I suppose, which was, um, it's very conscious that the, um, given the agenda on Thursday, but also the questions and the and the following hearing's coming on. Um, later on in the examination, which, which, um, makes sense in the context of the timetable you've created. Um, I'm just cognizant of, um, the DCA and the drafting of the DCA. Um, and that if you did have any significant concerns with that, that that might not come out until 2 or 3 months into the examination.

00:49:20:24 - 00:49:35:06

Um, so it was just to check, I suppose if you had in your head that there was going to be any, um, procedural decisions relating to the DCA prior to that, or if that would just be part of the things that are already in the timetable.

00:49:36:17 - 00:50:10:12

Um. Thank you. We'll touch on a few of those points around the draft development consent order, probably a little this afternoon, as you might imagine, for the compulsory acquisition. And similarly, there was an item on the issue specific hearing on Thursday which will also touch on those to a degree. Um, but yes, you're quite right. Maybe the substantive part of our remarks on the draft, on the

consent order will probably come a little later within the examination at, um, the written questions, one which is, uh, published for slightly later, currently in the draft timetable.

00:50:10:28 - 00:50:13:28

Um, is that helpful?

00:50:14:14 - 00:50:21:10

Yes. It was just whether we needed to get ready to be answering lots of questions on that, because often there is. But no. That's happy. Thank you sir.

00:50:30:05 - 00:50:37:14

Okay. In the room. If you could remember to introduce yourself before speaking. Yeah. Martin Nichols.

00:50:37:21 - 00:50:51:16

Uh, resident of Skipwith. Um, I do have a point, uh, to raise on agenda item three. I don't know if it's can be considered or not at this late stage.

00:50:53:27 - 00:51:00:17

If you'd like to make your point. It might be something, then, that the examining authority can take away for consideration.

00:51:00:20 - 00:51:24:12

Okay. Um, just on the preliminary assessment under other matters. Um, I would like to see an assessment of the fire risk entered in that particular under that particular category.

00:51:26:15 - 00:51:32:06

Um, in view of more recent developments that have been taking place.

00:51:32:08 - 00:51:55:18

Okay. Thank you for that comment. As my colleague Mr. Willis explained it, it's an assessment based on all the documentation received to date. It certainly doesn't rule out the consideration of all those other matters, such as fire risk, which will be considered through the examination process.

00:52:01:06 - 00:52:17:01

Thank you sir. Mr. Tony has also just pointed out that there is within the this initial assessment of principal issues, a section relating to um under health and safety, to the consideration of fire risk.

00:52:17:13 - 00:52:44:22

Yeah. Uh, I just thought I'd raise it because, um, under other matters, it relates to the proposed battery energy storage system, not the, um, not the solar panel installation or any substations associated with that. So, and also the impacts of the site selection.

00:52:46:00 - 00:52:52:26

Okay. Thank you for that comment. I think that will be revisited during the course of the examination.

00:52:53:09 - 00:52:54:03

Okay. Thank you.

00:52:56:26 - 00:52:57:11

So

00:52:58:28 - 00:53:05:23

just a final check at the end of item six. And it appears.

00:53:08:09 - 00:53:15:08

Nobody, virtually nobody in the room has a hand raised. So I will now pass over to Mr. Tandy.

00:53:25:00 - 00:53:56:27

Thank you. That completes our business for this morning. We trust the agenda has been covered, and we believe that we've provided an opportunity for all those who notified us of their desire to comment. To do so, the recording of the live stream and a note of the preliminary meeting will be added to the project web page of the Planning Inspectorate National Infrastructure website, as soon as possible after the meeting. The examination will now commence and it must be completed within a maximum of six months. And we look forward to working with you all during this period.

00:53:58:03 - 00:54:11:20

I'd like to take this opportunity to remind people that the first hearing in the examination will be a compulsory acquisition hearing, which will be held at 2 p.m. this afternoon. This is a blended event, and registration for this will commence at 1:30 p.m..

00:54:13:11 - 00:54:36:15

If you have registered to attend this meeting online, you will need to use the link that you have been provided with as this as we're using the link for the meeting this morning will not work. If you are proposing to watch the live stream, then you will need to use the relevant link that can be found on the project web page of the Planning Inspector, its National infrastructure website. As again, the link from this morning won't work.

00:54:38:06 - 00:54:54:02

The examining authority aims to publish our rule eight letter to confirm the examination timetable and the arrangements for the examination in the next week or so. The time is 1054, and this preliminary meeting for the Light Valley Solar project is now closed. Thank you.