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To the applicant
(By email only)

Your Ref:

Case ref: EN0110013

Date: 16 December 2025

Dear Harman Sond

Planning Act 2008 – section 51

Application by The Droles Solar Farm Limited for an order granting development consent for The Droles Solar Farm project.

Advice following issue of decision to accept the application for examination

On 16 December 2025 the Secretary of State decided that the application for the above project satisfied the acceptance tests under section 55 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). The Planning Inspectorate's acceptance checklist and the application documents have been published and made available on the project page of our website.

In undertaking checks at the acceptance stage, the Inspectorate has made some initial observations in relation to the application. This letter comprises advice to the applicant provided under section 51 of the PA2008 in respect of these initial observations. The applicant should pay attention to its content and consider how appropriate action might be taken in response.

Environmental Statement (ES) Chapter 3: Order limits and Context (Doc 6.1), and ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental matters (Doc 6.2):

While ES Chapter 3, paragraph 3.2.22 refers to Royal Air Force (RAF) Marham being located approximately 8 kilometres (km) southwest of the Site, ES Chapter 16, paragraph 16.6.11 refers to this distance being approximately 5.1km.

We ask that the applicant provides clarification on which of the above distances is correct.

ES Chapter 5: The Scheme (Doc 6.1)

Table 5-1 'Scheme Parameters used for the Environmental Statement' (page 9) states that to up to 7 pylons would be removed, however paragraph 5.3.45 refers to decommissioning of up to 5 pylons.

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Please can the applicant provide clarification on which is the correct maximum number of pylons that would be removed.

ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Doc 6.2)

- Paragraph 6.2.4 in relation to ES Figure 6.6: Zone of Theoretical Visibility (DSM) refers to a digital terrain model, whereas paragraph 6.4.7 refers to DSM as Digital Surface Model.
- Paragraph 6.2.5 in relation to ES Figure 6.5: Zone of Theoretical Visibility (DTM) refers to digital surface datasets, whereas paragraph 6.4.8 refers to DTM as Digital Terrain Model

Please can the applicant provide clarification on the above points.

ES Non-Technical Summary (Doc 6.5)

Figure 2.1 Concept Masterplan - While the legend describes the dark blue cross-hatching for the Grid Connection Infrastructure, there is no legend provided to describe what the light blue cross-hatching on the plan represents.

Please can the applicant provide an updated version of this document to address this point.

Book of Reference (BoR) (Doc 4.3)

Development Consent Order (DCO) articles have not been listed in the BoR, or indicated in coloured plots in the Land Plans.

Please can the applicant advise on its approach to the above.

Flood Risk Assessment (FRA): ES Appendix 12.2 (Doc 6.4)

The FRA does not differentiate between Flood Zones 3(a) and 3(b).

Please can the applicant provide details with a figure showing the differentiation between Flood Zones 3 (a) and 3 (b) for clarity.

Funding Statement (Doc 4.2)

We ask that the applicant provides information on the timing of the availability of funding, as details of this do not appear to have been provided.

Statutory Ecology and Nature Conservation Plan (Doc 2.7)

The Statutory Ecology and Nature Conservation Plan (Doc 2.7) appears to show an area which is less than the 25km distance used in the Environmental Statement's study area from the red line boundary of the order limits of the proposed development.

Could the applicant please provide a plan showing the full extent of the 25km study area.

Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (Doc 7.3)

Could the applicant please provide the following:

- A copy of the citation/Natura 2000 data sheets for each European site considered in the HRA report as an appendix to the HRA report.
- A plan showing the European sites potentially affected in relation to the proposed development as required by Regulation 5(2)(l)(i) of the APFP Regulations, within 25km of the order limits of the proposed development site as described in Section 3 of the HRA report.

Generating Output

The proposed generating output has been included in the application documents as follows:

- Explanatory Memorandum (Doc 3.2) and draft DCO (Work 1) (Doc 3.1) as 'exceeds 50MW'.
- Page 4 of Doc 1.1 - Application cover letter, "*The scheme provides up to 500MW of clean energy*".
- Doc 5.4- Statement of Need, page 10, 6th paragraph "*...the Scheme has a connection agreement for up to 500MW of export capacity*"

Paragraph 1.4.3 of the Explanatory Memorandum also states that providing an upper limit is neither desirable or necessary, however we ask that the applicant provides further clarification on the intended output figure.

Consultees identified on a precautionary basis

Given the individual circumstances of this case, the Planning Inspectorate advises taking a precautionary approach to consultation under s42(1)(a) of PA2008 to ensure that all persons potentially affected by, or potentially likely to have an interest in the application are given the opportunity to participate fully in the examination of the application. On this basis, the applicant may wish to serve notice on the bodies listed in Box 6 of the section 55 checklist when it serves notice of the accepted application under s56(2)(a) of the PA2008; unless there is a specific justification why this is not necessary.

Minor errors and omissions

There are minor errors and omissions, as reflected in Box 30 of the acceptance checklist. Please can these errors/omissions be addressed, and corrected versions of the documents be provided.

- ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Doc 6.2): Paragraph 6.6.60: first sentence ends in "*and.*"
- ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture (Doc 6.2): Paragraphs 11.5.10, 11.5.11, 11.6.7 and 11.11.8 contain the following words "*Error! Reference source not found.*"

- Flood Risk Assessment (FRA): ES Appendix 12.2 (Doc 6.4): Paragraph 12.2.59 states “*As such, the Sequential is passed...*” whereas paragraph 12.2.54 refers to ‘*the Sequential Test*’.
- Statement of Reasons (Doc 4.1): Page 1 – 5th paragraph, first sentence, typographical error “*ummarised*”.
- Planning Statement (Doc 5.5): Paragraph 8.3.30 contains the following words: “*Error! Reference source not found.*”
- Design Approach Document (Doc 5.7) Parts 2 and Part 3:
 - Paragraph 4.9.5: the words at the end of the second sentence are illegible.
 - Figure 1.24: PEIR Concept Masterplan for Statutory Consultation: the descriptions used in the key are illegible.
 - Figure 1.30: Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan: with the exception of the order limits, the descriptions used in the key are illegible.

In addition to the amendments set out above, we also note an explanatory list of the abbreviations and acronyms used has not been included within all of the application documents. We ask that this is provided in any future versions of application documents submitted to the examination.

Please pay close attention to the advice set out in this letter and act on it accordingly. It is requested that you action these points before the commencement of the relevant representation period. This will contribute towards a more efficient examination and give any future Examining Authority comfort that the documentation is complete and accurate.

We trust you find this advice helpful, however if you have any queries on these matters, please do not hesitate to contact our office using the contact details at the head of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Louise Harraway

Louise Harraway
Case Manager

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