Planning Inspectorate

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To the applicant.
By email only

Our Ref: EN0110013

Date: 21 October 2026

Dear Mr Byrne

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – rule 17

Application by the Droves Solar Farm Limited for an order granting development consent for the Droves Solar Farm

Request for further information

I am writing under rule 17 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 to request that the applicant responds to the following questions:

1. **Decommissioning and restoration**

Requirement (R) 20(1)(a) of the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) [REP5-004] states:
"20.—(1) The date of decommissioning: (a) with respect to each part of Work No. 1 must be no later than 60 years following the initial date of final commissioning; and"

The applicant's response to the Examining Authority's (ExA) third written questions (ExQ3) [REP5-078] question (Q) 5.0.1 states:

"The Applicant has obtained the agreement of the relevant option holder(s) to disclose the duration of the lease term, which is up to 40 years for the Solar Photo-voltaic (PV) Site, the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and the National Grid and Customer Substations."

a. Could the applicant clarify why there is a difference in the two durations given the above?
b. Could the applicant clarify whether it proposes to have an option to extend the lease term from up to 40 years to up to 60 years, and if so, could further details be provided? If not, what would be the implications of this and should there be provision in the dDCO for scenarios whereby the decommissioning

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is completed prior to expiry of the lease and after the proposed development stops generating electricity for an extended continuous period for non-maintenance reasons?

R20 of the dDCO excludes the decommissioning of Work No. 4 (works in connection with a new National Grid substation) and Work No. 5, (works in connection with a connection to the existing overhead transmission electric line).

The applicant's response to the ExA's first written questions (ExQ1) Q5.0.1 part (ii) [REP1-069] states "*The Lease to be granted pursuant to the relevant Option Agreement does not require reinstatement of any infrastructure which has been adopted by the Network Operator i.e. National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc.*"

c. Given the applicant's response above to ExQ3 Q5.0.1, could the applicant provide further detail on its proposals for permanently acquiring the land for Work Nos. 4 and 5 after the 40 year lease has expired?

2. Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments

a. The Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [REP5-038] has been updated to include a range of freeboard allowances for various proposed development components. Could the applicant confirm whether the maximum height specified for the components has taken into account the proposed freeboard allowances? If not, are there any implications for the Environmental Statement assessments?

b. While page 54 of the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments includes a heading for Appendix 1: National Grid and Customer Substation Platform extents, page 55 appears blank. Could the applicant provide this information?

3. Archaeology

Could the applicant confirm whether it will be updating R12 of the dDCO at deadline 6 to take account of Historic England's recommended wording referred to in item HER 1-16 of its statement of common ground [REP5-018].

Responses should be submitted by **deadline 6 (30 October 2026)**.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Johnson

Examining Authority

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