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Slough
SL1 4PN

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

Our Ref: EN0110014

Date: 15 July 2026

Dear Sir/ Madam

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

**Application by East Pye Solar Ltd for an order granting development
consent for the East Pye Solar project (EN0110014)**

**Invitation to the preliminary meeting, draft examination timetable, notification
of hearings and other procedural decisions**

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 member of the ExA. My name is David Cliff
and the other members of the ExA are John McEvoy and Clare Taylor. 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](#)).

We would like to thank those of you who submitted relevant representations. These
representations have assisted us when considering how we will 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 15 September 2026	Registration and seating available at venue from: 09.30 Virtual registration process from: 09.30 Preliminary meeting starts: 10.00	Dunston Hall, Ipswich Road, Norwich, NR14 8PQ 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

You must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by procedural deadline A, Tuesday 1 September 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 1 September 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 1 September 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 we make a 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 our initial assessment of principal issues arising from our 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.**

We are now requesting written submissions from recipients of this letter about how the application should be examined. We particularly wish to hear from you if you 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

You are invited to make a written submission about how the application is to be examined by **procedural deadline A** (Tuesday 1 September 2026 at 11.59pm) (see **annex D** to this letter).

We request that all submissions are made using the '[Have your say](#)' page on the [project webpage](#) on or before **procedural deadline A**. **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 1 September 2026** (see **procedural deadline A**).

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)
- 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 A**.

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. We remain flexible and will confirm the format of any hearings to be held during the examination stage when we provide formal notification of each hearing in advance of it taking place.

We are providing formal notification that the **preliminary meeting will be a blended event and that the OFHs and ISH referred to in annex E to this letter will also be blended events.**

After the preliminary meeting

After the preliminary we 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

We have made a procedural decision to hold the following initial hearings:

- Open floor hearing 1 (OFH1) on 15 September 2026 at 2.00pm (Blended event)
- Open floor hearing 2 (OFH2) on 16 September 2026 at 10.00am (Blended event)
- Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) on 16 (2.00pm) and 17 (10.00am) September 2026 (Blended event). This hearing will focus specifically on the scope of the proposed development, site selection and the draft Development Consent Order.

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

We have 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
- Statements of common ground
- Local impact reports
- ExA's site inspection
- Document updates during the examination
- Applicant's additional submissions
- Applicant's comments on relevant representations
- ExA's request for further information from the applicants

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 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](#).

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 we handle your personal information please view our [Privacy Notice](#).

National infrastructure planning guidance

From 24 July 2026 replacement National Infrastructure Planning Guidance will be in force. This can be accessed via the [National Infrastructure Planning Guidance Portal](#) which enables access to the up-to-date National Infrastructure Planning Guidance. It is coordinated by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as a central source for all users who wish to find guidance on all aspects of the NSIP regime from pre-application through to post-consent changes, and a range of related matters.

We look forward to working with all parties in the examination of this application.

Yours faithfully

David Cliff

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.

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



Agenda for the preliminary meeting

You must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by 1 September 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 **1 September 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 **1 September 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 15 September 2026
Registration Process:	9.30am
Meeting start time	10.00am
Venue:	Blended event at Dunston Hall, Ipswich Road, Norwich, NR14 8PQ 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	
09.30am	Registration and seating available at venue for in-person attendees
09.30am	Virtual registration process Please arrive at 09.30am to enter the virtual lobby. From here you will be admitted to the virtual meeting by the Case Team, greeted and given further instructions. The registration process will commence at 09.30am. 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.
10.00am	Preliminary meeting
Item 1	The preliminary meeting will formally open at 10.00am . The Examining Authority will join, welcome participants and lead introductions.
Item 2	The Examining Authority's remarks about the examination process
Item 3	Initial assessment of principal issues – annex C to Rule 6 Letter
Item 4	Draft examination timetable – annex D to Rule 6 Letter
Item 5	Procedural decisions taken by the Examining Authority – annex F to 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)
- 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) will aim to keep the proceedings focussed and as efficient as possible. This annex provides 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: [PROJECT MAILBOX](#)

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 East Pye 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 East Pye 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 a National Infrastructure Project website ([project webpage](#)). 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 the day 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 will be helpful 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 because it includes a generating station in England 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 National Policy Statement (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 will generally be given the opportunity to reply to any representations made.

Everyone who has made a valid relevant representation has been registered as an 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 be completed by 1.00pm.

During the PM participants may have to make allowances and be patient if there are delays associated with the technology used. It is anticipated there will be a mid-morning break at a convenient point in the agenda.

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 any hearings that are required 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. Where hearings are held, 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 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 (although there is no need to repeat points already made in relevant representations)
- 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. 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 arrange 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 hears 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 will be requested of each 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. A provisional date for a CAH is 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 dates reserved for ISHs and IPs may make suggestions for specific issues 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 1 September 2026**) for participants to notify the ExA that they wish to speak at an OFH1 or OFH2.

Site inspections

The ExA has already carried out its initial unaccompanied site inspection on 1 and 2 July 2026. As part of the examination process the ExA may undertake further site inspections. These can be either unaccompanied or accompanied.

The purpose of these is for the ExA to see features of the proposals within the context of the evidence put forward. Notes of all site inspections (USI) are published on the [project webpage](#).

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 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 (ARSI)

The draft examination timetable includes at **procedural deadline A** (1 September 2026) an opportunity for IPs to make submissions suggesting sites and locations that the ExA should visit. These will be used to inform further USIs/ ARSIs as well as possible ASIs.

Initial assessment of principal issues

This is the initial assessment of principal issues (IAP) prepared as required under section 88(1) of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). In accordance with Rule 5 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010, this IAP was completed within the period of 21 days after the deadline for relevant representations. It was therefore completed prior to the recent publication of the National Infrastructure Planning Guidance 'Planning Act 2008: Pre-examination stage for NSIPs', which comes into force on 24 July 2026.

It has been prepared by the Examining Authority (ExA) following its reading of:

- the application documents
- the relevant representations received in respect of the application
- 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.

Regarding national policy, the following National Policy Statements (NPS) have effect, and the issues contained within will be an integral part of the examination:

- Overarching NPS for Energy 2025 (EN-1)
- NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure 2025 (EN-3).
- NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure 2025 (EN-5).

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. Similarly, the effectiveness of proposed mitigation measures (including relevant management plans) and the extent to which such measures would be secured through the development consent order are considerations that will run throughout 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.

Topic	Summary of principal issue
Aviation	• Effects on aviation safety and operations, including Tibbenham Airfield (Norfolk Gliding Club) and other local airfields/strips
Community, health and well being	• Effects on the living conditions of local residents • Effects on recreational users, including public rights of way • Effects on human health, mental health and wellbeing • Battery energy storage system (BESS) safety provisions and implications
Cultural heritage	• Effects on the settings and significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets, including listed buildings and conservation areas • Effects on archaeological remains, including adequacy of archaeological investigation and mitigation
Cumulative effects	• The identification and assessment of cumulative effects taking account of other projects, plans and developments, including other infrastructure schemes
Ecology and biodiversity (including Habitats Regulations Assessment)	• Effects on designated habitats, including those with national and international designations • Effects on protected species, including adequacy of survey work • Effects on local ecology and biodiversity, including roadside verges, County Wildlife Sites and other Priority Habitats • Assessment of hedgerows and trees including habitat loss
Landscape and visual	• Effects on landscape character, including setting of local villages and settlements • Visual effects, including from public rights of way and residential properties • Design and appearance of proposed substations and other buildings/structures • Glint and glare effects

Noise and vibration	• Effects on residential and other receptors, including from construction activity, the operation of substations and other infrastructure
Site selection, alternatives and design	• The applicant's approach to site selection and alternatives, including location of proposed grid connection, substations and solar photovoltaic (PV) array sites, environmental and land considerations • Deliverability of proposed National Grid substation • Design flexibility and design parameters • Approach to achieving good design
Soils and agricultural land	• Effects on best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land, including adequacy of the agricultural land classification assessment • Adequacy of soil management measures • Effects on agricultural businesses and operations
Traffic and transport	• Adequacy and deliverability of construction traffic strategy and mitigation, including HGV movements and abnormal indivisible load routes • Effects on vulnerable highway users, including school children • Acceptability of proposed vehicular accesses
Water environment	• Flooding and surface water drainage implications, including adequacy of flood risk assessment • Water quality effects and ground water protection • Effects on water resources and supply • Compliance with Water Framework Directive

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.	Procedural deadline A Deadline for receipt by the ExA of: • written submissions on the examination procedure, including the draft examination timetable • requests to be heard orally at the preliminary meeting (PM) and/or attend at the venue in person • requests to speak at open floor hearing 1 on 15 September 2026 (pm) and/or attend the venue in person • requests to speak at open floor hearing 2 on 16 September 2026 (am) and/or attend the venue in person • requests to participate in issue specific hearing 1 on 16 and 17 September 2026 (ISH1) and/or attend the venue in person • comments on relevant representations • suggested locations for ExA site inspections (including justification and whether suggested locations can be seen from public land or require private access)	Tuesday 1 September 2026
2.	Preliminary meeting	Tuesday 15 September 2026 at 10:00 am
3.	Open floor hearing 1 (OFH1)	Tuesday 15 September 2026 at 2:00 pm

4.	Open floor hearing 2 (OFH2)	Wednesday 16 September 2026 at 10.00am
5.	Issue specific hearing (ISH1) ISH1 relating to site selection, the scope of the proposed development and the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO)	Wednesday 16 September 2026 at 2.00pm and Thursday 17 September 2026 at 10.00am
6.	Issue by the ExA of: - the examination timetable (the Rule 8 letter) - the ExA's initial written questions (ExQ1)	As soon as practicable after the preliminary meeting
7.	Deadline 1 (D1) For receipt by the ExA of: - local impact reports (LIR) from local authorities - written representations (WR) and summaries of any WR which exceed 1500 words - responses to ExA's initial written questions (ExQ1) - post hearing submissions, including written summaries of any oral cases heard in OFH1, OFH2 and ISH1 - initial statements of common ground (SoCG) requested by the ExA – refer to Annex F - requests by interested parties to be heard at a further open floor hearing (OFH3) where they have not previously been heard at OFH1 or OFH2 - requests by affected persons (defined in section 59(4) of the Planning Act 2008) to be heard at a compulsory acquisition hearing (CAH) - comments on relevant representations (RR) if not submitted by procedural deadline A - applicant's suggested draft itinerary for ExA accompanied and/or unaccompanied site inspection - any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules	Tuesday 6 October 2026

	• comments on any further information/submissions accepted by the ExA • updates from the applicant – refer to Annex F • notification by statutory parties of their wish to be considered as an interested party by the ExA	
8.	Deadline 2 (D2) For receipt by the ExA of: • comments on WRs • comments on LIRs • comments on responses to ExQ1 • the applicant's updated documents if required (refer to annex F) • comments from any party on submissions and information received at deadline 1 • responses to any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Procedure Rules 2010	Tuesday 27 October 2026
9.	Publication by the ExA of: • ExA's second written questions (ExQ2)	Tuesday 10 November 2026
10.	Dates reserved (if required) for: • Any further open floor hearing (OFH3) • Compulsory acquisition hearing • ExA's accompanied and/or unaccompanied site inspection	Week commencing 16 November 2026
11.	Deadline 3 (D3) • Responses to ExQ2 • Comments from any party on any other submissions received at deadline 2 • Updated SoCG • The applicant's updated documents (if required) (refer to annex F) • Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010	Tuesday 24 November 2026
12.	Dates reserved (if required) for: • any issue specific hearing	Week commencing

	any compulsory acquisition hearing	14 December 2026
13.	Deadline 4 (D4) For receipt by the ExA of: - post hearing submissions, including written summaries of any oral cases heard at hearings and responses to hearing action points - comments on responses to ExQ2 - Comments from any party on any other submissions received at deadline 3 - The applicant's updated documents if any revisions have been made, as set out in annex F of this letter - Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010	Wednesday 6 January 2027
14.	Publication by the ExA of: - the ExA's third written questions (ExQ3) (if required) - the ExA's commentary on, or schedule of changes to, the draft DCO (if required)	Tuesday 19 January 2027
15.	Deadline 5 (D5) For receipt by the ExA of: - responses to ExQ3 (if required) - comments on the ExA's commentary on, or schedule of changes to, the dDCO (if required) - comments from any party on any other submissions received at deadline 4 - any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010	Tuesday 2 February 2027
16.	Deadline 6 (D6) For receipt by the ExA of: - Comments from any party on any other submissions received at deadline 5 - any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 - final signed SoCGs including list of matters not agreed	Tuesday 16 February 2027

	• applicant's closing statement with summary of areas of disagreement • any interested party closing statements (if desired) regarding matters that they have previously raised during the examination and which have not been resolved to their satisfaction • final updated documents from the applicant (in clean and tracked versions), including: • final draft dDCO to be submitted by the applicant in the statutory instrument (SI) template along with the SI template validation report and a clean (all tracking removed) standalone MS Word version of the draft DCO, with no header or cover page • explanatory memorandum • the final updated Book of reference (BoR) and schedule of changes to BoR • land and rights negotiations tracker • any signed and dated planning agreements and obligations (if required) • management plans and control documents (if required) • guide to the application	
17.	Close of examination The ExA intends to close the examination on this date.	Tuesday 23 February 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 23:59 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 15 September 2026	Open floor hearing 1 (OFH1)	Registration and seating available at venue from: 01.30pm Virtual registration process from: 01.30pm Hearing starts: 2.00pm	Dunston Hall Ipswich Road, Norwich, NR14 8PQ 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 16 September 2026	Open floor hearing 2 (OFH2)	Registration and seating available at venue from: 09.30am Virtual registration process from: 09.30am Hearing starts: 10.00am	Dunston Hall Ipswich Road, Norwich, NR14 8PQ 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

Date	Hearing	Start time	Venue and Joining details
Wednesday 16 September 2026	Issue specific hearing 1 (ISH1) on the scope of the proposed development, site selection and the draft Development Consent Order	Registration and seating available at venue from: 01.30pm Virtual registration process from: 01.30pm Hearing starts: 02.00pm	Dunston Hall Ipswich Road, Norwich, NR14 8PQ 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
Thursday 17 September 2026	Issue specific hearing 1 (ISH1) (continued) on the scope of the proposed development, site selection and the draft Development Consent Order	Registration and seating available at venue from: 09.30am Virtual registration process from: 09.30am Hearing starts: 10.00am	Dunston Hall Ipswich Road, Norwich, NR14 8PQ 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
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.			

You must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by 1 September 2026

if you intend to participate in any of the hearings and provide all the information requested (see below).

If you simply wish to observe any of the hearings 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 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 **1 September 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 **1 September 2026**.

Any request to participate in a hearing **must include** the following information:

- name and unique reference number (found at the top of any 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)
- confirmation of whether you will participate virtually or in-person
- confirmation of the hearing(s) you wish to participate in, the agenda item(s) on which you wish to speak and/ or brief details of the topic(s) that you would like to raise
- for compulsory acquisition hearings, the plot number(s) of the relevant land provided in the [Book of Reference](#) and the [Land Plans](#)
- the [Examination Library](#) reference number (with paragraph/ page number where appropriate) of any documents you wish to refer to

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

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.

Hearing agendas

For **OFH1** and **OFH2** an agenda will be published in advance of the events confirming a speaking order and time slots for registered participants to make their oral submissions. Additional time has been reserved later in the examination for a further OFH if requests are made by IPs who are unable to participate in OFH1 or OFH2.

For **ISH1** scheduled for Wednesday 16 and Thursday 17 September 2026, the notice of hearing above specifies that its purpose will be to consider the scope of the proposed development, site selection and the draft Development Consent Order. This is intended to be a high level hearing in which the ExA will primarily seek responses from (and direct questions to) the applicant. If the ExA considers it beneficial for any specific IPs to participate in ISH1, including relevant local authorities, they will be listed in the forthcoming agenda, which again will be issued at least five working days before the event.

For subsequent 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.

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. Statements of common ground (SoCG)

The ExA would be assisted by the preparation of SoCG between the applicant and certain interested parties. The draft examination timetable at **annex D** to this letter therefore establishes **deadline 1** for submission of SoCGs along with subsequent opportunities for updated SoCGs to be submitted.

The aim of a SoCG is to agree factual information and to inform the ExA and all other parties by identifying where there is agreement and where the differences lie at an early stage in the examination process. It should provide a focus and save time by identifying matters which are not in dispute or need not be the subject of further evidence.

In particular, the SoCG should identify where the key differences between parties lie and the reasons for any disagreement or outstanding matters. Where disagreement exists, it would assist the ExA for the SoCG to specify what actions could be taken to address the matters in contention. This

information should form part of a principal areas of disagreement summary statement forming part of (rather than being separate to) the overall SoCG.

If there is documented agreement between the applicants and any party listed below in respect of protective provisions and no other matters of disagreement remain, then a statement to this effect would suffice and no SoCG is required. In the absence of such agreement, and even if agreement is expected to be reached, then a SoCG should be provided.

SoCGs are requested to be prepared between the applicant and the following parties:

- a) Anglian Water
- b) Environment Agency
- c) General Aviation Awareness Council & Norfolk Gliding Club
- d) Historic England
- e) South Norfolk District Council
- f) National Grid Electricity Transmission
- g) Natural England
- h) National Gas Transmission
- i) National Highways
- j) Norfolk County Council
- k) Norfolk Wildlife Trust

Depending on matters arising during the examination, the ExA may identify additional parties with whom SoCGs are required.

SoCGs should cover the following matters, to the extent that they are relevant to the interests of the party concerned:

- as appropriate for its area of responsibility, the matters listed under the relevant headings in the ExA's initial assessment of principal issues (annex C)
- All matters raised in its relevant representation
- A summary of matters agreed and matters not agreed or outstanding
- Relevant policy, legislation and guidance
- The articles and requirements of the draft DCO, including any suggested alternative or additional drafting
- Relevant mitigation, monitoring and management plans
- 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 with the ExA's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Unless otherwise stated or agreed, the SoCG should be agreed between the applicant and the relevant party, and submitted by the applicant at the deadlines set out in the examination timetable.

3. Local impact reports (LIR)

The ExA requests LIRs from Norfolk County Council and South Norfolk Council and welcomes LIRs from any other relevant local authorities defined in section 56A of the Planning Act 2008 who may wish to submit on. All LIRs are required to be submitted into the examination no later than **deadline 1** (6 October 2026).

4. ExA's site inspection – suggested locations

An unaccompanied site inspection was recently carried out by the ExA on 1 and 2 July 2026. The draft examination timetable at **annex D** to this letter includes dates reserved for a further ExA site inspection in week commencing 16 November 2026. Further unaccompanied inspections from publicly accessible locations are also expected to be carried out by the ExA during the examination.

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 or any oral representations will be allowed during an ASI.

The ExA requests that interested parties submit suggested locations for the ExA to visit as part of any further site inspection by **procedural deadline A** (1 September 2026). The request must include:

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

The applicant is requested to prepare a draft itinerary for the ASI to be submitted by **deadline 1** (6 October 2026). This should include:

- relevant locations referred to in the relevant representations received
- the locations suggested by interested parties submitted by **procedural deadline A** (1 September 2026).

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 any ASI.

5. Document updates during the examination

a) Guide to the application

The ExA requests that the applicant provides, at each deadline, an update to its 'Guide to the Application' document providing 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 also be submitted at deadline 6 before the close of the examination. All examination documents submitted should include a version number and date.

b) Development Consent Order (DCO) and explanatory memorandum

Where the applicant submits an amended dDCO at any deadline, the submission should include a new version number identifying that the submitted dDCO is an amended version. Amended dDCOs submitted by the applicants must be accompanied by:

- clean and track change versions
- a consolidated schedule of changes document listing all changes to the dDCO since the initial application version, when (including the version number) and for what purpose each change was introduced
- an amended explanatory memorandum to reflect any changes

c) Land and rights negotiations tracker

The Land and rights negotiations tracker [[APP-023](#)] 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 and Rights Negotiations Tracker in PDF and Excel formats is submitted into the examination at **procedural deadline A** 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 and Rights Negotiations Tracker should be provided at **deadline 6**.

d) Book of Reference (BoR) and Statement of Reasons

To include:

- The latest up-to-date versions of the BoR and SoR
- Clean copies and track change versions
- A 'Schedule of land rights changes' setting out the reasons for the changes included in each update

e) Updates to management plans and control documents

The ExA expects that the applicant should be having ongoing engagement with relevant parties on the content of these documents so that the drafting of them can be agreed as far as is reasonably possible at an early stage of the examination.

In the event of revised versions of documents such as outline management plans or other control documents being submitted, clean copies and copies showing tracked changes highlighting the changes made to the previous version of the document should be submitted. In instances of changes (other than minor typographical corrections) being made, a summary explanation of the reason(s) for those changes being made should be provided.

7. Applicant's additional submissions

The applicant has submitted two responses (each with accompanying documents) in response to advice issued by the Planning Inspectorate dated 2 April 2026 [[PD-002](#)] following the acceptance of the application. These are:

- Applicant's response letter [[AS-001](#)] and accompanying documents [AS-002 to AS-029] dated 26 April 2026.
- Applicant's response letter [[AS-040](#)] and accompanying documents [AS-030 to AS-041] dated July 2026.

The ExA has exercised its discretion and made a procedural decision to accept the above submissions. Interested parties should therefore refer to the most up-to-date documents as included in the [examination library](#) and as reflected in the applicants 'Guide to the Application'.

8. Comments on relevant representations (RRs)

Rule 3(2) of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 requires written comments on any RRs to be submitted either on the date of the preliminary meeting (PM), or a date specified in the Rule 8 letter, which follows as soon as practicable following the PM, whichever is the later. To comply, the ExA has included responses to RRs and summaries exceeding 1500 words in the submissions by **deadline 1** (6 October 2026). However, to prepare for the PM and subsequent hearings, the ExA asks for comments on RRs to be submitted by **procedural deadline A** (1 September 2026).

Comments on relevant representations should:

- Specify the names of the parties making the representation and the relevant Examination Library reference to demonstrate that all relevant representations have been responded to; and
- where a detailed or tabular representation has been submitted, present responses in a comparable manner to ensure that all points are responded to in similar terms.

9. ExA's request for further information from the applicants

a) Ecology

The ExA notes various relevant representations raising concern regarding the ecological survey work for white-clawed crayfish, including those from South Norfolk District Council [\[RR-1795\]](#), Norfolk Wildlife Trust [\[RR-1453\]](#) and Block East Pye [\[RR-0200\]](#).

It is noted that the Aquatic Habitat Assessment Report, ES Appendix 8.9 [\[APP-160\]](#) states that: 'Surveys were completed during a period of unusually dry conditions and many smaller drainage features were dry or partially dry at the time of inspection. As a result, the wetted extent, depth and in-channel habitat availability observed may under-represent typical conditions, particularly for ephemeral headwaters and field ditches'. The assessment further identifies that the site visits were conducted in September and October 2025.

Having regard to previous survey conditions, the timing of site visits and concerns raised, the ExA advises that further information is required to inform our consideration of the effects of the proposed development in this regard. The ExA is making this request at an early stage acknowledging the seasonal constraints associated with white-clawed crayfish survey work, so as to enable this to be completed between July and September. You are also referred to Natural England's standing advice: [White-clawed crayfish: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK](#).

The ExA requests that the applicant provides an update on this matter at **Procedural deadline A** (1 September 2026). This should include details of any further survey work carried out or proposed to be carried out. Where the additional survey work is not undertaken, the provision of robust justification of not doing so and any further relevant evidence should be provided to inform the ExA's consideration of potential effects on white-clawed crayfish.

b) Aviation operations and safety

The ExA notes the relevant representations submitted regarding potential effects on aviation related operations and safety, including from Norfolk Gliding Club [\[RR-1452\]](#) at Tibbenham Airfield and the General Aviation Awareness Council [\[RR-0664\]](#).

The ExA requests that the applicants carry out further engagement with these interests prior to the examination and provides a position statement at procedural **deadline A** (1 September 2026) including:

- Details of on-going and future engagement with Norfolk Gliding Club and the General Aviation Awareness Council
- An outline of the matters of disagreement between the relevant parties on aviation operations and safety
- Details of any further/supplementary surveys and information required, including timescales for their completion if not already carried out

- Details of any mitigation measures required
- A summary of the applicant's approach and response to dealing with aviation matters for all airfields and/or flight paths (including any military flightpaths) located near to the Order limits. This should include potential cumulative effects with other projects, including the Norwich to Tilbury project.

As a separate procedural decision, the ExA has also requested a SoCG with the General Aviation Awareness Council and Norfolk Gliding Club.

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 [project mailbox email address](#) 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 written based 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.