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

10 June 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

## **Planning Act 2008 – Application for Development Consent Order for Whitestone Solar Farm**

### **PINS Application ref. EN0110020**

#### **Introduction**

On behalf of Whitestone Solar Farm Ltd (the ‘Applicant’), I am pleased to enclose an application for a Development Consent Order (‘DCO’) (‘the Application’) pursuant to Section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 (‘PA 2008’) in relation to Whitestone Solar Farm (‘the Proposed Development’).

#### **Subject of the Application**

The Application is for a DCO for the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) energy generating station with a total capacity exceeding 100 megawatts (MW), Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), onsite substations and supporting infrastructure, and grid connection infrastructure. The grid connection infrastructure would connect the Proposed Development to the National Grid at the new National Grid substation Brinsworth (Long Lane 400kV Substation), located east of Long Lane, Rotherham. National Grid has applied to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council for the development of this new substation which is intended by National Grid to be operational in time for the Proposed Development to connect in 2029. The Long Lane 400kV substation is therefore not included in the Proposed Development and is subject to a separate planning application taken forward by National Grid.

The Application is required because the Proposed Development is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Proposed Development (NSIP) pursuant to sections 14(1)(a) and 15(1) and 15(2) of the PA 2008, as an onshore solar generating station in England with a capacity exceeding 100 megawatts (MW). As such, the decision on whether to grant development consent will be made by the Secretary of State for Energy, Security and Net Zero (‘Secretary of State’).



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The Proposed Development would be located within the Order Limits, as shown on the **Location Plans [EN0110020/APP/2.1]**. The Order Limits encompass the total area of the Proposed Development comprising the Site and Cable Corridors. The Site is specifically the land that is planned to be used for solar PV array and associated infrastructure, BESS, substation, landscaping and habitat enhancement. The Site is split into Whitestone 1, Whitestone 2, and Whitestone 3 as described in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Site and Surrounding Area [EN0110020/APP/6.3]**.

### Application Fee and Documentation Enclosed

A fee of £9,286.00 has been submitted by BACS to the account of the Planning Inspectorate on 27 May 2026. The Planning Inspectorate confirmed on 04 June 2026 that the fee had been received.

The Application is submitted via the Planning Inspectorate DCO Submission Portal. This was agreed with the Planning Inspectorate via email communication and within the final Project Update Meeting held on 27 April 2026.

In accordance with the Planning Inspectorate's 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Preparation and Submission of Application Documents', a GIS shapefile showing the Order Limits for the Proposed Development was issued to the Planning Inspectorate via email on 08 May 2026. The Electronic Application index was later issued on 03 June 2026 via email.

A **Section 55 Checklist [EN0110020/APP/1.4]** that has been completed by the Applicant has been included within the Application to assist with the Planning Inspectorate's compliance check of the Application.

### Application Formalities

This Application is made in the form required by Section 37(3)(b) of the PA 2008 and the application documents comply with the requirements in Section 37 of the PA 2008 and those set out in:

- The Infrastructure Planning (Applications, Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 ('the APFP Regulations');
  - The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 ('the EIA Regulations');
  - The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Guidance 'Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Proposed Developments' (April 2024);
  - MHCLG and DLUHC Guidance 'Planning Act 2008: Content of a Development Consent Order required for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects' (April 2024);
  - MHCLG and DLUHC Guidance 'Guidance related to procedures for the compulsory acquisition of land' (September 2013);
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- MHCLG and DLUHC Guidance 'Introduction to National Infrastructure Planning Guidance' (April 2024);
  - MHCLG Guidance 'Planning Act 2008: Application form guidance' (June 2013);
  - MHCLG and DLUHC Guidance 'Guidance on procedural requirements for major infrastructure projects' (updated December 2020);
  - MHCLG Guidance 'Associated development applications for major infrastructure projects' (April 2013); and
  - Planning Inspectorate advice 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Preparation and Submission of Application Documents' (updated November 2025).

The Proposed Development is an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development and therefore the Application is accompanied by an **Environmental Statement ('ES')** [EN0110020/APP/6.1 – 6.21] in accordance with the EIA Regulations.

The Application will be published (with any necessary redactions and minus any confidential documents) on the Planning Inspectorate's webpage from the point of acceptance. The confidential documents are to include:

- **ES Figure 6.3.1: Confidential Badger Survey Results – W1 to W3** [EN0110020/APP/6.19]
- **ES Figure 6.7.1: Hobby and Barn Owl (Confidential)** [EN0110020/APP/6.19]
- **ES Appendix 6.3: Confidential Badger Survey** [EN0110020/APP/6.20]
- **ES Appendix 6.7: Confidential Ornithology Report** [EN0110020/APP/6.20]

## Proposed Development Description

A non-technical summary of the Proposed Development is included within **ES Non-Technical Summary** [EN0110020/APP/6.21]. A more detailed technical description of the Proposed Development is included within **ES Chapter 5: The Proposed Development** [EN0110020/APP/6.5].

## Need for the Proposed Development

The Proposed Development will provide in excess of 100MW of renewable energy to the UK's electricity grid, contributing to the UK Government's goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050. In 2022, the Government published their Energy Security Strategy, announcing that they intend to accelerate and increase solar power capacity to 70GW by 2035. Powering Up Britain, published in 2023, further confirmed the Government's commitment to solar energy production.

The Proposed Development would play an important role in helping the UK to reach its renewable energy targets. Section 6 of the **Planning Statement** [EN0110020/APP/5.4] and **Statement of Need** [EN0110020/APP/5.8] provides a detailed case in support of the Proposed Development in the context of Government policy on energy infrastructure.

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## Consent flexibility

The design of the Proposed Development has been developed to a sufficient level of detail so as to allow the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and DCO Application examination to take place.

To maintain flexibility in the design and layout at this stage in the process, the assessment of the Proposed Development, in accordance with NPS EN-1, has adopted the Rochdale Envelope approach, as described in the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note Nine: Rochdale Envelope (July 2018). This involves specifying parameter ranges, including details of the maximum, and where relevant the minimum, size (footprint, width, and height relative to above ordnance datum ('AOD')), technology, and locations of the different elements of the Proposed Development. The **Works Plans [EN0110020/APP/2.3]** and the **Draft DCO [EN0110020/APP/2.3]** have been developed to reflect the level of flexibility required at this stage.

The use of the Rochdale Envelope approach has been adopted to present an assessment of the likely environmental effects of the Proposed Development. More detail on the parameters used is presented in the **Outline Design Parameters [EN0110020/APP/7.3]**.

## Habitats Regulations Assessment

As confirmed within **ES Chapter 6: Biodiversity [EN0110020/APP/6.6]** the need for a Habitat Regulations Assessment and assessment of European Protected Sites was scoped out as confirmed by the Scoping Opinion from the Planning Inspectorate. With the Planning Inspectorate stating "*This is scoped out on the basis that there are no European sites present within the red line boundary or area of influence. Scoping Report paragraph 7.3.20 identifies the nearest designated sites as the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA) which is located 17.5km southwest from the nearest point of the proposed development. Given the location of the Proposed Development, the Inspectorate agrees to scope this matter out of further assessment*".

## Compulsory Acquisition

The land over which the Applicant is seeking powers of compulsory acquisition of land, rights and interests and powers of temporary possession in the **Draft DCO [EN0110020/APP/3.1]** for the purposes of this Proposed Development is listed within the **Book of Reference [EN0110020/APP/4.3]** and shown on the **Land Plans [EN0110020/APP/2.2]**.

The **Statement of Reasons [EN0110020/APP/4.1]** also provides details of the powers sought, and the justification for these, as does the **Lands and Rights Negotiations Tracker [EN0110020/APP/4.4]** which also provides the latest position on negotiations to date.

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The **Book of Reference [EN0110020/APP/4.3]** has been prepared and is submitted in compliance with Regulation 5(2)(d) of the APFP Regulations.

Details of the adequacy of funding is provided in the **Funding Statement [EN0110020/APP/4.2]**. The Statement of Reasons and Funding Statement are submitted in compliance with Regulation 5(2)(h) of the APFP Regulations.

### Other Consents and Licenses

A summary of other consents and licenses likely to be required in addition to those being requested as part of the Draft DCO is provided in the **Consents and Agreements Position Statement [EN0110020/APP/5.3]**.

### Pre-Application Consultation

The Applicant has had careful regard to the pre-application guidance issued by the Government as required by section 50(3) of the PA 2008, consultation requirements of the PA 2008, the guidance and advice on pre-application consultation, and its pre-application discussions held with the Planning Inspectorate.

As required by Section 37(3)(c) of the PA 2008, the Application is accompanied by a **Consultation Report [EN0110020/APP/5.1]** and supporting **appendices [EN0110020/APP/5.1]**, which provide details of the Applicant's compliance with sections 42, 46, 47, 48 and 49 of the PA 2008, the APFP Regulations, the EIA Regulations, and the relevant guidance.

### Use of Artificial Intelligence

The Applicant confirms that Artificial Intelligence has been used during the preparation of the DCO Application. The use of AI has been set out below –

- **Consultation Report [EN0110020/APP/5.1]** – AI has been used through a self-made AI Agent to assist in the review of community focused statutory consultation feedback. This was then further checked by a human before further analysis of the feedback was conducted.
- **Outline Skills and Supply Management Plan [EN0110020/APP/5.18]** – Microsoft Co-Pilot was used to provide assistance with a review/comparison of other documents of the same nature.
- **Funding Statement [EN0110020/APP/4.2]** – Chat GPT was used to provide assistance with a review/comparison of other documents of the same nature.
- **ES Volume 3, Appendix 11.2: SF6 Technical Note [EN0110020/APP/6.20]** – Microsoft Co-Pilot was used to provide assistance with a review/comparison of other documents of the same nature.

The Applicant can confirm that while AI Agents have been used for purposes set out above, thorough checks were conducted by a human to ensure all information was accurate, consistent and relevant. Therefore, the Applicant takes full responsibility for the accuracy of the documents produced with the assistance of AI.

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## Other Matters

As required under Regulation 5(3) of the APFP Regulations, all plans, drawings or sections provided under Regulation 5(2) are no larger than A0 size, are drawn to an identified scale (not smaller than 1:2500) and, in the case of plans, show the direction of north. The exception to this is that some drawings and plans vary in scale due to the large size of the Proposed Development. Context would be lost for the plans provided in the Environmental Statement if they were to conform to the scale requirements required under Regulation 5(2). The Applicant can confirm that all drawings are produced in accordance with Regulation 5(3) and Regulation 5(2) of the APFP Regulations.

In accordance with Regulation 5(5) of the APFP Regulations, the Applicant retains all responses to the consultation carried out under Part 5 of the PA 2008 and can make them available at the request of the Planning Inspectorate and/or the Secretary of State.

The Applicant will keep all application documents under review and will endeavour to provide updates (where it considers it necessary to do so) during the examination of the Application considering questions and comments received from the Examining Authority and Interested Parties.

We look forward to hearing from you in relation to a formal acceptance of this Application. If we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us using the details provided below.

Yours sincerely,

Director, Whitestone Net Zero Ltd