

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

03 August 2026

Whitestone Solar Farm

Planning Inspectorate Application ref. EN0110020

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rule 2010

On 03 July 2026, the Planning Inspectorate issued a decision to accept for examination a Development Consent Order Application (the DCO Application) made by Whitestone Net Zero Ltd in respect of the Whitestone Solar Farm (the Proposed Development).

In issuing that decision, the Planning Inspectorate also issued advice relating to its initial observations on the DCO Application. This letter provides a response to that advice and is accompanied by the submission of a number of new and updated application documents. Appendix A to this letter sets out a detailed response to each point raised and identifies where documents have been updated.

In addition to the documents submitted in response to the section 51 and section 55 advice, the Applicant has submitted additional updated documents following the acceptance of the DCO which are all documented in Appendix A to this letter.

The Applicant has also submitted a number of new documents, including:

- 8.1 Schedule of Changes to the draft Development Consent Order **[EN0110020/APP/8.1]**
- 8.2 Natural England Statutory Consultation Response **[EN0110020/APP/8.2]**
- 8.3 Applicants Response to Section 55 and 51 Advice **[EN0110020/APP/8.3]**
- 6.20 Environmental Statement Appendix 6.4.1A: River Condition Assessment Reporting Sheets **[EN0110020/APP/6.20]**

For completeness, the Applicant has also updated the Guide to the Application **[EN0110020/APP/1.3.1]** (clean and tracked).

Yours sincerely,



Jonathan Thompson
Director, Whitestone Net Zero Ltd

Appendix A – Applicant's response to Section 51 and Section 55

Document / Topic	Section 51 / 55 Advice	Response	Revised Document Submitted
<u>Section 51 Advice</u>			
Habitats Regulations Assessment clarifications	A No Likely Significant Effects Report was not submitted with the application; the Environmental Statement confirmed that there were no identified impact pathways to European sites and that this had been agreed with Natural England. The Inspectorate notes that the consultation response providing explicit agreement on this matter is not included in the submission and the applicant is requested to provide this response.	The Applicant has now provided the Natural England response to statutory consultation which demonstrates the agreement between Natural England and the Applicant.	8.2 Natural England Statutory Consultation Response [EN0110020/APP/8.2].
	The applicant should also explicitly confirm that in-combination effects with other projects have been considered in reaching the conclusion that there are no pathways for significant effects.	The Applicant has included specific reference to in-combination effects in Table 6-2: Topics Scoped out of Assessment in ES Volume 2, Chapter 6: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation [EN0110020/APP/6.6.1].	Updated ES Volume 2, Chapter 6: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation [EN0110020/APP/6.6.1] (clean and tracked)
Minor errors and omissions	At Schedule 13 of the draft Development Consent Order (DCO) (Doc 3.1) will need to	Corrections have been made accordingly within the relevant documents, and all changes are	Updated draft Development Consent Order [EN0110020/APP/3.1.1] (clean



	ensure that the names of the documents are consistent with the title description of the document that has been submitted.	illustrated within the new Schedule of Changes to the draft Development Consent Order [EN0110020/APP/8.1] .	and tracked) and Schedule of Changes to the draft Development Consent Order [EN0110020/APP/8.1] .
	There is an error reference in paragraphs 2.2.3 and 2.24 of the Consents and Agreements Position Statement (Doc 5.3).	Corrections have been made accordingly to paragraphs 2.2.1, 2.2.3 and 2.2.4 within the Consents and Agreements Position Statement [EN0110020/APP/5.3.1] .	Updated Consents and Agreements Position Statement [EN0110020/APP/5.3.1] (clean and tracked).
	The applicant needs to check the correct references are given throughout the application in documents such as the draft DCO (Doc 3.1) and the Planning Statement (Doc 5.4).	The Applicant can confirm that a review of the Draft DCO and Planning Statement has been conducted regarding the document references, and the required updates have been made.	Updated draft Development Consent Order [EN0110020/APP/3.1.1] (clean and tracked) and updated Planning Statement [EN0110020/APP/5.4.1] (clean and tracked).
	In the Planning Statement (Doc 5.4) appendix 1 4.3.21 is blank and appendix 1 4.3.15 refers to 'Figure 01' which should possibly refer to 'Figure 2'. The figure numbers and table numbers should be checked throughout the document.	The Applicant has reviewed the Planning Statement and made the relevant updates.	Updated Planning Statement [EN0110020/APP/5.4.1] (clean and tracked).
	In the Grid Connection Statement, (Doc 7.1) paragraph 6.1.3 says that the new Long Lane substation is shown on Sheet 9 of the Works	The new Long Lane 400kV substation, will be sited within Work Area 2E, as shown on sheet 9 of the Works Plans. Work No. 2E enables electrical engineering works to	Updated Grid Connection Statement [EN0110020/APP/7.1.1] (clean and tracked).



	Plans however, this is not shown on the Works Plans.	connect to the new Long Lane 400kV substation but not for the construction of the substation itself, which is subject to a separate consenting process under the Town and Country Planning Act. The planning application (RB2025/1468) was approved by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council at Planning Board on 16 th July 2026.	
	It would be helpful if part 1 to 3 tables in the Book of Reference (Doc 4.3) were searchable	The Applicant has discussed this matter with the Planning Inspectorate, and this has now been rectified.	n/a
	Within the Works Plans (Doc 2.3) the applicant should consider if it would be useful to have the works descriptions within the legend. On sheet 20 works '1-2F' needs to be checked to see if labelling is correct. Plots 4-11, 4-10, 4-9, 4-8, 4-7, 4-6 as identified in the Land Plan seem to be missing; if these are needed, they will need inserting.	A brief description of each Work No. has been added to the legend on each sheet. The Order Limits were corrected on sheet 4 to include plots 4-6, 4-7, 4-8, 4-9, 4-10, and 4-11 and sheet 16 to include plot 16-9. The placement of labels on sheet 15 and sheet 20 has been updated to clarify the extent of Works No. 1 (solar).	Updated Works Plans [EN0110020/APP/2.3.1] .
	It is noted in Appendix 13.2 Transport Statement (Doc 6.20)	The Applicant has updated the reference, to correctly refer to M621.	Updated ES Appendix 13.2: Transport Statement



	that this incorrectly refers to 'M62112' when this should be 'M621'.		[EN0110020/APP/6.20.1] (clean and tracked).
Environmental Statement	Any error messages within the chapters and appendices will need to be corrected together with any missing words and typographical errors.	The Applicant has reviewed all documents and made the changes to all relevant documents.	- 6.2.1 – ES Chapter 2: EIA Methodology [EN0110020/APP/6.2.1] (clean and tracked) - 6.8.1 – ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN0110020/APP/6.8.1] (clean and tracked) - 6.10.1 – ES Chapter 10: Water Resources and Flood Risk [EN0110020/APP/6.10.1] (clean and tracked) - 6.13.1 – ES Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport [EN0110020/APP/6.13.1] (clean and tracked) - 6.14.1 – ES Chapter 14: Noise and Vibration [EN0110020/APP/6.14.1] (clean and tracked)



			- 6.20.1 - ES Appendix 6.3: Confidential Badger Survey Report [EN0110020/APP/6.20.1] (clean and tracked) - 6.20.1 - ES Appendix 6.6: Breeding Bird Survey Report [EN0110020/APP/6.20.1] (clean and tracked) - 6.20.1 - ES Appendix 6.10: Bat Survey Report [EN0110020/APP/6.20.1] (clean and tracked) - 6.20.1 - ES Appendix 6.12: Bat Survey Report [EN0110020/APP/6.20.1] (clean and tracked) - 6.20.1 - ES Appendix 6.13: Fisheries and White Clawed Crayfish eDNA Report [EN0110020/APP/6.20.1] (clean and tracked) - 6.20.1 - ES Appendix 7.3: Landscape Character Assessment
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			[EN0110020/APP/6.20.1] (clean and tracked) - 6.20.1 - ES Appendix 7.4: Representative Viewpoint Assessment [EN0110020/APP/6.20.1] (clean and tracked) - 6.20.1 - ES Appendix 8.2: Cultural Heritage Baseline [EN0110020/APP/6.20.1] (clean and tracked) - 6.20.1 - ES Appendix 8.3.1: Sieving Exercise Assets [EN0110020/APP/6.20.1] (clean and tracked) - 6.20.1 - ES Appendix 8.4: Assessment of Indirect Effects to Setting [EN0110020/APP/6.20.1] (clean and tracked) - 6.20.1 - ES Appendix 9.8: Phase 1 Contaminated Land Report: Whitestone 2
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			[EN0110020/APP/6.20.1] (clean and tracked) - 6.20.1 - ES Appendix 10.3: Water Framework Directive Compliance Assessment [EN0110020/APP/6.20.1] (clean and tracked) - 6.20.1 - ES Appendix 16.2: Glint and Glare Report [EN0110020/APP/6.20.1] (clean and tracked)
	The naming of volumes and appendices will need to be consistent. It appears that chapters are labelled volume 6 when they are later referred to as volume 1.	The Applicant can confirm that the Environmental Statement chapters are volume 6 of the DCO application as per the Guide to the Application [APP-003] and this is why Volume 6 is present on the cover pages. However, it should be noted that due to the size of the Environmental Statement it has been split into 3 parts as follows – - Volume 1 – Chapters - Volume 2 – Figures - Volume 3 – Appendices Therefore, no updates are required.	n/a



	Also, ES Appendix 8.9 Phase I Trial Trenching Report (Doc 6.20) is named Phase 'I' on the cover sheet when this should state 'Phase 1'.	The Applicant has updated the cover page to state "Phase 1".	Updated ES Appendix 8.9 Phase I Trial Trenching Report [EN0110020/APP/6.20.1] (clean and tracked).
	Within ES Appendix 6.3 Badger Survey Report (Doc 6.20), reference to Nature Scotland is likely needed to be removed.	The Applicant has removed this reference.	Updated ES Appendix 6.3: Badger Survey Report [EN0110020/APP/6.20.1] (clean and tracked).
<u>Section 55 Advice</u>			
Section 42 – Duty to Consult	The Planning Inspectorate advises taking a precautionary approach to consultation under s42(1)(a) of PA2008 to ensure that all persons potentially affected by, or potentially likely to have an interest in the application are given the opportunity to participate fully in the examination of the application. On this basis, the applicant should serve notice on Clowne Parish Council and Staveley Parish Council when it serves notice of the accepted application under s56(2)(a) of the PA2008, unless there is a specific justification why this is not necessary.	The Applicant can confirm that both Clowne Parish Council and Staveley Parish Council have been served notice under section 56(2)(a) of the PA2008.	n/a
	The applicant is reminded to investigate and update their Book	As set out in in section 11 of the Statement of Reasons [APP-020]	An updated Book of Reference [APP-022] will be submitted at



	of Reference, if necessary, and ensure that under s42(1)(d) of PA2008 to ensure that all persons potentially affected by, or potentially likely to have an interest in the application are given the opportunity to participate fully in the examination of the application. On this basis, the applicant should serve notice on the above possible affected persons when it serves notice of the accepted application under s56(2)(d) of the PA2008, unless there is a specific justification why this is not necessary.	and section 6.2 of the Consultation Report [APP-024], the Applicant undertook “<i>diligent inquiry</i>” to identify parties within Categories 1, 2 and 3, as defined in sections 44 and 57 of the PA 2008. In accordance with section 42(1)(d) of the PA 2008, the Applicant consulted with all identified parties at either the Statutory Consultation (16 September to 28 October 2025) or two Targeted Consultations (4 March to 3 April 2026 and 16 April to 18 May 2026). The Applicant has reviewed the Planning Inspectorate’s advice, and, at a high-level, notes that all properties are outside the Order Limits of the Proposed Development. A detailed update is provided below for each property and grouped into discrete responses: <u>Firsby Hall Farm and The Threshing Barn including HS2 Ltd</u> These properties are outside the Order Limits but benefit from a right of access over Firsby Lane (Plot 3-1 in the Book of Reference [APP-022] and identified spatially on the	the Procedural Deadline when it is expected a substantive number of changes can be captured before the commencement of Examination.
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		Land Plans [APP-009]). The freeholder was consulted during the Statutory Consultation and as part of the first Targeted Consultation, is included in the Book of Reference [APP-022] with respect to its access rights and has been sent a notice pursuant to section 56(2)(d) of the PA 2008. HS2 Ltd manage these properties on behalf of the freeholder, however, this does not constitute an interest defined under section 57 of the PA 2008 as it is the freeholder who benefits from the access rights over Firsby Lane. <u>Reserve House including occupiers</u> This property is outside the Order Limits but benefits from a right of access over Firsby Lane (Plot 3-1 in the Book of Reference [APP-022] and identified spatially on the Land Plans [APP-009]). The freeholders were consulted during the Statutory Consultation, are included in the Book of Reference [APP-022] with respect to their access rights and have been sent notices pursuant to section 56(2)(d) of the PA 2008. Any occupiers of this property wouldn't	
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		hold an interest defined under section 57 of the PA 2008 as it is the freeholders who benefit from the access rights over Firsby Lane. <u>Brier Barn and Firsby Hall Farm Cottage including occupiers</u> These properties are outside the Order Limits and do not benefit from a registered right of access over Firsby Lane (Plot 3-1 in the Book of Reference [APP-022] and identified spatially on the Land Plans [APP-009]). An interest in Firsby Lane was not flagged through the Applicant's "<i>diligent inquiry</i>", which, alongside the initial non-contact (desktop) referencing methods, included engagement with the freeholders of Plot 3-1 and the erection of unregistered / unknown site notices for this plot during the Statutory Consultation. On the basis of the information provided in the City of Doncaster Council's Adequacy of Consultation Representation [AoC-005], which alludes to the fact that all properties in Firsby benefit from a right of access over Firsby Lane, the Applicant has taken a precautionary approach and sent	
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		notices pursuant to section 56(2)(d) of the PA 2008 to the freeholders of these properties. The Book of Reference [APP-022] will be updated to reflect this at the Procedural Deadline when it is expected a substantive number of changes can be captured before the commencement of Examination. Any occupiers of these properties wouldn't hold an interest defined under section 57 of the PA 2008 as it is the freeholders who benefit from the access rights over Firsby Lane. <u>Springvale Farm, Springvale House, Morthern House and New Sycamore Farm</u> These properties are outside the Order Limits but the freeholders were all consulted during the Statutory Consultation, are included in the Book of Reference [APP-022] with respect to other Category 1 and / or 2 interests in the Proposed Development and have been sent notices pursuant to section 56(2)(d) of the PA 2008. Furthermore, the Applicant acknowledges that "<i>diligent inquiry</i>"	
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		is an ongoing duty and will update the Book of Reference [APP-022] at the appropriate deadlines and notify newly identified interests of their rights under section 102A of the PA 2008 as such interests are established.	
S50(3) Regard to guidance about pre-application procedure	Appendix 8.5 Geoarchaeological Desk Based Assessment (Doc 6.20) this does not appear signed by the author or the approver.	The Applicant has updated ES Appendix 8.5 to ensure it has been signed by the approver.	Updated ES Appendix 8.5 Geoarchaeological Desk Based Assessment [EN0110020/APP/6.20.1] (clean and tracked)
	Works Plan (Doc 2.3) - Plots 4-11, 4-10, 4-9, 4-8, 4-7, 4-6 do not appear in the works plans. If needed, as identified in Land Plan, they should also be included and shown in the Works Plan which work/s they are needed for. Ensure plots are labelled correctly, '1-2F' on sheet 20 needs checking. It may also be useful if the legend details the type of work instead of just the works area number.	A brief description of each Work No. has been added to the legend on each sheet. The Order Limits were corrected on sheet 4 to include plots 4-6, 4-7, 4-8, 4-9, 4-10, and 4-11 and sheet 16 to include plot 16-9. The placement of labels on sheet 15 and sheet 20 has been updated to clarify the extent of Works No. 1 (solar).	Updated Works Plans [EN0110020/APP/2.3.1] (clean and tracked)
	Draft DCO (Doc 3.1) there are document naming discrepancies in Schedule 13.	Corrections have been made accordingly within the relevant documents, and all changes are illustrated within the new Schedule	Updated draft Development Consent Order [EN0110020/APP/3.1.1] (clean and tracked)



		of Changes to the draft Development Consent Order [EN0110020/APP/8.1].	Schedule of Changes to the draft Development Consent Order [EN0110020/APP/8.1].
	Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan (Doc 5.12) references referred to need to be checked throughout the document.	The Applicant notes this request, but the Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan is document ref. 5.14 (APP-047). The Applicant has reviewed this document in accordance with the comment and noted no updates were required. However, while reviewing the Applicant also reviewed the Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (document ref. 5.12) and updates were subsequently required to ensure all references were correct.	Updated Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN0110020/APP/5.12.1] (clean and tracked).
	Location Plan (Doc 2.1) and Vegetation Removal Plans (Doc 2.9) it would be useful for these plans to show land excluded from order limits.	The Location Plan and Vegetation Removal Plans have been updated to show land excluded from the Order Limits in a yellow colour.	Updated Location Plans [EN0110020/APP/2.1.1] (clean and tracked). Updated Vegetation Removal Plans [EN0110020/APP/2.9.1] (clean and tracked).
	Guide to the Application (Doc 1.3) brackets appear around 'Net Zero One Ltd' in the first sentence of paragraph 1.2.1.	The Applicant has updated this accordingly within the document.	Updated Guide to the Application [EN0110020/APP/1.3.1] (clean and tracked).



	Environmental Statement Appendix 10.2 Flood Risk Assessment (Doc 6.20) paragraph 8.2.6 refers to the site as 1,149 hectares which does not accord with other documents such as the Planning Statement (Doc 5.4).	The areas stated in Paragraph 10.2.13 of the Flood Risk Assessment are as follows: <i>“The Order Limits comprise a total area of approximately 1,488 hectares (ha), consisting of approximately 339ha proposed for the Cable Corridors and 1,149ha proposed for the Site”</i> This is correct and consistent with ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Site and Surrounding Area [APP-055] and paragraph 2.1.1 of the Planning Statement [APP-037]. Therefore, no change is required.	n/a
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