Planning Inspectorate

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Customer Services: 0303 444 5000
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All interested parties, statutory parties and any other person invited to the preliminary meeting

Our Ref: EN0110020

Date: 06 October 2026

Dear Sir/ Madam

Planning Act 2008 – section 88 and 89 and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – rules 4, 6, 9 and 13

Application by Whitestone Net Zero Ltd for an order granting development consent for the Whitestone Solar Farm

Appointment of the Examining Authority and invitation to the preliminary meeting and notification of hearings

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 members of the ExA. My name is Rebecca Norman and the other members of the ExA are Craig Loughlin and Helen van Willegen. 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.

disability confident EMPLOYER

Date	Start time	Venue and joining details
Tuesday 10 November 2026	**Registration and seating available at venue from:** **9:30am** **Virtual registration process from:** **9:30am** **Preliminary meeting starts:** **10:00am**	1925 Suite, Asseal New York Stadium, New York Way, Rotherham, S60 1FJ 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
IMPORTANT: The preliminary meeting should be completed before 1.00pm on Tuesday 10 November 2026.		

You must register by completing the event participation form by 23:59pm Tuesday 27 October 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 **23:59pm Tuesday 27 October 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 **23:59pm Tuesday 27 October 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 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, including the use of virtual methods

You are invited to make a written submission about how the application is to be examined by **procedural deadline A** (**Tuesday 27 October 2026 23:59**) (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 I** 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 **23:59pm Tuesday 27 October 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)
- For blended events, 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 OFH and ISH referred to in annex E to this letter will also be blended events.**

After the preliminary meeting

After the preliminary meeting 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 (OFH1) on Tuesday 10 November (Blended event)
- Issue Specific Hearings (ISH1 and ISH2) on Wednesday 11 and Thursday 12 November 2026 (Blended event)

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 AI in submissions
- Statements of common ground
- Request for suggested locations for an accompanied site inspection
- Status of examination documents
- Acceptance of additional submissions into the examination
- Hearing visuals
- Comments on Relevant Representations
- Closing statement

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 I** 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.

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

Yours faithfully

Rebecca Norman

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 Applicant's Updates
H Examination documents and 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.

Agenda for the preliminary meeting

You must register by completing the event participation form by 27 October 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 **27 October 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 **27 October 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 page. 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 10 November 2026**
Registration process:	**09.30am**
Meeting start time:	**10.00am**
Venue:	**Blended event at:** **1925 Suite, Asseal New York Stadium, New York Way, Rotherham, S60 1FJ** **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	
9.30am	Registration and seating available at venue for in-person attendees
9.30am	**Virtual registration process** Please arrive at 9.30am 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 9.30am. 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 **Item 1**	**Preliminary meeting** 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 – **annex B** to the Rule 6 Letter.
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	Oral representations from Interested Parties on the draft Examination timetable and Examination Process
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)
- For blended events, 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) is conscious of videoconferencing fatigue and will aim to keep the proceedings focussed and as efficient as possible. This annex provides advance access to 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, and will be available to answer questions by email before and after the PM. The contact email address is: whitestonesolarfarm@planninginspectorate.gov.uk.

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 the Whitestone Solar Farm, 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 Whitestone Solar Farm Ltd, 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 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 is important 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 a NSIP under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) as a consequence of sections 14 and 15: it includes the construction of a generating station in England with a capacity exceeding 50 MW in capacity. The following designated National Policy Statements (NPSs) apply to this examination and to decision-making relating to this application.

- Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy ('NPS EN-1')
- National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure ('NPS EN-3)
- National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure ('NPS EN-5')

The ExA will consider the proposed development in accordance with the NPS 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 is generally 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 take half a day to complete.

During the PM participants may have to make allowances and be patient if there are delays associated with the technology used. In recognition of the fatigue associated with on-screen communication, the ExA will provide breaks during the PM as appropriate.

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 hearings 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. While some hearings are held to provide supplementary evidence, 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 are strongly encouraged to submit a LIR. 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
- 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. If possible, events will be arranged for times when all relevant parties are available, but 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 rearrange 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 takes 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. Provisional dates for CAHs are 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 a number of dates reserved for ISHs and IPs may make suggestions for topics 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 (**27 October 2026**) for participants to notify the ExA that they wish to speak at an OFH or a CAH.

Site inspections

As part of the examination process the ExA may undertake 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 unaccompanied 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 decide to hold USIs to relevant nominated locations, supported by the submission of additional written, photographic, video or even drone material if this would be preferable to not visiting sites or holding ASIs in circumstances which could make them difficult and unduly time-consuming to conduct (for example if public health restrictions are in place). 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 a deadline 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 prepared as required under section 88(1) of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). 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:

- NPS EN-1 – Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy
- NPS EN-3 – National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure
- NPS EN-5 - National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure

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.

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. The bulleted items under each issue are indicative and do not preclude other sub-items being considered.

1. Ecology and Biodiversity

- Effects on protected species and other locally present species
- Effects on statutory and locally designated sites
- Effects on woodland, trees and hedgerows

- The adequacy of assessments and suitability and effectiveness of the proposed mitigation
- The proposed biodiversity enhancements including their appropriateness and effectiveness

2. Green Belt

- The adequacy of assessments undertaken
- Impacts on the Green Belt, together with the case for very special circumstances.

3. Heritage

- Impact on the setting of the designated and non-designated heritage assets
- Physical impacts from the construction and decommissioning phase on potential archaeological heritage assets
- Mitigation measures

4. Landscape and Visual Impact

- Adequacy of the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment
- Effects on the landscape character, sensitive receptors and visual amenity
- Effects on residential properties, public rights of way and views within the local landscape
- Whether the proposed mitigation will provide satisfactory and effective measures during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the proposed development

5. Soils – Agriculture and Best and Most Versatile Land

- The agricultural land classification of the site and the impact on BMV,
- Methodology and assessment used to assess the impact of temporary and permanent land loss.
- The decommissioning of the project and future land use.
- Cumulative impacts.

6. Traffic and Transport

- The effects of construction traffic on the local highway network, residents and businesses.
- The effect of the development on the major road network.
- Cumulative impacts.

7. Water Environment

- Effects on flood risk and drainage during construction, operation and decommissioning.
- Adequacy of assessments including the sequential and exception test and suitability and effectiveness of proposed mitigation measures.
- Local flood risk and drainage, including surface water, ordinary watercourses, pollution and groundwater.

8. Other Matters

- Site selection, need and alternatives.

- Assessment of glint and glare effects including on aviation, residential and road receptors.
- Effects on population health and wellbeing.
- The proposed battery energy storage system (BESS) including health and safety matters.
- Major incidents and disasters.

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 any submissions about the use of virtual methods • requests to be heard orally at the preliminary meeting • suggested locations for site inspections (accompanied or unaccompanied), including justification, for consideration by the ExA	**Tuesday 27 October 2026**
2.	**Preliminary meeting (PM)** is an opportunity to comment on the examination procedure. The Examining Authority will not hear views on the application. Use this link to register: Whitestone Solar Farm Preliminary Meeting and Hearings Event Participation Form – Fill in form	**Tuesday 10 November 2026 10.00am**
3.	**Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1)** is for parties to speak directly to the Examining Authority about their views on the application. Use this link to register: Whitestone Solar Farm Preliminary Meeting and Hearings Event Participation Form – Fill in form	**Tuesday 10 November 2026 2.00pm**
4.	**Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1)** regarding Environmental Matters	**Wednesday 11 November 2026 10.00am**
5.	**Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2)** regarding Environmental Matters	**Thursday 12 November 2026 10.00am**
6.	**Issue by the ExA of:** • The examination timetable (Rule 8 Letter)	**As soon as practicable**

		following the PM
7.	**Deadline 1** For receipt by the ExA of: • comments on relevant representations (RR) • summaries of all RR exceeding 1500 words • written representations (WRs) and summaries of any WR which exceed 1500 words • post hearing submissions, including written submissions of any oral cases heard at OFH1, ISH1 and ISH2 • Local Impact Reports (LIRs) from the local authorities • the applicant's draft itinerary for an accompanied site inspection (ASI) (If required) • suggestions for locations for the ASI (if any) from any other party together with **reasoning** • requests by interested parties to be heard at a further open floor hearing (OFH2) • requests by affected persons (defined in section 59(4) of the Planning Act 2008) to be heard at a compulsory acquisition hearing (CAH) • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 • comments on any further information/ submissions accepted by the ExA • draft Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) – see **annex F** • updates from the applicant – see **annex F**	**Tuesday 24 November 2026**
8.	**Deadline 2** For receipt by the ExA of: • Comments on WRs • Comments on responses to RRs • Comments on the LIRs • comments on the applicant's draft itinerary for the ASI (if required) • comments on any additional submissions received by Deadline 1 and accepted by the ExA (if required)	**Tuesday 15 December 2026**

	• comments on Draft Statements of Common Ground • comments from affected persons on applicant's updated land rights tracker • the applicant's revised dDCO and other updates from the applicant – see **annex F** • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010	
9.	**Publication by the ExA of:** • the ExA's first written questions (ExQ1)	**Tuesday 22 December 2026**
10.	**Deadline 3** For receipt by the ExA of: • Responses to ExQ1 • Comments on any updated or additional documents submitted by the applicant at **deadline 2** • Updates from the application – refer to **annex F** • Any further information requested by ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 • Comments on any further information requested by the ExA and received by **deadline 2**	**Tuesday 19 January 2027**
11.	**Publication by the ExA of:** • The ExA's final itinerary for the ASI (if required)	**Tuesday 2 February 2027**
12.	**Week reserved for hearings:** • Further Issue Specific Hearings on Environmental Matters (ISH3) and the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) (ISH4) • Compulsory Acquisition Hearing (CAH) • Further Open Floor Hearing (OFH2) (if required) • ASI (if required)	**Tuesday 9 – Thursday 11 February 2027**
13.	**Deadline 4** For receipt by the ExA of:	**Thursday 18 February 2027**

	• Post hearing submissions, including written summaries of any oral cases made at hearings held during 9 – 11 February 2027. • Updates from the applicant, including the applicant's revised Explanatory Memorandum, updated Land and Rights Negotiations Tracker, Updated BoR, schedule of changes to the BoR, Statement of Reasons and Land Plans, updated outline control documents, progress regarding Protective Provisions, progress on securing other consents – refer to **annex F**	
14.	**Publication by the ExA of:** • The ExA's Second Written Questions (ExQ2) (if required) • The ExA's proposed dDCO (schedule of changes)	**Tuesday 2 March 2027**
15.	**Deadline 5** For receipt by the ExA of: • Responses to ExQ2 • Responses to the ExAs proposed dDCO • Comments on the applicant's revised dDCO • Updates from the applicant, including the applicant's revised Explanatory Memorandum, updated Land and Rights Negotiations Tracker, Updated BoR, schedule of changes to the BoR, Statement of Reasons and Land Plans, updated outline control documents, progress regarding Protective Provisions, progress on securing other consents – refer to **annex F** • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 • comments on any further information requested by the ExA and received by **deadline 3**	**Tuesday 23 March 2027**
16.	**Deadline 6** For receipt by the ExA, from the applicant, of: • **the final draft DCO** Final draft DCO to be submitted by the applicant in the SI template Applicant to provide the email notification from https://publishing.legislation.gov.uk/validation confirming the document has successfully passed validation, and the PDF version of the SI validation report obtained from the link in the notification email. The applicant should also provide a clean (all	**Tuesday 6 April 2027**

	tracking removed) standalone MS Word version of the draft DCO**,** with no header or cover page • **the final updated BoR** Final BoR and schedule of changes to BoR • **final SoCGs** • **final Statement of Commonality of SoCG** • **list of matters not agreed where SoCG could not be finalised** • **final Navigation Document/ Guide to the Application** • **final Status of Negotiations CA Schedule** • **final Status of Negotiations with Statutory Undertakers** • **final NPS Tracker** • **final signed and dated section 106 (if required)** • **Closing Statement** For receipt by the ExA, from any IP, of: • **comments on any further information received** Comments on any additional information/submissions received by d**eadline 5** • **any further information requested by ExA** Any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010	
17.	**Close of examination** The ExA intends to close the examination on this date. See 'Note about the close of examination date'.	**Friday 9 April 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.

Hearing agendas

Please note that for ISHs and CAHs the ExA will publish a high-level agenda alongside the notification of the hearing to help inform your decision about whether to register to participate. A detailed draft agenda will be made available 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. For OFHs agendas may not be published.

Notification of initial hearings

The Examining Authority (ExA) provides notice of the following initial hearings:

Date	Hearing	Start time	Venue and Joining details
Tuesday 10 November 2026	**Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1)**	**Registration and seating available at venue from:** **1.30pm** **Virtual registration process from:** **1.30pm** **Hearing starts:** **2.00pm**	1925 Suite, Asseal New York Stadium, New York Way, Rotherham, S60 1FJ 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 11 November 2026	**Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) – Environmental Matters**	**Registration and seating available at venue from:** **9.30am** **Virtual registration process from:** **9.30am** **Hearing starts:** **10.00am**	1925 Suite, Asseal New York Stadium, New York Way, Rotherham, S60 1FJ 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
Thursday 12 November 2026	**Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) – Environmental Matters**	**Registration and seating available at venue from:** **9.30am** **Virtual registration process from:** **9.30am** **Hearing starts:** **10.00am**	1925 Suite, Asseal New York Stadium, New York Way, Rotherham, S60 1FJ 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 23:59pm Tuesday 27 October 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 **23:59pm Tuesday 27 October 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 **23:59pm Tuesday 27 October 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)
- For blended events, 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

High-level agendas for these hearings will be published alongside this notification on the project webpage to help inform your decision about whether to register to participate.

For 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. For open floor hearings an agenda may not be published.

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)

In relation to some of the principal issues identified in **annex C** to this letter, the ExA would be assisted by the preparation of SoCGs between the applicant and certain interested parties. The draft examination timetable at **annex D** to this letter therefore establishes **deadline 1 Tuesday 24 November 2026** for submission of draft SoCGs.

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. It can also usefully state where and why there may be disagreement about the interpretation and relevance of the information. Unless otherwise stated or agreed, the SoCG should be agreed between the applicant and the other relevant interested party or parties, and submitted **by the applicant**.

SoCGs are requested to be prepared between the applicant and:

A **City of Doncaster Council**
B. **Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council**
C. **North East Derbyshire Council**
D. **Natural England**
E. **Environment Agency**
F. **Historic England**
G. **National Highways**
H. **National Grid Electricity Transmission**
I. **Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd**
J. **Northern Powergrid (Yorkshire) PLC**
K. **Cadent Gas Ltd**
L. **ERG UK Holding Limited**
M. **JJSI Ltd**
N. **Harmony Energy Ltd**
O. **Canal and River Trust**

All of the SoCGs listed above should cover the articles and requirements in the draft Development Consent Order. Any interested party seeking that an article or requirement is reworded should provide the form of words which are being sought.

Where a particular SoCG cannot be agreed between the parties by **deadline 6 Tuesday 6 April 2027**, or if any local authority position needs to be signed off at a higher level, draft versions of that SoCG are requested to be submitted **by the applicant** to **deadline 5 Tuesday 23 March 2027**. The position of the relevant interested parties should then be confirmed in the course of the examination.

The content of SoCGs will help to inform the ExA about the need to hold any issue specific hearings during the examination, and to enable the ExA and the applicant to give notice of such hearings in advance of them taking place.

3. Accompanied site inspection – suggested locations

The draft examination timetable at **annex D** to this letter includes half a day reserved for an accompanied site inspection (ASI) within the week of hearings commencing Tuesday 9 February 2027, should the ExA decide to hold one.

If either the applicant or other interested parties consider additional locations beyond those which the ExA has already visited as part of USI1 need to be visited, the ExA requests that interested parties submit suggested locations

for the ExA to visit as part of an ASI by **procedural deadline A Tuesday 27 October 2026.** The request must include:

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

Interested parties should be aware that ASIs are not an opportunity to make any oral representations to the ExA about the proposed development. However, participants may be invited by the ExA to indicate specific features or sites of interest.

The applicant is requested to prepare a draft itinerary for the ASI to be submitted by **deadline 1 Tuesday 24 November 2026.** This should include:

- relevant locations referred to in the relevant representations received
- any other locations at which the applicant has predicted likely significant environmental effects
- the locations suggested by interested parties submitted by **procedural deadline A**

Comments by interested parties on the applicant's draft itinerary must be submitted by **deadline 2 Tuesday 15 December 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 the ASI.

4. Status of the applicant's examination documents

The ExA requests that the applicant provides, at each deadline, an updated 'Status of the applicant's examination documents' document which provides 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 be submitted before the close of the examination. All examination documents submitted should include a version number and date.

5. Additional submissions

In addition to the documentation submitted by **procedural deadline A Tuesday 27 October 2026** the ExA has exercised its discretion and made a procedural decision to accept the following additional submissions:

- AS-001 – AS-066 Applicant's Response to Section 55 and 51 Advice by Whitestone Net Zero Ltd
- AS-067 – Late Adequacy of Consultation Representation by Mansfield District Council
- AS-068 – Late Adequacy of Consultation Representation by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- AS-069 - Relevant Representation by A Eastwood, Interested Party

6. Visuals for the Hearings

For all hearings, the ExA may wish to refer to plans and drawings to assist in the discussion points. The applicant is therefore requested to make provisions for the electronic display of such plans and drawings. The ExA will issue supplementary agendas no less than 5 days before those events and may indicate which plans and drawings may be required.

For IPs joining online, the ExA considers the most appropriate way of participation would be for persons to have available and to hand the Examination Library (EL). As each plan is uploaded the ExA will notify those persons online of the EL reference number (e.g. APP-003) and IPs can then download the document themselves. This is considered preferable to the alternative of low-resolution drawings being prepared and screened on Microsoft Teams by the applicant, which despite best intentions, are often time consuming to load and difficult to see and navigate for online users.

7. Deadline for the Submission of Comments and Summaries 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 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 requested responses to RRs and summaries exceeding 1500 words by **deadline 1, Tuesday 24 November 2026.**

However, the ExA has noted from experience that applicants generally respond as quickly as possible following the close of the RR period, and it would be helpful to the ExA, for the PM and subsequent hearings, if responses and summaries to RRs could be submitted by **procedural deadline A Tuesday 27 October 2026.**

8. Closing Statement

The ExA would like to invite the applicant to submit a closing statement at **deadline 6 Tuesday 6 April 2027.** The closing statement should set out in

summary its position and where the applicant considers any areas of disagreement remain with the local authority and statutory parties.

The Applicant's Updates

The draft examination timetable in **annex D** includes deadlines for the applicant to provide updates to the examination. The deadlines are set at points in the timetable where it will help with the smooth running of the examination for the ExA to have the up-to-date information at that time. This annex sets out the ExA's request for the matters to be included in those updates. Please note that final updates must be submitted by **deadline 6 Tuesday 6 April 2027.**

Statements of Common Ground

Annex F sets out the Statements of Common Ground between the applicant and various interested parties that are requested by the ExA, and the matters to be covered.

The Statements of Common Ground are to be accompanied by a document summarising:

- The status of each Statement of Common Ground
- The matters agreed between the applicant and each interested party
- The main outstanding concerns held by each interested party, the reasons for those concerns, the next steps to be taken to address them and the progress anticipated by the next deadline and by the close of the examination.
- When it is anticipated that any draft Statements of Common Ground will be finalised and when the finalised signed and dated copies will be submitted to the examination.

Updates to the Book of Reference, Statement of Reasons and Land Plans

To include:

- The latest, fully up-to-date versions of the Book of Reference, Statement of Reasons, Land Plans, Special Category Land Plans and any related updates to the draft Development Consent Order.
- Clean copies and copies showing tracked changes to the previous versions.
- Each version supplied with unique revision numbers that are updated consecutively from the application versions, clearly indicated within the body of each document, and included within the electronic filename.
- A 'Schedule of Land Rights Changes' report, or equivalent, setting out the reasons for the changes included in each update.

Updates to the draft Development Consent Order and Explanatory Memorandum

To include:

- The latest, fully up-to-date versions of the draft Development Consent Order and Explanatory Memorandum.
- Clean copies and copies showing tracked changes to the previous versions.
- A copy of the draft Development Consent Order in Microsoft Word.
- Each version supplied with unique reference numbers that are updated consecutively from the application versions, clearly indicated within the body of each document, and included within the electronic filename.
- A report validating that the draft Development Consent Order is in the Statutory Instrument Template (obtained from the publishing section of the legislation.gov.uk website) and email validation confirmation.
- A 'Schedule of Changes to the draft Development Consent Order' report, or equivalent, setting out the reasons for the changes included in each update.

Schedule of the latest versions of the applicant's submission documents and documents to be certified

To include:

- An updated Application Guide schedule identifying the latest version of each individual document and plan submitted by the applicant and identifying those documents that are to be certified under the draft Development Consent Order.
- For any updated documents of plans, clean copies and copies showing tracked changes to the previous versions.
- Updates supplied with unique revision numbers that are updated consecutively from the application versions, clearly indicated within the body of each document, within the electronic filename, and (for the certified documents or plans) in the draft Development Consent Order.

Schedule of progress in securing other consents

To include:

A summary of the up-to-date position in respect of obtaining the necessary consents and whether there is any reason to believe that any consent will not be granted.

Where the Environment Agency or Natural England are the consenting authority, and without prejudice to their subsequent decision, written confirmation of whether they have any reason to believe that any consent will not be granted. As well as being required for the ExA to assess the adequacy of the applicant's mitigation proposes, this is required for the ExA to report any known impediments to the Secretary of State.

A summary of the progress made since the last update, any outstanding matters, the next steps to be taken, and the progress anticipated by the next deadline and by the close of the examination.

Examination documents and information about the 'Have Your Say' page

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 contact us via:
Email: whitestonesolarfarm@planninginspectorate.gov.uk,
Telephone: 0303 444 5000

Post:

Whitestone Solar Farm Case Team
Planning Inspectorate
National Infrastructure
c/o QUADIENT
69 Buckingham Avenue
Slough
SL1 4PN

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 have not 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 text 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.