Planning Inspectorate

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

Agenda for Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1):

Hearing	Date and Time	Location
Issue Specific Hearing 1	**Wednesday 11 November 2026** **Hearing starts at 10.00am** Registration and seating available at venue from 9.30am and virtual registration process from 9.30am	**1925 Suite, Asseal New York Stadium, New York Way, Rotherham, S60 1FJ** and By virtual means using Microsoft Teams

Agenda

1. Welcome, introductions, arrangements for the hearing. There will be a 2 minute silence at 11am

2. Purpose of the Issue Specific Hearing 1

3. Matters for discussion at this Hearing

3.1	**Landscape and Visual** Documents that may be referred to during the discussion of this item: [APP-155], [APP-158], [APP-040], [APP-046], [APP-047], [APP-059], [APP-067], [APP-071], [APP-075], [APP-076], [APP-109], [AS-042] and [APP-150]. A significant number of Relevant Representations (RR) refer to Landscape and Visual matters and examples that may be referred to include [RR-2625], [RR-0454], [RR-2316], [RR-1023], [RR-0288], [RR-2727] and [RR-2401]. The Examining Authority (ExA) will ask the applicant to give a ten minute summary of its case with regard to landscape and visual matters, including • The design principles and evolution; • The approach taken for the assessment of the landscape and visual impacts; • The proposed mitigation strategy; and

	• The approach used for the assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development on public rights of way (PRoW) . The ExA will then invite interested parties (IPs) to comment on the Applicant's position in respect of landscape and visual matters The ExA will then ask any questions it may have in respect to the oral and written cases made by the applicant and other IPs.
3.2	**Glint and Glare** Documents that may be referred to during the discussion of this item: [AS-060], [APP-068], [APP-046] and [APP-158]. The ExA will ask the applicant to give a ten minute summary of its case with regard to effects of glint and glare, including: • To provide an overview of their approach to assessing key effects on aviation, road, footpath and residential receptors; • To outline their proposed mitigation measures; and • To provide an update on their discussions with statutory consultees and Sheffield Aero Club Ltd on these points. The ExA will then invite IPs to comment on the applicant's position in respect of landscape and visual matters The ExA will then ask any questions it may have in respect to the oral and written cases made by the applicant and other IPs.
3.3	**Ecology and Biodiversity** Documents that may be referred to during the discussion of this item: [AS-021], [APP-042], [APP-043], [APP-046] [APP-094], [APP-096], [APP-098], [AS-007] [AS-032] and [APP-107]. The ExA will ask the applicant to give a ten minute summary of its case with regard to ecology and biodiversity, including • An overview of their approach to assessing key effects to habitats and species, also explaining any limitations in baseline surveys; • An outline the role and function of the different aspects of the biodiversity mitigations and enhancements included within the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) and outline landscape and ecology management plan (oLEMP); and • A summary of their biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment principles and methodology. The ExA will then invite IPs to comment on the applicant's position in respect of ecology and biodiversity matters.

	The ExA will then ask any questions it may have in respect to the oral and written cases made by the applicant and other IPs.
3.4	**Agricultural Land and BMV** Documents that may be referred to during the discussion of this item: [AS-005], [APP-061], [APP-096] and [APP-129]. The ExA will ask the applicant to give a ten minute summary of its case with regard to best most valuable (BMV) agricultural land, including: • The approach to how it has sought to minimise overall take of BMV land, also explaining any limitations in baseline surveys; • An outline of the BMV land which is being used for BNG purposes; and • An update on their discussions with Natural England on these points. The ExA will then invite IPs to comment on the applicant's position in respect of agricultural land and BMV. The ExA will then ask any questions it may have in respect to the oral and written cases made by the applicant and other IPs.
3.5	**Water, Flooding and Ground Conditions** Documents that may be referred to during the discussion of this item: [APP-061], [AS-023], [APP-042], [APP-050], [APP-122], [APP-137], [AS-015], [AS-056] and [PD1-008]. The ExA will ask the applicant to give a ten minute summary of its case with regard to water, flooding and ground conditions, including: • To provide an overview of their application of the Sequential and Exception Tests, including an explanation of how it is ensured that the project will be safe for its lifetime; • An outline of their approach to management of surface water and drainage; • To provide an overview of their approach to assessing the existing ground conditions; and • An update on their discussions with the Environment Agency on each of these topics. The ExA will then invite IPs to comment on the Applicant's position in respect of water, flooding and ground conditions. The ExA will then ask any questions it may have in respect to the oral and written cases made by the applicant and other IPs.

4. Review of issues and actions arising

5. Any other business

6. Close of Hearing

Purpose of ISH1

The main purpose of ISH1 is to undertake an examination of various environmental impact matters arising from consideration of the application and representations. The focus will be on gaining an overview of key elements of the application as a framework for more detailed consideration as the examination progresses. ISH1 is being held to hear evidence relating to matters in respect of the following topics:

- Landscape and Visual
- Glint and Glare
- Ecology and Biodiversity
- Agriculture and BMV land
- Flooding and Ground Conditions

Attendees

The ExA would find it helpful if the following parties could attend this hearing:

Agenda Item 3.1 Landscape and Visual	**Agenda Item 3.2 Glint and Glare**	**Agenda Item 3.3 Ecology and Biodiversity**
• Applicant • Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council • City of Doncaster Council • North East Derbyshire District Council • A representative of a Parish Council with an interest in this item • Interested parties who submitted comments on this topic	• Applicant • Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council • City of Doncaster Council • North East Derbyshire District Council • National Highways • A representative of a Parish Council with an interest in this item • Interested parties who submitted comments on this topic	• Applicant • Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council • City of Doncaster Council • North East Derbyshire District Council • A representative of a Parish Council with an interest in this item • Interested parties who submitted comments on this topic
Agenda Item 3.4 Agriculture and BMV Land	**Agenda Item 3.5 Water, Flooding and Ground Conditions**	
• Applicant	• Applicant	

• A local authority or parish council with an interest in this item • Interested parties who submitted comments on this topic	• Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council • City of Doncaster Council • North East Derbyshire District Council • Environment Agency • A representative of a Parish Council with an interest in this item • Interested parties who submitted comments on this topic	

However, this does not indicate that other parties will not be able to contribute. All interested parties (IP) are invited to attend and make oral representations on the matters set out in the agenda, subject to the ExA's ability to control the hearing.

The ExA has sought to provide sufficient detail to assist the parties to prepare for the hearing. The details set out above are indicative and the ExA may find it necessary to include additional agenda items or to amend the order in which the items are dealt with.

Anyone wishing to attend the hearing in person, who has not already advised the case team of this, should do so as soon as possible.

The event will be livestreamed and a link for watching the livestream will be posted on the Whitestone Solar Farm project webpage of the National Infrastructure Planning website closer to the hearing date. IPs and members of the public who wish to observe the hearing can therefore view and listen to the hearing using the livestream, or view and listen to the recording, after it has concluded.

Registration process

Parties who have registered to speak (both in person and virtually) will receive a joining instruction email shortly before the hearing which will include a link to the virtual event on Microsoft Teams, and a telephone number should they need to participate by telephone. To enable the hearing to start on time at **10.00am** those attending virtually should join promptly at **9.30am** to ensure that all virtual attendees can complete the registration process in good time.

Procedure at ISH

Guidance under the Planning Act 2008 and the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 provides that it is for the ExA to probe, test and assess the evidence through direct questions of persons making oral representations at hearings. Questioning at the hearing will be led by the ExA. Cross questioning of a person giving evidence by another person will only be permitted if the ExA decides it is necessary to ensure representations are adequately tested or that an IP has had a fair chance to put its case.