



CLEVE HILL SOLAR PARK

CLOSING STATEMENT BY THE APPLICANT

November 2019
Revision A

Document Reference: 16.3.1
Submitted: Final Submission

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CLEVE HILL
SOLAR PARK

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1 INTRODUCTION

1. This Closing Statement provides a summary of Cleve Hill Solar Park Ltd's (the Applicant's) submissions made to the Examining Authority (ExA) during the course of the examination of the Cleve Hill Solar Park (the Development) Development Consent Order Application (the DCO Application).
2. Section 105 of the Planning Act 2008 sets out the factors to which the Secretary of State must have regard in deciding this application.
3. This document sets out a summary of the Applicant's case, including the benefits of the Development and compliance with national policy objectives in the context of section 105 of the Planning Act 2008. This Closing Statement does not introduce new or different information, rather it draws attention to submissions made by the Applicant in the DCO Application and throughout the examination. The Applicant hopes that this Closing Statement will assist the Examining Authority and the Secretary of State in the reporting and decision-making process.
4. References to other Application documentation are provided in square brackets where necessary according to the reference system set out in the [Cleve Hill Solar Park Examination Library](#).
5. The following sections are included in this document:
 - Section 105(2) - having regard to important and relevant matters;
 - Section 105(2)(a) - Local Impact Reports;
 - Section 105(2)(b) - any matters prescribed in relation to development of the description to which the application relates;
 - Section 105(2)(c) - any other matters which the Secretary of State thinks are both important and relevant to the Secretary of State's decision;
 - National Policy Statements;
 - The Planning Balance;
 - The Benefits of the Development;
 - How the Principal Issues Identified Have Been Addressed; and
 - Conclusion.

2 SECTION 105(2) - HAVING REGARD TO IMPORTANT AND RELEVANT MATTERS

2.1 Section 105(2)(a) - Local Impact Reports

6. Section 105(2) lists matters the Secretary of State must have regard to. These matters include the local impact reports (LIRs) submitted. These are summarised below, together with Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs) agreed with the relevant councils:
 - Swale Borough Council (SBC) [REP1-005]:
 - Applicant's response [REP2-033];
 - SoCG between the Applicant and SBC [REP4-037].
 - Canterbury City Council (CCC) [REP1-001]:
 - Applicant's response [REP2-035];
 - SoCG between the Applicant and CCC [REP5-014].
 - Kent County Council (KCC) [REP1-004]:
 - Applicant's response [REP2-034];

- SoCG between the Applicant and KCC [REP7-029].

7. The issues raised in the LIRs reflect the 'Principal Issues' discussed in this document, as identified by the ExA. The resolution of those issues and the Applicant's final position is set out in section 6 of this document, and in the SoCG between the Applicant and each council.

2.2 Section 105(2)(b) and (c) - any matters prescribed in relation to development of the description to which the application relates; and any other matters which the Secretary of State thinks are both important and relevant to the Secretary of State's decision

8. As set out in the relevant SoCGs, the Applicant has agreed all issues raised in the LIRs and subsequently by both CCC and KCC, save for minor disagreement with the Applicant's assessments in relation to the precise level of impact in terms of landscape and visual impacts (CCC) and historic landscape impacts (KCC). KCC has also raised some minor points relating to public rights of way.

9. Similarly, the Applicant has reached agreement with SBC save for disagreement in relation to the following matters:

- The relevance of National Planning Policy;
- Compliance with Local Planning Policy;
- Landscape and Visual Impact;
- Residential Amenity;
- Heritage Impacts; and
- Public Rights of Way.

10. The Applicant established a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with the LPAs during the pre-application phase and has engaged proactively and positively with SBC throughout. However, several of the issues raised by SBC during the examination including in the LIR were not raised in earlier consultation (e.g., at PEIR stage, pre-application), including concerns about biodiversity impact, heritage impact, amenity impact and traffic impact. SBC's views contradict the views of other consultees, including statutory bodies with responsibility to advise in relation to these issues such as Natural England, KCC Highways Department and Historic England, who have engaged with and had regard to these issues, as set out in the SoCG agreed with those agencies ([AS-050], [REP7-029] and [REP4-038]).

11. The Applicant has sought to resolve these concerns through responses to the LIR [REP2-033] and responses to other SBC submissions throughout the examination, as well as through discussion on agreement in the SoCG. The Applicant will continue to work positively with SBC, and the other LPAs through the PPA.

12. Section 105(2)(c) provides that the Secretary of State must have regard to any other matters which they think are both important and relevant. These may include the Development's compliance with planning and other policy, starting at the strategic Government level and following to the local level. The Applicant's position in terms of policy compliance in this respect is set out in its Planning Statement [APP-254] and Appendix A of the Statement of Reasons ([REP7-035] and updated in the Final Submission (document reference 16.4.1)).

13. National Policy Statements (NPSs), the Planning Balance, the Benefits of the Development and the Principal Issues are both important and relevant, and these are summarised in the following sections.

3 THE NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENTS

14. Although solar development does not have a technology specific NPS, the Applicant is of the view that NPS EN-1 for Energy, EN-3 for Renewable Energy Infrastructure and EN-5 for Electricity Networks Infrastructure are the relevant NPSs for the determination of this Application, as set out in the Written Representation by the Applicant on NSIP Policy and Procedure [REP2-026].
15. The Planning Statement [APP-254] demonstrates that there is no conflict with the NPS policy and that the Applicant has fully taken into account the guidance contained within the NPSs.
16. The environmental compliance considerations of EN-1 have been considered in detail in both the submitted Environmental Statement (ES) and submissions made during the examination.
17. The Application documents identify that the Applicant has reduced the environmental impacts of the Development as far as is reasonably practicable in consultation with relevant consultees whilst addressing the Need identified (see section 5.1 of this document). The Development is therefore fully compliant with the requirements of Policy EN-1 and fully supported by the NPSs.

4 THE PLANNING BALANCE

18. The Planning Balance test to be applied by the ExA is therefore: Are the benefits of the Development outweighed by the adverse impacts of the Development assessed in the ES as per EN1 paragraph 4.1.3?
19. The Development's benefits are significant at both a national and global scale, relating principally to renewable energy generation and electricity grid management functions, which materially reduce the causes of climate change. There are also local benefits to terrestrial ecology. Adverse impacts are principally local landscape and visual effects, including those on public rights of way through the site, although these have been mitigated as far as practicable. It is clear, therefore, that the benefits of the Development hugely outweigh any adverse impacts identified. Further detail is provided in Sections 5 and 6 of this document.
20. EN-1 provides clear guidance that there is a need for renewable energy generation. The Development is a solar photovoltaic (PV) renewable electricity generating and storage development and as such there is policy support for the Development.
21. EN-1 further requires that substantial weight be given to the contribution that the Development would make towards satisfying the identified energy need.
22. Net Zero and the climate emergency give an increased focus and urgency to the need for renewable energy development.
23. The benefits of the Development are set out in section 5 of this document.
24. The anticipated extent of the Development's contribution to the need for energy generation and the substantial weight to be given to this in line with NPS EN-1 is discussed in the Applicant's Planning Statement [APP-254] and Statement of Need [APP-253].
25. There is an overriding and substantial need for renewable energy development to which Cleve Hill Solar Park makes a very substantial contribution as one of the largest renewable energy developments in the UK. The adverse impacts of the Development have been mitigated as far as is reasonably practicable and enhancements such as biodiversity net gain and a new permissive footpath are proposed. The benefits of the Development clearly outweigh the limited adverse effects.

5 THE BENEFITS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Addressing Need

26. The Applicant has set out its position in relation to the need for the Development in its Needs Statement [APP-253], as supplemented by an Addendum [AS-008], at the Issue Specific Hearing on Need [REP3-014] and in response to comments from Graveney Rural Environment Action Team (GREAT) ([AS-037], [REP3-030] and [REP4-067]).
27. In summary, the Statement of Need explains how 300 - 400 MW of unsubsidised low-carbon solar generation is needed in the UK and that the location of the project site is uniquely suited to the co-location of 300 - 400 MW of electricity storage alongside the solar generation asset.
28. The Statement of Need also explains how the project offers a cost-effective contribution to decarbonising the UK's electricity sector, provides energy security through diversity in supply, will assist the operation of the NETS through its energy storage facility and will lower costs to consumers.
29. The Applicant also noted in its Legal Submissions on the Recent Drax Repower DCO Decision [AS-042] the comments of the Secretary of State on the Drax Repower DCO application relating to the need for development, and weight to be given to "Net Zero" targets. The Applicant's position on these topics are summarised below.
30. *National Policy Statements*
31. In relation to need, the Applicant highlighted that the Secretary of State on the Drax decision had confirmed that:
 - a. the need for energy NSIPs is set out in EN-1;
 - b. the policies in EN-1, including the presumption in favour of granting consent for energy NSIPs have already taken account of the need to achieve security of supply, affordability and decarbonisation at a strategic level;
 - c. it is not necessary to assess the contribution a particular NSIP will make to that identified need or those objectives;
 - d. the general contribution to meeting the identified need and objectives by an NSIP should be given significant weight;
 - e. whilst a number of other schemes may have planning consent, there is no guarantee that they will be delivered; and
 - f. Government does not consider it appropriate for planning policy to set targets for or limits on different technologies.
32. The Applicant notes that in making her decision, the Secretary of State was satisfied that the national need remains, and that in the consideration of the planning balance it overrides the impacts associated with a gas fired generation station. The Applicant's position is that it follows that the same compelling need case exists for low carbon energy NSIPs generally, and particularly this project which makes a valuable contribution to the national energy need.
33. The Applicant acknowledges that solar and energy storage technologies are not included within NPS EN-3, and hence the DCO Application falls to be considered under section 105 of PA 2008. This section states that where no NPS applies, the Secretary of State must have regard to local impact reports, matters prescribed in relation to the type of development proposed, and any other important and relevant matters.

34. As outlined in the Applicant's written representation on NSIP Policy and Procedure [REP2-026], each of EN-1, EN-3 and EN-5 are important and relevant under section 105 to this application, and therefore the DCO Application should be considered as if it fell under them. The NPS policies which are of particular relevance and importance to this examination are set out in the Planning Statement at Paragraphs 59-98[APP-254], and the National Planning Policy Framework at paragraph 5:
- "5. The Framework does not contain specific policies for nationally significant infrastructure projects. These are determined in accordance with the decision making framework in the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and relevant national policy statements for major infrastructure, as well as any other matters that are relevant (which may include the National Planning Policy Framework). National policy statements form part of the overall framework of national planning policy, and may be a material consideration in preparing plans and making decisions on planning applications."*
35. As noted in the Applicant's written representation, this approach was taken by previous Secretaries of State when deciding applications for NSIPs which are not addressed by a specific NPS, including the Glyn Rhonwy Pumped Storage Generating Station Order 2017, the Swansea Bay Tidal Generating Station Order 2015 and the Triton Knoll Electrical System Order 2016, all of which referred to EN-1, EN-3 and/or EN-5.
36. "Net Zero"
37. In relation to the "Net Zero" targets, in June 2019, the UK Government made a legal commitment to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Consensus across industry, academia and international experts, is that achieving net-zero will require radical decarbonisation action across all major energy use sectors, most notably in space heating and transport. The consequence will be that electricity demand will significantly increase (the Net Zero Report by the Committee on Climate Change [REP2-037] expects a doubling of today's UK demand to c. 600 TWh/year in 2050 (page 203)), meaning that UK generation capacity will also need to grow to meet demand, and critically with low carbon emissions capacity that enables the net zero target to be met.
38. Approximately 30 GW of existing UK generation is scheduled to close by 2030, meaning that this generation (of which 8 GW is low-carbon nuclear generation nearing the expected end of its operational life) needs to be replaced before any increases in end-use electricity can be met.
39. New low-carbon generation must very soon be brought to market in an affordable and efficient way, to ensure that decarbonisation targets are realised without harming the UK economy. This includes the generation of low-carbon electricity, as well as the integration technologies which help match supply with demand, and operate the GB electricity system safely and securely at all times.
40. Cleve Hill Solar Park, if consented, will deliver large-scale, subsidy free, solar PV and energy storage assets, with each expecting to have a capacity in the region of 300 - 400 MW. Cleve Hill Solar Park is a fully deliverable project, it has the right: technologies, scale, location and investment, to make meaningful and timely contributions to GB decarbonisation and security of supply, whilst helping towards lowering consumer bills. Cleve Hill Solar Park would address key aspects of emerging Government policy on need and support the UK's international climate commitments.

5.2 Biodiversity Enhancement / Net Gain

41. As well as the provision of substantial renewable electricity generation capacity, the Development includes substantial biodiversity net gain (65%) as reported in the Biodiversity Metric report submitted [REP4-052].

42. The Applicant established a Habitat Management Steering Group during the pre-application phase, and has met regularly with the group which includes Natural England, the Environment Agency, Kent Wildlife Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to discuss mitigation and enhancement proposals.
43. The mitigation and enhancement proposals are secured by DCO Requirements 5 and 6 relating to the Outline Landscape and Biodiversity Management Plan (LBMP) [REP7-013]. The change of land use from intensive arable cultivation and the cessation of input of agricultural chemicals to the habitats proposed in the Outline LBMP will result in improvements in water quality, greater habitat and species diversity, the creation of local biodiversity action plan habitats such as lowland meadow and will ensure that the small number of adverse impacts identified will be fully mitigated. These improvements will occur onsite, but will also benefit adjacent areas.

5.3 Permissive Footpath

44. The Applicant has undertaken an iterative consultation process over a consultation area of 12,800 local properties and business as well as with a number of statutory consultees and local interest groups.
45. As part of the pre-application consultation in June 2018, the Applicant consulted on proposals for additional footpaths, cycleways and bridleways around and through the site.
46. Following consultation, the Applicant included in the Development design a permissive footpath which connects existing footpaths to the south and north of the site and creates a new direct, off-road route between Graveney and the North Kent Coast.

5.4 Socio-economic

47. The Development will make a substantial business rate contribution to the local economy, estimated to be c. £1 million per year.
48. In addition, the dDCO (Revision I) includes Requirement 16, which requires that a skills, supply chain and employment plan is submitted ahead of construction. This plan will identify opportunities for individuals and businesses to access employment and supply chain opportunities associated with the construction, operation and maintenance of the Development.
49. An outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan was submitted to the examination at Deadline 5 [REP5-026].

6 HOW THE PRINCIPAL ISSUES IDENTIFIED HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

50. The Applicant has carried out a full Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.
51. The Examining Authority identified ten 'Principal Issues' in the Rule 6 letter [PD-003]. The Applicant has set out how each of these Principal Issues and further issues raised during the examination have been addressed in the following sections.

6.1 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation (including Habitats Regulations Assessment)

52. The key statutory consultee in respect of nature conservation matters is Natural England. The local planning authorities deferred to Natural England on nature conservation matters related to designated sites (see LIRs and SoCGs referred to in Section 2).

53. The Applicant has agreed all relevant matters of concern with Natural England in a SoCG [AS-050]. This agreement of all issues confirms Natural England's advice that there will be no Adverse Impact on Integrity of the Swale Special Protection Area or any other designated site from the Development.
54. The Applicant has provided mitigation and enhancement proposals to the satisfaction of Natural England in an Outline LBMP [REP7-013], which is secured by DCO Requirements 5 and 6. In that document, the Applicant has committed to implement, manage, monitor and refine the management of the habitats proposed in consultation with the Habitat Management Steering Group (HMSG) which will be chaired by a representative of the host local planning authorities, and includes representatives from:
- Natural England;
 - Environment Agency;
 - Kent Wildlife Trust;
 - Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; and
 - Cleve Hill Solar Park Ltd.
55. The Applicant has demonstrated that the Development will result in biodiversity net gain (quantified according to the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric as 65% gain) [REP4-052].

6.2 Compulsory Acquisition

56. The Applicant is seeking powers of compulsory acquisition. Section 122 of the Planning Act 2008 provides that the Secretary of State may only make an order which includes powers of compulsory acquisition if he or she is satisfied that the conditions in section 122 (2) and (3) are met. These tests are supplemented by *Planning Act 2008: guidance related to procedures for the compulsory acquisition of land*.
57. The condition in section 122(2) is that the land (subject to the application for powers of compulsory acquisition) is required for the development to which the development consent relates or is required to facilitate or is incidental to that development.
58. The condition in section 123(3) is that there is a compelling case in the public interest for the land to be acquired compulsorily. The Applicant set out in its Statement of Reasons [APP-019] why it considers that the DCO Application meets both the conditions in sections 122(2) and (3).
59. The Applicant asserts that the conditions in sections 123(2) and (3) are met at the close of the examination. The Applicant has made significant progress in coming to agreement with many of the persons affected by the application for powers of compulsory acquisition and has reached agreement with 91% of all parties.

6.3 Cultural Heritage

60. The key statutory consultees in respect of heritage matters are Historic England and KCC.
61. The Applicant has agreed matters with Historic England in a SoCG [REP4-038]. There is some residual disagreement on the precise level of impact at a small number of receptors, however the Applicant and Historic England agree that in all cases, the level of harm is assessed as 'less than substantial'.
62. The Applicant has agreed an archaeological Outline Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) [REP4-011] with KCC. There is some residual disagreement in the SoCG with KCC [REP7-029] on the precise level of impact on historic landscape, and KCC has deferred to Historic England and the district authorities on this matter, none of whom has raised any issues specifically related to historic landscape in their written representations, SoCG or LIRs.

6.4 Draft Development Consent Order (dDCO)

63. The Applicant has revised the dDCO as required throughout the examination to address comments made by the ExA and Interested Parties.
64. The Applicant has consulted SBC on the wording of relevant Requirements (e.g., [AS-039]) and has included additional Requirements following the Application submission (dDCO, Revision I) and in response to issues arising during the examination of the Application relating to:
- Requirement 3 - Battery Safety Management;
 - Requirement 16 - Local Skills, Supply Chain and Employment;
 - Requirement 17 - Decommissioning; and
 - Requirement 20 - Consultation.
65. The dDCO is demonstrated to secure the mitigation required by the ES in the Mitigation Route Map [REP7-025].
66. The key aspects of the design of the Development are set out in the Outline Design Principles (ODP), which is secured by Requirement 2 - detailed design, of the dDCO. The ODPs secure the Development parameters which if altered, have the potential to affect the worst-case design of the Development. This approach was taken in accordance with relevant case law in relation to the application of the Rochdale Envelope (as set out in PINS Advice Note Nine: Rochdale Envelope).
67. The ODPs have been discussed throughout the examination and whilst the list of parameters is not intended to be an exhaustive list of the parameters of the Development, where requested the Applicant has added to the list of parameters, and included the candidate design in the ODPs in order to give SBC the ability to compare the detailed design of the Development to the design assessed in the ES ensuring that the impacts of the 'as-built' Development are the same, or of a lesser magnitude than those assessed in the ES.

6.5 Environmental Statement – General

68. The ES was produced in accordance with the EIA Scoping Report [APP-198] and the EIA Scoping Opinion received [APP-199]. Each technical chapter of the ES ([APP-037] to [APP-048]) sets out the scoping opinion received in respect of that discipline, and how comments have been addressed.
69. The Applicant has received questions relating to the ES throughout the examination, and has sought to provide thorough and helpful responses at each juncture, including in:
- The Applicant's Response to the ExA's First Written Questions [REP2-006];
 - The Applicant's Response to the ExA's Further Written Questions [REP4-020]; and
 - The Applicant's Response to the ExA's Rule 17 Request [REP7-030].
70. The questions, and discussion at the hearings has led to a detailed Mitigation Route Map document being submitted [REP7-025] to address comments made by the ExA, which captures all mitigation proposed in the ES and how it has been secured in the DCO.
71. The ES for the DCO Application has been subject to clarification notes in respect of the following:
- Development Description Clarification Note confirming the definition of maintenance works considered as part of the Development Description following a request by the MMO [AS-028];

- Climate Change Chapter Clarification Note, updating the Climate Change baseline in the ES following the publication of United Kingdom Climate Projections 2018 in November 2018 (following Application submission); and
- ES Clarification Note, removing the northern on-site access route option, providing an update to the ES to demonstrate that the assessments have already considered the worst-case and that no change to assessments is required.

72. No ES assessment outcomes have been required to be updated during the examination.

6.6 Landscape and Visual Effects

73. Landscape and visual impacts are assessed in Chapter 7 - LVIA of the ES [APP-037]. The assessment concludes, at paragraph 480, that:

"While the large scale and extent of the Development are acknowledged, the overall effects of the Development on landscape and visual amenity are limited to a small geographical area and a small number of visual receptors."

74. KCC has not commented on landscape and visual matters, but the local planning authorities SBC and CCC have set out that they disagree with the Applicant's assessment and feel that the landscape and visual impacts of the Development are greater than assessed.

75. The Applicant respectfully disagrees and has continued to provide additional detailed supporting information throughout the examination as requested by the ExA, such as cross sections [REP5-025] / [REP4-033] to help demonstrate the acceptability of the landscape and visual effects as summarised in the extract from Chapter 7, above.

6.7 Noise

76. SBC Environmental Health Department are the key consultee in respect of noise and vibration considerations. The SBC LIR (section 6.10 [REP1-005]) and the SoCG between the Applicant and SBC (paragraph 3 [REP4-037]) confirm that the Applicant and SBC are fully in agreement that noise and vibration issues have been adequately addressed.

6.8 Socio-economic

77. As well as the substantial business rate contribution of the Development, the dDCO (Revision I) includes Requirement 16, local skills supply chain and employment which requires that a skills, supply chain and employment plan is submitted ahead of construction. This plan will identify opportunities for individuals and businesses to access employment and supply chain opportunities associated with the construction, operation and maintenance of the Development.

78. An outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan was submitted to the examination at Deadline 5 [REP5-026].

79. The Applicant has reached agreement with KCC public rights of way officers on public access related matters, as set out in the SoCG between the Applicant and KCC [REP7-029]. The creation of a new permissive footpath is included in the proposals which connects existing footpaths to the south and north of the site and creates a new direct, off-road route between Graveney and the North Kent Coast.

6.9 Traffic and Transport

80. The Applicant has reached agreement with KCC Highways, the local highway authority, on all highway related matters, including agreement on the content of the Outline CTMP [REP7-021], as set out in the SoCG between the Applicant and KCC [REP7-029].

6.10 Water Flooding and Coastal Defence

81. The Applicant has taken advice from the Environment Agency (EA), as the UK's statutory body with responsibility for flood defence, since September 2018. The Applicant has used the data provided by the EA, and modelling undertaken on their behalf using the best available data (as reported in the flood risk assessment [APP-227]) to inform the design of the Development. A SoCG was agreed with the EA in May 2019 [AS-017].
82. Requirement 17 of the dDCO (Revision I) secures the ability for the EA to undertake a "managed realignment" at Cleve Hill no earlier than the 40th anniversary of final commissioning of the Development, as is also proposed under the 'no solar park' scenario in the Medway Estuary and Swale Strategy (MEASS).
83. The Development represents the best option for decarbonisation at the Cleve Hill site. Evidence of this was presented in a written representation submitted by the Applicant at Deadline 3 [REP3-025], which provides a comparison between managed realignment on the site and the Development, finding greater decarbonisation benefits as a result of the Development.

6.11 Other issues raised during the examination

84. During the examination, interested parties have raised concerns in relation to ensuring the safety of the energy storage facility which forms part of the Development.
85. The Applicant has included Requirement 3 (battery safety) in the dDCO and has produced an accompanying Outline Battery Safety Management Plan [REP6-021] in consultation with Kent Fire and Rescue Service and the Health and Safety Executive (including document review). The Outline BSMP sets out relevant legislation, and UK and international guidance applicable to energy storage facilities to ensure safe operation, and goes beyond this to set out a comprehensive and wide ranging suite of information requirements to be set out in the final document to provide decision makers and the local community with robust and detailed evidence demonstrating how the energy storage component of the Development would be safely designed, constructed and operated.

7 CONCLUSION

86. The Application is in accordance with NPSs EN-1, EN-3 and EN-5 for the reasons set out in this closing submission and other submissions to the examination.
87. The Applicant has addressed all of the issues raised in the Local Impact Reports (Section 105 (2)(a)), other matters prescribed in relation to the Development and other matters raised by the ExA (Section 105 (2)(b) and (c)).
88. Matters likely to be considered important and relevant to the decision (Section 105 (2)(c)) include the NPSs, the planning balance, the need for the Development and how principal issues have been addressed.
89. Substantial weight should be afforded to the Development's contribution to satisfying the need identified in NPS EN-1 as amplified in the Needs Statement [APP-253], as supplemented by an Addendum [AS-008], at the Issue Specific Hearing on Need [REP3-014] and in response to comments from GREAT ([AS-037], [REP3-030] and [REP4-067]).
90. The need for the Development, along with the other benefits of the Development, is not outweighed by the adverse impacts of the Development, and the Planning Balance is therefore strongly in favour of granting consent for the Development.

91. The Development is the first solar PV with energy storage NSIP to reach the 'decision' stage and as such there has been significant industry and media attention on how the application has progressed through examination, and interest in the ultimate decision on the DCO Application. All solar PV with energy storage projects have been consented to date under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, but have been necessarily capped at less than 50 MW. In the same period, solar PV and energy storage projects in Europe and globally have typically been larger, and those countries have consequently enjoyed significant international investment. There are similar developments at the NSIP pre-application stage (*e.g.*, Sunnica Energy Farm (EN010106), and Little Crow Solar Park (EN010101)), and further potential schemes not yet in the public domain. Therefore, the grant of consent for this Development offers the Secretary of State the opportunity to unlock, and provide confidence to, a new era of large scale solar PV and energy storage in the UK. This opportunity is fundamental to the future of the UK's low carbon energy supply, in accordance with the legal framework and targets established via government policy such as "Net Zero". It is also the key to economic growth associated with the renewable energy industry, through increased appetite to invest in and finance, solar and energy storage NSIPs, and the associated supply chain.
92. The Applicant therefore respectfully requests that Cleve Hill Solar Park is approved in accordance with Section 105 of the Planning Act, and that the DCO is made in line with the dDCO (Revision I).