



Stonestreet Green Solar

Statement of Commonality

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Deadline 1
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EP Rule 8(1)(b)
Planning Act 2008
The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010



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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Statement of Commonality

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Commonality (the Statement) has been prepared to provide the Examining Authority (ExA) with a summary of the latest position regarding the negotiation of Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs) between the Applicant, relevant statutory consultees and other parties in relation to Stonestreet Green Solar (the Project).
- 1.1.2 The Rule 6 Letter [\[PD-004\]](#) dated 22 October 2024 requires the submission of SoCGs to inform the ExA and all other parties on matters where there is agreement and where differences lie at an early stage in the Examination process. The Rule 6 Letter requests that these are accompanied by an Issues Tracker (this Statement) detailing the progression of discussions.
- 1.1.3 Annex D of the Rule 6 Letter identifies the following parties with which the Applicant has sought to develop SoCGs:
- Ashford Borough Council (ABC) [\[RR-018\]](#);
 - Environment Agency (EA) [\[RR-086\]](#);
 - Historic England (HE) [\[RR-099\]](#);
 - Kent County Council (KCC) [\[RR-156\]](#);
 - National Grid Electricity Transmission PLC (NGET) [\[RR-203\]](#).
 - National Highways (NH) [\[RR-205\]](#);
 - Natural England (NE) [\[RR-206\]](#);
 - Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (NR) [\[RR-207\]](#);
- 1.1.4 This Statement is to be treated as an iterative document throughout the Examination and will be updated and submitted at subsequent deadlines to provide an up to date overview of the latest position on the SoCGs.

1.2 Structure of this Statement

- 1.2.1 This Statement is structured as follows:
- Section 2 sets out the status of each SoCG;
 - Section 3 provides a summary of where agreement has been reached with each party;
 - Section 4 provides details of any steps to be taken to progress outstanding matters towards resolution.

2 Status of the SoCGs

2.1 Overview at Deadline 1

2.1.1 This section provides an overview of the progression of each SoCG at Deadline 1 and will be updated to reflect their current status at each Examination deadline.

2.1.2 Table 2-1 identifies the status of each SoCG, categorised as follows:

- **SoCG in draft** – where a SoCG has been drafted (with matters recorded as agreed, ongoing and not agreed) and is subject to further discussions to resolve any outstanding matters;
- **Final signed SoCG** – where a final position has been reached on all matters, as either agreed or not agreed positions.

Table 2-1: Status of SoCGs at Deadline 1

Party	Status of SoCG at Deadline 1
Ashford Borough Council	SoCG in draft
Kent County Council	SoCG in draft
National Grid	SoCG in draft
Network Rail	SoCG in draft
Environment Agency	SoCG in draft, all matters agreed subject to Environment Agency review of submitted updates
Historic England	SoCG in draft, all matters agreed
Natural England	SoCG in draft, all matters agreed
National Highways	SoCG in draft, all matters agreed subject to National Highways review of submitted DCO update

3 Commonality

3.1 Summary

- 3.1.1 This section of this Statement provides a summary of the topics covered in the SoCGs submitted at Deadline 1. It shows where there is commonality in the matters discussed between the Applicant and the various parties, and shows where matters have reached a final agreed position.
- 3.1.2 Table 3-1 lists out the topics covered in each of the SoCGs and the status for each stakeholder, where applicable. Where a topic is not relevant to a particular party the cell has been greyed out.
- 3.1.3 The Rule 6 Letter requests that for areas under discussion, each party flags their estimation as to the likelihood that disagreement will remain by the closure of Examination, as set out below and in each individual SoCG.

Key

	All matters agreed
	Low likelihood that matter will not be resolved
	Medium likelihood that matter will not be resolved
	High likelihood that matter will not be resolved
	Matter not discussed with that party

Table 3-1: Topics Raised by National Grid and Network Rail

Topics	SoCG Party	
	National Grid	Network Rail
Grid connection		
dDCO		
Protective Provisions of assets		
Compulsory acquisition and temporary possession of land		

Table 3-2: Topics Raised by the Environment Agency, National Highways, Historic England and Natural England

Topics		SoCG Party			
		Environment Agency	National Highways	Historic England	Natural England
General	Policy compliance				
	Access to Aldington Flood Storage Area (AFSA)				
	Effects on international and national designated sites				
Water	FRA assessment				
	Outline OSWDS				
	AFSA Risk Assessment				
	Drainage Strategy				
	WFD Assessment				

Biodiversity & Landscape	Environmental permit				
	Outline LEMP and design principles				
	Outline CEMP				
	Impacts on species and woodland				
Air quality	Air Quality Assessment				
Transport	Traffic Assessment				
	Outline CTMP, DTMP, dDCO				
Heritage	Historic Environment Assessment				
	Impact on Designated Heritage Assets				

Table 3-3: Topics Raised by Local Authorities

Topics		SoCG Party	
		Ashford Borough Council	Kent County Council
General	Principle of Development		
	Scale of development		
	Compliance with NPS Policy		
	Consideration of Alternatives		
	Good Design		
	Economic and Social Effects		
	DCO, including Schedule 2 Requirements		
Highway and transportation	Traffic and Assessment		

Topics		SoCG Party	
		Ashford Borough Council	Kent County Council
PRoW	Outline RoWAS		
Landscape	Scope and assessment		
	Landscape Strategy		
	Outline LEMP		
	Outline CEMP, DEMP		
	Cumulative landscape effects		
Water	SuDs		
Cultural Heritage	Built Heritage		
	Archaeology		
Cumulative Assessment	Scope of the assessment, and long list of schemes		

4 Summary of Ongoing Positions

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 This section provides an overview of the matters identified in Table 3-1 that remain unresolved at Deadline 1 with each of the parties and sets out how the Applicant is intending to progress matters with those parties with the intention of reaching a final agreed position before the close of the Examination.

4.2 Ashford Borough Council (Doc Ref. 8.3.1)

4.2.1 The Applicant has had a Planning Performance Agreement with ABC since May 2023, which has allowed for extensive engagement during the pre-application stage, and continued engagement in the Examination stage.

4.2.2 The Applicant has been in active discussions with ABC and the SoCG has been updated a number of times during the post submission stage (see Appendix 1 for further details). Agreement has been reached on a number of matters, with outstanding matters relating to the following topics:

- Need and principle of development (Table 2.1): ABC question the scale and size of the development. The Applicant has responded to these matters and awaits ABC's response.
- Planning Policy (Table 2.2): ABC considers the Project does not comply with the relevant National Policy Statements (EN-1 and EN-3). The Applicant has responded to these matters and awaits ABC's response.
- Landscape Character and Visual Amenity (Table 2.3): ABC considers that the Project does not minimise impacts on the landscape by providing reasonable mitigation where possible and appropriate. The Applicant has responded to these matters and awaits ABC's response.
- Cumulative Landscape Effects (Table 2-3) : ABC contend that different effects should have been identified as compared to those which have been identified in **ES Volume 2, Chapter 8: Landscape and Views (Doc Ref. 5.2(A))** [[AS-012](#)] and **ES Volume 2, Chapter 17: Cumulative Assessment (Doc Ref. 5.2)** [[APP-041](#)]. The Applicant has requested further clarification on this point and await ABC's response.

4.2.3 The Applicant has sought and continues to seek an opportunity to discuss the outstanding matters with ABC, however, a response from ABC has not yet been provided. The Applicant looks forward to receiving this and will be in a position to update the SoCG once further discussions have been held with ABC regarding the outstanding matters.

4.3 Environment Agency (Doc Ref. 8.3.2)

- 4.3.1 The Applicant has been in active discussions with the EA and the SoCG has been updated a number of times during the post submission stage (see Appendix 1 for further details). Agreement has been reached on a number of matters, with outstanding matters relating to the following topics:
- Updates to the **Outline LEMP (Doc Ref. 7.10(A))** and **Design Principles (Doc Ref. 7.5(A))**: The EA has requested further details, which the Applicant has provided at Deadline 1. Agreement is anticipated in advance of Deadline 3.
 - Aldington Flood Storage Area: The EA has requested further details regarding the proposed cable route and access to its assets, which the Applicant has provided at Deadline 1. Agreement is anticipated in advance of Deadline 3.
 - Outline OSWDS: The EA has requested further details, which the Applicant has provided at Deadline 1. Agreement is anticipated in advance of Deadline 3.
 - Flood Storage Calculations: The EA has requested further details, which the Applicant has provided at Deadline 1. Agreement is anticipated in advance of Deadline 3.
- 4.3.2 The Applicant will continue to discuss these matters with EA and progress will be reported at Deadline 2.

4.4 Historic England (Doc Ref. 8.3.3)

- 4.4.1 The Applicant has been in active discussions with Historic England and the SoCG now reflects that the Parties have reached an agreed position on all matters. Agreement was reached on 6 December 2024, however, the parties are yet to formally sign the SoCG. A signed version of the SoCG is anticipated to be submitted into the Examination at Deadline 2.

4.5 Kent County Council (Doc Ref. 8.3.4)

- 4.5.1 The Applicant has had a Planning Performance Agreement with KCC since May 2023, which has allowed for extensive engagement during the pre-application stage, and continued engagement in the Examination stage.
- 4.5.2 The Applicant has been in active discussions with KCC and the SoCG has been updated a number of times during the post submission stage (see Appendix 1 for further details). Agreement has been reached on a number of matters, with outstanding matters relating to the following topics:
- Impacts to Public Rights of Way ('PRoW') (Table 2.3): The Parties are making constructive progress in resolving a number of detailed matters. Agreement is anticipated before the end of Examination.
 - Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) (Table 2.4): KCC have requested further details, which the Applicant has provided at Deadline 1. Agreement is anticipated in advance of Deadline 3.

- Heritage (Table 2.6): The Parties are continuing to discuss archaeological matters and progress will be reported at Deadline 2.
- Biodiversity (Table 2.7): KCC have requested further details in relation to the skylark mitigation, which the Applicant has provided at Deadline 1. Agreement is anticipated in advance of Deadline 3.

4.5.3 The Applicant will continue to discuss these matters with KCC and progress will be reported at Deadline 2.

4.6 National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (Doc Ref. 8.3.5)

4.6.1 The Applicant has been in active discussions with National Grid Electricity Transmission plc ('NGET') and the SoCG has been reviewed (see Appendix 1 for further details). The outstanding matters are summarised as follows:

- The **Draft DCO (Doc Ref. 3.1(B))**, including protective provisions: Discussions have been ongoing between the Applicant and NGET regarding the protective provisions since early 2023. The version of the draft protective provisions as at the date of submission of the Application is included in Part 5 of Schedule 13 to the **Draft DCO (Doc Ref. 3.1(B))**.
- Acquisition of land and rights: The Applicant and UKPN have been engaging with NGET. Discussions relate to the agreement of the protective provisions noted above.

4.6.2 The Applicant will continue to discuss these matters with NGET and progress will be reported at Deadline 2.

4.7 National Highways (Doc Ref. 8.3.6)

4.7.1 The Applicant has been in active discussions with National Highways and the SoCG has been updated a number of times during the post submission stage (see Appendix 1 for further details). Agreement has been reached on most matters, with the remaining matter relating to a clarification of the definition of the 'relevant highway authority' within the **Draft DCO (Doc Ref. 3.1(B))** so that it is clear that National Highways would be included. National Highways are reviewing this definition and the Applicant anticipates that this matter will be agreed in advance of Deadline 2.

4.8 Natural England (Doc Ref. 8.3.7)

4.8.1 The Applicant has been in active discussions with Natural England and the SoCG now reflects that the Parties have reached an agreed position on all matters. Agreement was reached on 10 December 2024, however, the parties are yet to formally sign the SoCG. A signed version of the SoCG will be submitted into the Examination at Deadline 2.

4.9 Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (Doc Ref. 8.3.8)

- 4.9.1 The Applicant has been in active discussions with Network Rail ('NR') and the SoCG has been reviewed (see Appendix 1 for further details). The outstanding matters are summarised as follows:
- The **Draft DCO (Doc Ref. 3.1 (B))**, including protective provisions: Discussions have been ongoing between the Applicant and NR regarding the protective provisions since early 2023. The version of the draft protective provisions as at the date of submission of the Application is included in Part 7 of Schedule 13 to the **Draft DCO (Doc Ref. 3.1 (B))**.
 - Acquisition of land and rights: The Applicant and UKPN have been engaging with NR's Asset Protection Team. Discussions relate to the agreement of the protective provisions noted above.
- 4.9.2 The Applicant will continue to discuss these matters with NR and progress will be reported at Deadline 2.