

Springwell Solar Farm

Draft Statement of Common Ground –
Exolum Pipeline System Ltd

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (“SoCG”) has been prepared in respect of the application for the proposed Springwell Solar Farm Development Consent Order (“the Application”) made by Springwell Energyfarm Ltd (“the Applicant”) to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero under section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 (“PA 2008”).
- 1.1.2 Springwell Solar Farm is a proposed new solar farm and battery storage facility located in North Kesteven, Lincolnshire. The proposals also include infrastructure to connect Springwell to the National Grid, as well as any necessary supporting site infrastructure and environmental mitigation, including landscaping and ecological planting (“the Proposed Development”).
- 1.1.3 The SoCG is being submitted to the Examining Authority as an agreed draft between both parties. It will be amended as the examination progresses in order to enable a final version to be submitted to the Examining Authority.

1.2 Parties to this Statement of Common Ground

- 1.2.1 This SoCG has been prepared by the Applicant and Exolum Pipeline System Ltd.
- 1.2.2 Exolum Pipeline System Ltd are a statutory stakeholder defined for the Springwell Solar Farm Development Consent Order application.
- 1.2.3 Collectively, the Applicant and Exolum Pipeline System Ltd are referred to as ‘the parties.’

1.3 Purpose of this document

- 1.3.1 This Statement of Common Ground (‘SoCG’) is being submitted to the Examining Authority as an agreed draft between both parties. This SoCG is a ‘live’ document and will be amended as the examination progresses in order to enable a final version to be submitted to the Examining Authority.
- 1.3.2 The SoCG has been prepared in accordance with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities’ Guidance on the examination stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (‘DLUHC Guidance’).
- 1.3.3 Paragraph 007 of the DLUHC Guidance comments that:
“A Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) is a written statement prepared jointly by the applicant and another party or parties, setting out any matters on which they agree, or indeed disagree. A SoCG helps to ensure that the evidence at the examination focuses on the material differences between

the main parties and therefore makes best use of the lines of questioning pursued by the Examining Authority”.

- 1.3.4 The aim of this SoCG is, therefore, to provide a clear position of the progress and agreement met or not yet met between Exolum Pipeline System Ltd and the Applicant on matters relating to the Application.
- 1.3.5 The document will be updated as more information becomes available and as a result of ongoing discussions between the Applicant and Exolum Pipeline System Ltd.
- 1.3.6 The SoCG is intended to provide information for the examination process, facilitate a smooth and efficient examination, and manage the amount of material that needs to be submitted.
- 1.3.7 This SoCG does not seek to replicate information which is available elsewhere within the Application documents. All documents are available in the deposit locations and/or the Planning Inspectorate website.
- 1.3.8 Once finalised, the SoCG will be submitted to the Examining Authority concerning the Application under section 37 of the PA 2008 for an order granting development consent for the Proposed Development.

1.4 Terminology

- 1.4.1 In the table in the issues chapter of this SoCG:
 - “Agreed” indicates where an issue has been resolved.
 - “Not Agreed” indicates a position where both parties have reached a final position that a matter cannot be agreed between them.
 - “Under Discussion” indicates where points continue to be the subject of on-going discussions between parties.

2. Description of the Proposed Development

2.1. Introduction

- 2.1.1. The Applicant confirms that the Proposed Development comprises the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) array electricity generating facility with a total capacity exceeding 50 megawatts (MW), a Battery Energy Storage system (BESS) with an import and export connection to the National Grid.
- 2.1.2. The DCO would, amongst other things, authorise the Applicant to construct, operate and maintain the Proposed Development. The principal components of the Proposed Development include:
- Solar PV development including;
 - Ground-mounted Solar PV generating station. The generating station will include Solar PV modules and mounting structures;
 - Balance of Solar System (BoSS), which comprises inverters, transformers, and switchgear;
 - 400kV Grid Connection Corridor to connect the Springwell Substation and proposed National Grid Navenby Substation;
 - Satellite Collector Compounds comprising switchgear, transformers, ancillary equipment and operation, maintenance, security and welfare units;
 - A project substation (the ‘Springwell Substation’) compound, which will include substation, main collector compound, switching and control equipment, office/control/welfare/security buildings, storage areas, and provisions for vehicular parking and material laydown;
 - Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) compound, including batteries and associated inverters, transformers, switchgear and ancillary equipment and their containers, enclosures, monitoring systems, air conditioning, electrical cables, fire safety infrastructure and operation, maintenance, security and welfare facilities;
 - Underground cabling will connect the Solar PV modules and BESS compound to the BoSS, collector compounds, and the Springwell Substation.
 - Ancillary infrastructure works, including boundary treatments, security equipment, earthing devices, fencing, lighting, earthworks, surface water management, internal tracks and any other works identified as necessary to enable the development;
 - Landscaping, habitat management, biodiversity enhancement and amenity improvements; and
 - Works to facilitate vehicular access to the Site.

3. Record of Engagement

3.1. Summary of consultation

- 3.1.1. The parties have been engaged in consultation throughout the early stages of the Proposed Development. Table 1 shows a summary of key engagement that has taken place between the Applicant and Exolum Pipeline System Limited in relation to the Application.

Table 1 – Record of Engagement

Date	Form of correspondence	Key topics discussed and key outcomes
16/01/23	Non-Statutory Consultation Feedback	Contact information for future engagement and collaboration for any works to take place. Map of assets to take into consideration. Objection to the project by Exolum Pipeline System Limited due to close proximity to their assets.
16/06/23	Meeting	Introduction of the project, the design and current considerations of Exolum Pipeline System Limited assets.
12/12/24	Email	Email to Exolum Pipeline System Limited from the Applicant advising of dates for statutory consultation and offering a meeting on updated proposals.
18/01/24	Statutory Consultation Feedback	Objection to the project by Exolum Pipeline System Limited
17/05/24	Email	Email to Exolum Pipeline System Limited from the Applicant acknowledging objection to the scheme during statutory consultation and offering a meeting on updated proposals.
May-Oct 2024	Emails	Emails between Exolum Pipeline System Limited and the Applicant to organise a meeting.

4. Current Position

Position of the Applicant and Exolum Pipeline System Ltd.

- 4.1.1. The following tables set out the position of the Applicant and Exolum Pipeline System Ltd, following a series of meetings and discussions with respect to the key areas of the Proposed Development. This includes matters where discussions are ongoing.
- 4.1.2. As noted above, this is a ‘live’ document, and some aspects have yet to be agreed upon between both parties. The intention is to provide a final position in subsequent versions of the SoCG, addressing and identifying where changes have been made, and ultimately, documenting agreement by both parties on relevant points.

Table 2 – Topics Discussed

Ref.	Description of Matter	Stakeholder Comment	Applicant’s Response	Status
1	Easements	Easements of 3m either side of the pipeline (from centreline) – 6m total	Agreed	Agreed
2	Working Areas	Nominal excavation and working areas for maintenance – these include some flexibility, which should be discussed and agreed in preparation for works on site.	Reasonable working areas will be built into the design through discussion and agreement and in line with statutory requirements	Agreed
3	Cathodic Monitoring & Protection	Some equipment and cable rating (kV) may trigger the need for cathodic monitoring or protection	The design will consider this and avoid where reasonably practicable.	Agreed
4	Road and Cable Crossing Exolum Pipeline System Limited Assets	Road / cable / data crossings need special consideration e.g. buried	Road and cable crossings will build in all appropriate offsets and margins, using suitable methods of protection for	Agreed

		slabs etc. and might be best combined in the same location(s). All services to be routed underneath the pipeline by at least 1200mm	both Applicant and Exolum Pipeline System Limited's assets. Crossings will be perpendicular where reasonably practicable.	
5	Exact Location of Assets	Exact location of the Exolum Pipeline System Limited's assets to be determined prior to build	Location of the assets to be determined as soon as practicable within the design phase, prior to construction.	Agreed
6	Protective Provisions	PPs are in progress and to be agreed	PPs are in progress and to be agreed.	In progress

Entries above to be reviewed once PPs are in place to minimise the repetition and sources of confusion / conflict. PPs take precedence over the draft SOCG.



Signatures

This Statement of Common Ground is agreed upon:

On behalf of Exolum Pipeline System Ltd

Name:

Signature:

Date:

On behalf of the Applicant

Name:

Signature:

Date:

