

**East Park Energy Development Consent Order (EN010141) – Procedural questions on the conduct and scope of the examination**

Dear Examining Authority,

Stop East Park Energy (SEPE) confirms that representatives intend to attend the Preliminary Meeting scheduled for 17 March 2026.

Having reviewed the Rule 6 letter and the draft examination timetable, SEPE would welcome clarification on a number of procedural matters relating to the proposed structure and scope of the examination.

Given the number of issues identified below, and recognising that speaking time at the Preliminary Meeting may necessarily be limited, SEPE is providing these questions in writing in advance so that the Examining Authority may consider them when finalising the examination timetable and hearing arrangements.

SEPE understands that the purpose of the Preliminary Meeting is to discuss how the application will be examined, rather than the merits of the proposed development. The questions below therefore relate solely to procedural matters and the scope of the examination.

The intention in submitting these questions is to assist the Examining Authority in ensuring that the examination provides sufficient opportunity for the principal issues raised within the Environmental Statement and within Relevant Representations and Written Representations to be properly explored where necessary.

**Scope and adequacy of Issue Specific Hearings**

The draft examination timetable currently proposes two Issue Specific Hearings (ISH): one concerning the draft Development Consent Order and general principles of the proposed development, and one concerning Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, soil and construction traffic.

Given the breadth of topics addressed within the Environmental Statement and the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues, SEPE would welcome clarification of the following:

1. Does the Examining Authority consider that the currently proposed hearing structure provides sufficient opportunity for all principal issues identified in the

Initial Assessment of Principal Issues to be examined through oral hearings where necessary?

2. Does the Examining Authority currently anticipate holding additional Issue Specific Hearings on other principal topics (for example landscape and visual impact, ecology, heritage assets, socio-economic effects, or cumulative impacts) should written submissions indicate that further oral examination would be beneficial?
3. What criteria has the Examining Authority applied in determining the initial scope of Issue Specific Hearings within the draft timetable?
4. Will Interested Parties be able to request the convening of additional Issue Specific Hearings later in the examination should written representations or responses to the Examining Authority's written questions identify matters that would benefit from oral examination?

### **Structure of Issue Specific Hearings covering multiple topics**

The draft timetable indicates that ISH2 may cover several topics within a single hearing.

5. Where an Issue Specific Hearing addresses multiple topics, does the Examining Authority intend to structure the agenda so that each topic is considered separately with opportunities for Interested Parties to make oral submissions on each topic individually?
6. If an Interested Party has registered interest in more than one topic within the same hearing, will they be permitted to speak under each relevant agenda item?

### **Allocation of speaking time at hearings**

7. Does the Examining Authority intend to apply specific time limits to oral submissions at Issue Specific Hearings and, if so, could the Examining Authority clarify the anticipated duration of speaking opportunities for Interested Parties?
8. Where a participant is addressing multiple issues within a hearing, will speaking time be allocated per participant or per topic within the hearing agenda?

### **Participation by Interested Parties unable to attend hearings**

9. Where an Interested Party is unable to attend a hearing, will the Examining Authority accept written submissions addressing matters considered at that hearing, including submissions made after publication of the hearing recording or transcript?
10. Will Interested Parties be able to submit post-hearing written comments responding to matters raised during Issue Specific Hearings?

### **Open Floor Hearing and additional hearings**

11. If matters raised during the Open Floor Hearing indicate that particular issues require more detailed examination, would the Examining Authority consider convening additional Issue Specific Hearings later in the examination period?

### **Examination of the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)**

The Proposed Development includes a Battery Energy Storage System with a stated capacity of up to 100MW. SEPE notes that the operational characteristics of the system appear capable of allowing electricity import from the transmission network as well as storage of electricity generated by the proposed solar arrays.

SEPE would welcome clarification of how the Examining Authority intends to examine this aspect of the proposal.

12. Does the Examining Authority intend to request further information from the Applicant regarding the proposed operating model of the BESS facility, including the extent to which the system may import electricity directly from the transmission network (grid charging) rather than storing electricity generated by the on-site solar arrays?
13. Will the examination consider whether the BESS is intended to operate solely as storage associated with the proposed solar generating station, or whether it may function as a partially or fully stand-alone grid-connected storage facility?
14. Where grid charging of the BESS is possible, does the Examining Authority intend to examine how such operation relates to the description of the development as renewable energy infrastructure and the extent to which electricity imported from the transmission network may originate from non-renewable generation sources?
15. Does the Examining Authority consider it necessary to clarify whether the BESS component forms part of the generating station itself or constitutes associated development with a distinct operational function?

### **Examination of alternatives and site selection**

SEPE notes that the Environmental Impact Assessment process normally requires consideration of reasonable alternatives and the reasons for selecting the chosen development site.

SEPE would therefore welcome clarification as to how this aspect of the proposal may be examined.

16. Does the Examining Authority anticipate examining the Applicant's site selection and alternatives assessment during the course of the examination, including whether alternative locations, layouts or configurations were considered in order to avoid or reduce environmental effects such as the use of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, landscape impacts and effects on nearby communities?
17. Does the Examining Authority anticipate requesting clarification from the Applicant regarding the methodology and evidence used in the site selection process, including how environmental constraints and land quality considerations were balanced in identifying the proposed site?
18. If the examination identifies that certain environmental effects arise primarily from the chosen site layout or from land parcels included within the Order Limits, does the Examining Authority anticipate examining whether alternative

layouts or reductions in site extent could reasonably avoid or reduce those impacts?

### **Examination of other principal environmental issues**

In addition to the matters above, SEPE would welcome clarification as to whether the following topics are likely to form part of the structured examination process.

19. Does the Examining Authority anticipate that the examination of landscape and visual impacts, including the assessment of viewpoints, cumulative landscape effects and the effectiveness and timescale of proposed mitigation planting, may benefit from structured oral examination during the course of the examination?
20. Does the Examining Authority anticipate examining the setting of heritage assets and historic landscape character where these may be affected by the proposed development?
21. In addition to the classification of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, does the Examining Authority anticipate examining the broader implications of the proposed development for agricultural land use and food production over the operational lifetime of the project?
22. Does the Examining Authority anticipate examining socio-economic effects of the proposed development on rural communities and local economic activity where these matters arise during the examination?
23. Will the examination consider the extent of design flexibility within the Proposed Development and whether the Environmental Impact Assessment has assessed clearly defined worst-case scenarios for key environmental effects?
24. Does the Examining Authority anticipate examining the proposed decommissioning arrangements and restoration of agricultural land at the end of the operational period, including the adequacy of any relevant requirements within the draft Development Consent Order?

SEPE raises these questions to assist the Examining Authority in determining whether the current draft timetable and hearing structure will provide sufficient opportunity for the principal issues arising from the application to be examined where necessary.

SEPE looks forward to participating constructively in the examination and thanks the Examining Authority for its consideration of these matters.

Yours faithfully,

**Stop East Park Energy (SEPE)**  
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