

Appeal refs: 6001284 Land at Treading Field, Treading Drain, Tydd St. Giles, PE13 4PL and 6001285 Land east of Guanockgate Road, Nr. Sutton St Edmund, PE13 4PY

Case Management Conference summary note

1. The case management conference (the conference) was led by the Hearing Inspector, Michael Chalk, starting at 10am on 16 December 2025.
2. The appeals relate to a proposal for a 49.9 Megawatt solar farm on a site that straddles the boundary between Fenland District Council and South Holland District Council.
3. The Hearing is to open on **Tuesday 27 January at 10am**. It is scheduled to sit for up to 3 days, from 27-29 January. The venue will be the Boathouse, Harbour Square, Wisbech, PE13 3BH. The Inspector would appreciate if details of parking arrangements at the venue could be confirmed by no later than the week before the Hearing.
4. The councils are encouraged to draw the attention of interested parties to this note, including posting a copy on its website.

Main issues

5. The Inspector identifies the main issues, based on the parties' cases to date, as follows:
6. For both appeals:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the supply of best and most versatile agricultural land, and on food security
7. For 6001284 only:
 - The effect on the character and appearance of the area
8. While not expected to form separate main issues the Inspector may also have questions on some or all of the following other matters which have been raised by interested parties and consultees:
 - Highways, construction traffic routing and the restoration of road surfaces
 - Living conditions of residents, with specific regard to noise and glint and glare
 - Wildlife and ecology, including bird strikes
 - The material supply chain, including health effects associated with cobalt mining and the use of child labour
 - Site contamination risks

- Contingency plans for the decommissioning of the site
 - Health risks, including for those with electromagnetic sensitivity
 - Site security
9. These other matters may be addressed in the documents yet to be submitted.

Conditions

10. An agreed schedule of suggested planning conditions for each appeal and the reasons for them, including the text of any referenced policies, is to be submitted before the Hearing.
11. Careful attention must be paid to the wording and the conditions will need to be properly justified having regard to the tests for conditions. You are reminded in this regard that as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, conditions should be kept to a minimum and that conditions that are required to be discharged before development commences should be avoided unless there is a clear justification. The reasons for any pre-commencement conditions will need to include that justification.
12. Any difference in view on any of the suggested conditions, including suggested wording, should be highlighted in the schedule with a brief explanation given. These will be addressed at the Hearing.

Planning obligations

13. The parties confirmed that no planning obligations are expected in relation to these appeals.

Hearing running order

14. The Inspector will aim to adjourn no later than 5pm each day, subject to completing discussion on any issue at hand. Depending on progress the Inspector may suggest an earlier start after the first day.
15. The Inspector will make opening comments on the first day of the Hearing. Following this will be the discussion on agricultural land.
16. The second day will involve discussion of the effect on character and appearance.
17. The third day will involve discussion of any remaining matters, as well as the suggested conditions.

Other matters

18. The Inspector will carry out an unaccompanied visit before the Hearing opens to see the site and surrounding area from public land. The parties will seek to coordinate a list of viewpoints for the Inspector to visit and view the site from. He will carry out a further visit after the Hearing opens during which he will also see the site from viewpoints requested by those attending the Hearing. This is likely to be on the second or third day, depending on timing and light levels.

19. The appellant advised that written comments on the recently revised National Policy Statement for renewable energy infrastructure¹ will be provided shortly. This will allow comments from the councils and any interested parties also by **Friday 2 January**.
20. A consultation on the updates to the National Planning Policy Framework was launched this week². Comments on the proposed changes and any effect they may have on the parties' cases should be made by **Friday 2 January**.
21. The appellant confirmed that printed copies of the plans and photomontages would be provided for reference at the Hearing.

Document submission dates

22. The councils' statements, and interested party comments, are due by **Friday 2 January**.
23. The statement of common ground between the main parties should be submitted by **Tuesday 13 January**.
24. The list of agreed conditions should be submitted by **Wednesday 21 January**. Please provide the list(s) of viewpoints for the Inspector's pre-hearing site visit by this date as well.

Costs

25. Neither party indicated during the conference any intention to apply for costs. Costs can be awarded in relation to unreasonable behaviour that results in unnecessary expense for another party. You are also reminded in this regard that, to support an effective and timely planning system in which all parties are required to behave reasonably, the Inspector can initiate an award of costs.

Close

26. Thank you for your co-operation.

M Chalk

17 December 2025

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-policy-statements-for-energy-infrastructure>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-proposed-reforms-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>