



Application by Norfolk Boreas Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Norfolk Boreas Offshore Wind Farm

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Version 1.0 issued on 19 May 2020

This FAQ document aims to assist persons involved in the Examination who have questions about the Examination Timetable, procedures and arrangements, including the proposals for virtual Hearings. It may from time to time be updated at the discretion of the Examining Authority (ExA).

1. Why have you issued a new Timetable?

The public health restrictions during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic resulted in the postponement of hearings on 17 and 18 March 2020 and the hearings reserved for 14, 15 and 16 April 2020. On 6 April 2020, the Planning Inspectorate asked the Secretary of State to consider requests from a number of Interested Parties to extend the Examination period.

On 11 May 2020 the Secretary of State set a new deadline for completion of the Examination on or before 12 October 2020.

The Examining Authority has issued a Rule 8(3) procedural decision on 19 May 2020 to provide an updated Examination Timetable including new potential Hearing dates. It also includes a request for information from Interested Parties, through a Questionnaire, on their wish and / or ability to take part in Hearings using teleconferencing and / or video conferencing.

2. Why have so many dates been identified for Hearings?

Several dates for Hearings have been reserved in the Examination Timetable at this stage in order to provide for flexibility. However, it is not anticipated that all of these dates will be needed. All potential participants and observers are asked to reserve these dates in their diary as far as is possible. A further update will be provided once the ExA has enough information to confirm which dates for Hearings are required.

3. Will the Examination be held in public and will there be any restrictions on who can take part?

The ExA will continue to hold the Examination in public. It will not have any private discussions with any parties.

Arrangements will be made for any Hearings to be as accessible to Interested Parties as they reasonably can be in the current circumstances.

The ExA is also able to use its discretion to permit other parties to attend Hearings and to accept oral submissions from them. The ExA will continue to do this if it considers it likely that this would assist the Examination.

The ExA continues to encourage participants who are members of the same organisation, or who know each other and have similar views, to work together and to identify one or two people to make a written submission, or an oral submission at a Hearing. The ExA will give the same consideration to any matter, whether it is raised once or several times.

Please contact the Case Team if you are not sure of your status:

Project email: NorfolkBoreas@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Siân Evans (Case Manager): 0303 444 5671

Steven Parker (Case Officer): 0303 444 5125

There is no need to attend a Hearing to simply repeat a representation that has already been made in writing. All previous and future written submissions will be taken into consideration by the ExA in making its recommendation to the Secretary of State.

4. How could any Hearings be held when there are public health restrictions in place?

In light of the public health situation surrounding coronavirus (COVID-19), it is not currently possible to hold Hearings that require people to attend in person. Therefore, the ExA is considering arrangements for Hearings that could be accessible for people at home using a telephone, computer or tablet. The ExA is considering options for participation by either sound only (audio) or sound plus picture (video).

The aim is to make access to any Hearing as straightforward and manageable as possible. For example, for an Open Floor Hearing it may be possible for Interested Parties to simply make oral representations via a telephone.

5. Can you provide more details about the virtual hearings referred to in the Rule 8(3) letter?

Instead of people being physically together in one place, virtual hearings allow people to observe or join in a discussion from a location such as their home or office.

Teleconferencing allows an audio (sound only) discussion between participants at different locations. It typically involves the use of a telephone, mobile, smartphone, or a computer or tablet connected to the internet.

Video conferencing allows a video (sound plus picture) discussion between participants at different locations. It typically involves the use of a smartphone, or a computer or tablet connected to the internet.

6. I want to take part in the Hearings but am not sure if I will be able to. How will you cater for my needs?

The ExA is sensitive to catering for different needs. The Planning Inspectorate is working to make any Hearing as accessible as possible and will provide support and guidance to participants before it takes place.

7. What equipment and software will I need?

The Planning Inspectorate is considering the use of readily available equipment and software, which most people are likely to have already. Details of the requirements and relevant guidance and support will be provided in due course. It should also be possible to take part in Hearings using a telephone.

8. How will I be able to join a Hearing?

Advance notice of a request to speak at or observe Hearings will be required.

The practicalities of the technical arrangements that need to be made in advance of the Hearings mean that the ExA is unlikely to be able to accommodate any requests to speak at Hearings that are not made in advance in accordance with the Examination Timetable. Further details will be provided with the notification of any Hearings.

Technical and management considerations may result in the ExA limiting the number of speakers at any Hearings. Hearings will also be split into shorter sessions allowing participants to take part in those sessions where matters are of interest. The ExA is likely to prioritise Interested Parties and those speaking on behalf of a group of people. The ExA will give the same consideration to any matter, whether it is raised once or several times.

The Examination is primarily a written process and points raised in writing have exactly the same standing as those made orally at a Hearing

9. Will I be able to observe the Hearings if I decide that I don't want to speak at them?

Recordings will be made of Hearings and will be the formal record of the Hearings as has always been the case for Examinations. The recordings will be made available on the project page of the National Infrastructure Planning website as soon as is practicable after each Hearing.

10. Will I be able to make a submission on the matters that are covered in Hearings if I decide that I don't want to speak at them?

Parties who do not speak at the Hearings, but who access the recordings are invited to make a written submission on the specific matters included in the Hearing Agendas or arising at the Hearings. These submissions are to be made at the deadline for post-Hearing submissions identified in the Examination Timetable.

11. Can I still take part in the Examination if I am not able to speak at a Hearing or observe it?

Yes, Interested Parties and Statutory Parties can continue to participate in the Examination through the written process. Deadlines for written submissions are identified in the Examination Timetable.

Previously in the Examination the ExA has used its discretion to accept submissions from other parties. The ExA's intention is to continue to do that when it considers it likely that this would assist the Examination.

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12. What if I'm not able to participate in the Examination now or my circumstances change?

Please contact the Case Team and explain your circumstances. We will do our best to accommodate your needs and enable different means of involvement.

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13. What additional information will be provided?

The revised Examination Timetable includes deadlines and dates for activities regarding virtual Hearings. Following the receipt of responses from IPs to the Questionnaire on virtual Hearings, notification will be published of the specific dates, times and type of each required Hearing.

Information will be provided on the methods that will be used at virtual Hearings, to assist with allowing parties to understand the new format, and on the support that will be provided to participants. We will aim to issue agendas approximately two weeks before each virtual Hearing.

14. How should I keep up to date with the latest news about the Examination?

Please visit the project page of the National Infrastructure Planning website regularly for updates:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/norfolk-boreas/>

The project website also has a facility for you to sign up to receive updates by email.

16. How can I be kept up to date with the Examination if I do not have access to the internet?

Notification of Procedural Decisions will continue to be made by post for those parties who do not have, or have not provided, an email address. We understand that parties without internet access may not be able to access other documents including detailed information contained within any procedural decisions.

If you do not have a computer, tablet or smartphone available to you, please call the Planning Inspectorate Case Team on 0303 444 5000 for further assistance.