



National Infrastructure  
Planning  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square  
Bristol, BS1 6PN

Customer  
Services: 0303 444 5000  
Email: [northfalls@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:northfalls@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

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All Interested Parties, Statutory Parties and any  
Other Persons invited to the Preliminary  
Meeting

Case Ref: EN010119  
Date: 10 December 2024

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Dear Recipient

**Planning Act 2008 – Section 88 and 89 and The Infrastructure Planning  
(Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – Rules 4, 6 and 9 and 13**

**Application by North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Ltd for an Order Granting  
Development Consent for the North Falls Offshore Wind Farm (EN010119)**

**Appointment of the Examining Authority, invitation to the Preliminary Meeting  
and Notification of Hearings**

Following my appointment by the Secretary of State as the lead member of the Examining Authority (ExA) to carry out an Examination of the above application I am writing to introduce myself and the other members of the ExA. My name is Wendy McKay and the other members of the ExA are Anthony Johnson, Jonathan Medlin, Matthew Shrigley and Helen Van Willegen. A copy of the appointment notice can be viewed under the [documents tab](#) on the project webpage of the National Infrastructure Planning website ([project webpage](#)).

The ExA for the North Falls Application has been appointed solely to examine this Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) application, in accordance with the provisions of the relevant legislation. We will therefore only be examining this application, and we will have no responsibility for examining any other NSIP application made in the nearby area that might be accepted for examination before or after the commencement of the Examination for the proposed North Falls Offshore Wind Farm.

Accordingly, should applications for the proposed:

- Norwich to Tilbury network reinforcement (currently at the pre-application stage); and
- Sea Link transmission proposal (currently at the pre-application stage)



be accepted for examination, then each of those schemes would be the subject of their own examinations. Each of those examinations would be conducted by its exclusively appointed ExA. In the case of Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm, this was accepted for examination on 22 April 2024 and is subject to its own examination with its own exclusively appointed ExA. The ExA would, however, stress that in examining the application for the proposed North Falls Offshore Wind Farm and in making a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero it will, amongst other things, be considering the cumulative and in-combination effects of this NSIP with other projects.

We would like to thank those of you who submitted Relevant Representations. These representations have assisted us when considering how we will examine this application.

### Invitation to the Preliminary Meeting

As a recipient of this letter, you are invited to the Preliminary Meeting to discuss **the procedure** for the Examination of the above application.

Date	Start time	Venue and joining details
28 January 2025	<p><b>Registration and seating available at venue from: 9.30am</b></p> <p><b>Virtual Registration Process from: 9.30am</b></p> <p><b>Preliminary Meeting starts: 10am</b></p>	<p>Wivenhoe House Hotel, Wivenhoe Park, Park Road, Colchester, CO4 3FA</p> <p>And</p> <p>By virtual means using Microsoft Teams</p> <p>Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered.</p>

The Preliminary Meeting should be completed before 1pm on 28 January 2025. However, a reserve period has been scheduled for 2pm on the same day to allow for the meeting to be resumed in exceptional circumstances e.g. to account for a failure of technology. Normally the reserve period will not be required and confirmation of this will be provided by the ExA at the end of the Preliminary Meeting and subsequently notified on the [project webpage](#).

**You must register by completing the [Event Participation Form](#) by 20 January 2025 if you intend to participate in the Preliminary Meeting and provide all the information requested (see below).**

If you simply wish to observe the Preliminary Meeting then you do not need to register as you will be able to either:



1. watch a livestream of the event - a link to the livestream will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin; and/or
2. watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished.

Alternatively, you can attend the physical event at the venue to observe the proceedings; however, to ensure there is adequate seating capacity at the venue we request that you register your attendance to **observe only by 20 January 2025** using the [Event Participation Form](#). Please note that it may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **20 January 2025**.

## Purpose of the Preliminary Meeting

The purpose of the Preliminary Meeting is to enable views to be put to us about how the application should be examined. The ExA will therefore limit the scope of the Preliminary Meeting to consideration of **how the application will be examined**. See **Annex B** to this letter and the Planning Inspectorate's Advice for members of the public: [The stages of the NSIP process and how you can have your say](#) for more information.

The Preliminary Meeting is **not** an opportunity for you to give your views about what you like or don't like about the application. The merits or disadvantages of the application will only be considered once the Examination starts, which is after the Preliminary Meeting has closed. All relevant and important matters will be taken into account when we make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, who will take the final decision in this case.

The agenda for the meeting is at **Annex A** to this letter. This has been set following our Initial Assessment of Principal Issues arising from our reading of the application documents and the Relevant Representations received. The Initial Assessment of Principal Issues is set out in **Annex C** to this letter.

## Written submissions about how the application should be examined

The Planning Act 2008 establishes a principally written process for the Examination of applications for Development Consent Orders and **representations made in writing carry equal weight to oral representations at all stages of the process**.

We are now requesting written submissions from recipients of this letter about how the application should be examined. We particularly wish to hear from you if:

- You consider changes need to be made to the draft Examination Timetable set out at **Annex D** to this letter; and/or
- you wish to comment about the arrangements for future Examination hearings, including the use of virtual methods.



You are invited to make a written submission about how the application is to be examined by **Procedural Deadline A (20 January 2025)** (see **Annex D** to this letter).

We request that all submissions are made using the '[Have your say](#)' page on the [project webpage](#) on or before **Procedural Deadline A. Annex H** to this letter provides further information about using the '[Have your say](#)' page.

### **Requests to participate at the Preliminary Meeting**

Please note that **you are not required to attend, or make written submissions to, the Preliminary Meeting in order to participate in the Examination.** If you are an Interested Party you can make a Written Representation and comment on the Written Representations made by other Interested Parties during the Examination. You will also be able to participate in any hearings that are arranged.

If you wish to participate at the Preliminary Meeting you are required to notify the ExA in writing on or before **20 January 2025 (Procedural Deadline A)**.

Any request to participate in the Preliminary Meeting **must include** the following information:

- Name and unique reference number (found at the top your letter or email from the Planning Inspectorate);
- email address (if available) and contact telephone number;
- name and unique reference number of any person/organisation that you are representing (if applicable);
- for blended events, confirmation of whether you will participate virtually or in-person; and
- the agenda item on which you wish to speak and a list of the points you wish to make.

Requests to participate should be made using the [Event Participation Form](#) on or before **Procedural Deadline A**.

**Please contact the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter if you require any support or assistance to attend the Preliminary Meeting, either virtually or in person.**

### **Format of Examination Events – Preliminary Meeting and Hearings**

The Examination of the application will principally be a written process supplemented where necessary by various types of hearings. See the Planning Inspectorate's Advice for members of the public: [The stages of the NSIP process and how you can have your say](#) for more information.

Both blended (part in-person and part virtual) and fully virtual events form part of the Planning Inspectorate's operating model. We remain flexible and will confirm the



format of any hearings to be held during the Examination Stage when we provide formal notification of each hearing at least 21 days in advance of it taking place.

## After the Preliminary Meeting

After the Preliminary Meeting we will issue a letter (known as the Rule 8 letter) setting out the finalised Examination Timetable. A note of the meeting will also be published on the [project webpage](#).

## Notification of initial hearing

We have made a Procedural Decision to hold the following initial hearing:

- Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH 1) on **Wednesday 29 January 2025** (Blended Event)

Important information about this hearing is contained in **Annex E** to this letter, including what details need to be provided with a request to be heard at a hearing and the procedure that will be followed.

## Examining Authority's Written Questions

The draft Examination Timetable includes provision for the publication of the ExA's Written Questions as soon as practicable after the Preliminary Meeting.

The proposed deadline for responses to our Written Questions is **4 March 2025** (see **Annex D** to this letter). There will be an opportunity to discuss this proposed deadline at the Preliminary Meeting.

## Procedural Decisions following the submission of Relevant Representations by Interested Parties

The ExA has already made a number of Procedural Decisions with the purpose of utilising pre-Examination time and to obtain additional information or clarifications as early as possible. These are set out in our Procedural Decision letter dated 28 November 2024 [PD-005]. They include the Procedural Decision that the Applicant, IPs and the Other Persons listed therein **must** prepare Initial Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) and a Progress with Statements of Common Ground (PSoCG) to be submitted at or before a deadline date to be identified in the Examination timetable and thereafter to be updated during the Examination and submitted in their **final and signed** forms at the **Final Deadline** to be specified in that timetable.

The Examination timetable (see **Annex D** to this letter) now identifies **Deadline 1 (18 February 2025)** as the proposed submission date for the Initial SoCGs and the PSoCG. It also provides for the submission of updates to those documents at Deadlines 2, 4, 5 and 6 with the Final signed SoCGs including a list of any matters not agreed, and Final PSoCG by **Deadline 8 (23 July 2025)**.



The ExA's other Procedural Decisions set out in that letter [PD-005] include those relating to the preparation and submission of Local Impact Reports (LIR) by Local Planning Authorities; the submission of updates to the Natural England (NE) Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS) and the submission by the Applicant of a Land Rights Tracker, and a collated National Policy Statement (NPS) Accordance Table. Likewise, for all these other decisions the Examination Timetable now identifies the proposed submission dates for the requested documentation together with dates for the submission of updates during the Examination. There will be an opportunity to discuss all these proposed deadlines at the Preliminary Meeting under **Agenda Item 4 – Draft Examination Timetable**.

### **Other Procedural Decisions made by the Examining Authority**

We have made some further Procedural Decisions which are set out in detail at **Annex F** to this letter. They are summarised as follows:

1. Request for suggested locations for an Accompanied Site Inspection.
2. Acceptance of Additional Submissions into the Examination.
3. Notification by Statutory Parties of their wish to be considered Interested Parties.

### **Changes to land interests**

When the Applicant becomes aware that there has been a change in ownership, or a new interest, in relevant land the Applicant is requested to make the relevant person aware that they can make a request to the ExA to become an Interested Party under section 102A of the PA2008 by emailing the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter. The Examination Timetable includes various Deadlines for the submission of an updated Book of Reference and schedule of changes to the Book of Reference, which should include confirmation that relevant persons have been informed of their rights under section 102A.

### **Managing Examination correspondence**

Given the volume and frequency of letters the Planning Inspectorate needs to send to Interested Parties during an Examination, we aim to communicate with people by email as electronic communication is more environmentally friendly and cost effective for the taxpayer.

If you have received a letter but are able to receive communications by email, please inform the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter as soon as possible.

A '[Have your say](#)' page is available on the website for parties to provide written submissions at relevant deadlines during the Examination. **Annex H** to this letter provides further information about using the '[Have your say](#)' page.

There is also a function on the right-hand side of the project webpage called '[E-mail updates](#)'. This provides you with an opportunity to register to receive automatic e-mail updates at key stages during the Examination.



## Your status in the Examination

You have received this letter because you are a person or organisation who is involved in the NSIP process. See the Planning Inspectorate's Advice for members of the public: [National Infrastructure Projects and the people and organisations involved in the process](#) for further details.

If, having read the advice, you are still unsure about how you are involved in the process please contact the Case Team using the details at the top of this letter.

## Deadlines

Please note that all deadlines in the draft Examination Timetable and as referred to in this letter are at 23.59 on the deadline day. Each deadline within the Timetable should, however, be treated as being a 'not later than time and date'. There is therefore no reason why submissions relating to a particular deadline cannot be made to the Planning Inspectorate in advance of the stated deadline.

## Awards of costs

All parties will normally be expected to meet their own costs. Costs can be awarded against a party who has acted unreasonably and has caused the party applying for the award of costs to incur unnecessary or wasted expense during the Examination. You should be aware of the relevant costs guidance [Awards of costs: examinations of applications for development consent orders](#).

## Management of information

Information, including representations, submitted in respect of this Examination (if accepted by the Examining Authority) and a record of any advice which has been provided by the Planning Inspectorate is published on the [project webpage](#).

The Examining Authority would draw your attention to the Inspectorate's guidance on the use of artificial intelligence (AI). If you have chosen to use AI please mark your document as required. [View: use of artificial intelligence in casework evidence](#).

Examination documents can also be viewed electronically at the locations listed in **Annex G** to this letter.

Please note that in the interest of facilitating an effective and fair Examination, it is necessary to publish some personal information. To find out how we handle your personal information please view our [Privacy Notice](#).

We look forward to working with all parties in the Examination of this application.

Yours faithfully

*Wendy McKay*



## Lead Member of the Examining Authority

### Annexes

- A** Agenda for the Preliminary Meeting
- B** Introduction to the Preliminary Meeting
- C** Initial Assessment of Principal Issues
- D** Draft Examination Timetable
- E** Notification of initial hearings
- F** Other Procedural Decisions made by the Examining Authority
- G** Availability of Examination Documents
- H** Information about the Make a submission tab

This communication does not constitute legal advice.

Please view our [Privacy Notice](#) before sending information to the Planning Inspectorate.



## Agenda for the Preliminary Meeting

**You must register by completing the [Event Participation Form](#) by 20 January 2025 if you intend to participate in the Preliminary Meeting and provide all the information requested (see below).**

If you simply wish to observe the Preliminary Meeting, then you do not need to register as you will be able to either:

1. watch a livestream of the event - a link to the livestream will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin; and/or
2. watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished.

Alternatively, you can attend the physical event at the venue to observe the proceedings; however, to ensure there is adequate seating capacity at the venue we request that you register your attendance to **observe only** by **20 January 2025** using the [Event Participation Form](#). Please note that it may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **20 January 2025**.

Please note that by attending the event either in person or online you are agreeing to be filmed for the purposes of the online livestream of the event and the recording of the event which will be published on the [project webpage](#). A limited number of seats will be available for observers who wish not to be filmed at the venue. Please contact the case team to notify them if you prefer not to be filmed at the event. A transcript of the event will also be published on the project page of our website after the event.

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Tuesday 28 January 2025</b>
<b>Registration Process:</b>	<b>9.30am</b>
<b>Meeting start time:</b>	<b>10.00am</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Blended event at Wivenhoe House Hotel, Wivenhoe Park, Park Road, Colchester, CO4 3FA</b>
	<b>and by virtual means using Microsoft Teams</b>
	Full instructions on how to join online or by phone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered.
<b>Attendees:</b>	<b>Invited parties who have pre-registered</b>

<b>Agenda for the Preliminary Meeting</b>	
<b>9.30am</b>	Registration and seating available at venue for in-person attendees
<b>9.30am</b>	<p><b>Virtual Registration Process</b> Please arrive from 9.30am to enter the virtual lobby. From here you will be admitted to the virtual meeting by the Case Team, greeted and given further instructions. The Registration Process will commence at 9.45am. This will be hosted by the Case Team and cover the housekeeping arrangements for the Preliminary Meeting and allow for any questions to be asked about how to take part.</p>
<b>10.00am</b> <b>Item 1</b>	<p><b>Preliminary Meeting</b> The Preliminary Meeting will formally open at <b>10.00am</b>. The Examining Authority will join, welcome participants and lead introductions.</p>
<b>Item 2</b>	The Examining Authority's remarks about the Examination process
<b>Item 3</b>	Initial Assessment of Principal Issues – <b>Annex C</b> to Rule 6 letter
<b>Item 4</b>	Draft Examination Timetable – <b>Annex D</b> to Rule 6 letter
<b>Item 5</b>	Procedural decisions – <b>Annex F</b> to Rule 6 letter and [PD-005]
<b>Item 6</b>	Handling of potential commonality issues for the proposed North Falls Offshore Wind Farm and Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm
<b>Item 7</b>	Any other matters
<b>Close of the Preliminary Meeting</b>	

If you are participating using Microsoft Teams, please join the virtual lobby promptly using the instructions that will be sent to you. The event will start at **10.00am** irrespective of any late arrivals, for whom access may not be possible.

It may take some time to admit participants from the virtual lobby, your patience whilst you are waiting is appreciated.

The agenda for the Preliminary Meeting is subject to change at the discretion of the Examining Authority (ExA), although in making changes the ExA will be mindful of the need to provide opportunities for fair involvement to all Invited Parties. Any request to participate in the Preliminary Meeting **must include** the following information and be made on the [Event Participation Form](#):

- Name and unique reference number (found at the top your letter or email from the Planning Inspectorate);
- email address (if available) and contact telephone number;
- name and unique reference number of any person/organisation that you are representing (if applicable);
- for blended events, confirmation of whether you will participate virtually or in-person; and
- the agenda item on which you wish to speak and a list of the points you wish to make.

## **Introduction to the Preliminary Meeting**

### **Background**

The Preliminary Meeting (PM) will be a blended event with some participants attending in person and some taking part virtually using Microsoft Teams

The Examining Authority (ExA) is conscious of videoconferencing fatigue and will aim to keep the proceedings focussed and as efficient as possible. This annex provides advance access to information that would usually be included in the ExA's introductory remarks. Please read this carefully. The ExA will only present a summary of the key points set out here in order to ensure that the time available for participants to speak is maximised.

### **The Examining Authority and the Case Team**

The ExA will introduce themselves at the start of the PM.

The ExA will be supported by the Planning Inspectorate Case Team. During the Registration Process a member of the Case Team will welcome and admit participants from the virtual lobby, and will be available to answer questions by email before and after the PM. The contact email address is:

[northfalls@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:northfalls@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

### **The purpose of the Preliminary Meeting**

The PM is being held to discuss the arrangements for the Examination of the application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the North Falls Offshore Wind Farm, which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), and which will generally be referred to in the PM and Examination as the 'Proposed Development'. The application has been made by North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Ltd, which will be referred to as 'the Applicant'.

You will find information about the application and, in due course, documents produced for the Examination on the project webpage of the National Infrastructure Planning website ([project webpage](#)). The project webpage has links to the Examination Timetable, Relevant Representations and Examination documents and Examination procedure.

You are encouraged to look at the [project webpage](#) if you haven't already done so, because it will be used to communicate with you and to provide access to documents throughout the Examination.

The main purpose of the PM is to discuss the arrangements for the Examination of the application. It focuses on the process only, and it will not be looking at the substance of the proposals: Questions, discussions and representations about the merits or disadvantages of the Proposed Development are for the Examination itself which will begin the day after the close of the PM.

The PM will be your opportunity to influence the process that the ExA intends to follow. The agenda for the PM is attached to this Rule 6 letter at **Annex A**. It is important to have the letter and the agenda in front of you and to refer to them during the course of the PM. You may wish to print these in advance of the PM for reference.

### **Government guidance and policy**

The application is a NSIP under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) as a consequence of sections 14 and 15. The designated National Policy Statements (NPSs) for Energy EN1, EN3 and EN5 apply to this Examination and to decision-making relating to this application.

The ExA will consider the Proposed Development in accordance with the previously mentioned NPSs and any other applicable policy or considerations the ExA deem to be important and relevant. The PA2008 makes it clear that, in making a decision, the relevant Secretary of State (SoS) “*must decide the application in accordance with any relevant NPS*” (s104(3)), subject to certain provisos. Essentially, the provisos are that the application must not breach legal or treaty obligations, and that any adverse impact of the Proposed Development would not outweigh its benefits.

The SoS is entitled to disregard any representations that relate to the merits of the designated NPS. In practice, this means that the ExA will not spend time examining representations that challenge policy set out in NPSs, or the validity of NPSs themselves. The focus will be on the merits or disadvantages of the Proposed Development, tested to the appropriate extent using the tests set out in relevant designated NPSs that are in force.

Other important and relevant planning policies that the ExA may consider include policies in the relevant local authorities’ development plans. However, if these conflict with policy in a NPS, then the NPS will take precedence.

In summary, the PM will establish the procedures and timetable for the Examination of the Proposed Development. It will set a framework for the ExA to enable the SoS to consider and decide the application. In doing so, the ExA will have regard to:

- The positions and representations of all Interested Parties (IPs);
- any Local Impact Reports (LIR) prepared and provided by relevant local authorities;
- other prescribed matters; and
- any other matters that appear to be both relevant and important to the relevant SoS’s decision.

## Preliminary Meeting invitees

The Applicant is invited to the PM and is generally given the opportunity to reply to any representations made.

Everyone who has made a valid Relevant Representation has been registered as an Interested Party (IP) and has been invited to the PM. All IPs are entitled to involvement in the Examination.

Each person or organisation with an interest in land or rights that are affected by a Compulsory Acquisition request in this application is an Affected Person (AP) and has been invited to the PM. In addition to a general entitlement to involvement in the Examination, APs have a right to be heard in relation to any objection about the effects of Compulsory Acquisition on their interests in land, and a right to be notified of any Compulsory Acquisition Hearing. All APs are IPs, whether or not they have made a valid Relevant Representation.

Certain bodies are Statutory Parties and they have been invited to the PM. Statutory Parties can elect to become IPs without having made a valid Relevant Representation by notifying the ExA in writing.

The ExA has the power to involve people who are not IPs in the Examination as though they are IPs, including by inviting them to the PM. However, this is only done in exceptional circumstances, for example if it was clear that the application would materially affect a person and they had been unable to take the necessary action to register as an IP. They are not automatically an IP or eligible to elect to become an IP.

The ExA has decided to invite the following Other Persons to the PM:

- Brockthorpe Consultancy Ltd on behalf of Strutt & Parker (Farms) Ltd and Liane Enterprises Ltd. [AS-034];
- David Snook. [AS-035];
- Port of Tilbury London Ltd. [AS-036] and [AS-037];
- Civil Aviation Authority;
- Essex County Fire and Rescue Service;
- Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority;
- Port of Felixstowe;
- Royal Yachting Association;
- Belgium:
  - Government of Flanders;
  - Département des Permis et Autorisations de la Direction Générale Opérationnelle de l'Agriculture, des Ressources Naturelles et de l'Environnement du Service Public de Wallonie;
  - Bruxelles Environnement, Division Autorisations et Partenariats;
  - Belgium-Federal Authority Directorate-general Environment;
- France:
  - Ministère de l'écologie, du développement durable et de l'énergie;
- Germany:

- Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection;
- Netherlands:
  - Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management; and
- NatureScot.

### Conduct of the Preliminary Meeting

The ExA estimate that the PM will take up to three hours to complete.

During the PM participants may have to make allowances and be patient if there are delays associated with the technology used. In recognition of the fatigue associated with on-screen communication, the ExA will provide breaks during the PM as appropriate.

A digital recording of the PM will be made available on the project webpage as soon as practicable following the close of the PM. The recording allows any member of the public who is interested in the application and the Examination to find out what has been discussed at the PM. The making and publication of these recordings are a means by which the ExA meets the legal requirement to hold the PM (and any other hearings) in public. In this regard, **anyone speaking at the PM will need to introduce themselves each time they speak**, to ensure that someone listening to the recording after the event is clear who was speaking. A written note of the PM will be produced and published as soon as practicable following the close of the PM.

As the recordings are retained and published, they form a public record that can contain personal information to which the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) applies. Participants must do their best to avoid providing any information which should otherwise be kept private and confidential. If there is a need to refer to such information, it should be in written form. Although this will also be published, personal and private content can be redacted or removed before it is made publicly available. Any person who is unclear on this point should ask the Case Team for guidance before they place personal and private information into the public domain.

The Planning Inspectorate's practice is to publish the recordings and retain them for a period of five years from the SoS's decision on the DCO. If you actively participate in the PM, it is important that you understand that you will be recorded and that the recording will be made available in the public domain. Please see our [Privacy Notice](#) for more information about how we handle your data.

Following the ExA's introductions, each participant who has been registered to speak will be asked to introduce themselves, including any organisations or groups that they represent. The ExA will then conduct the meeting in accordance with the agenda. If you prefer not to have your image recorded, you can switch off your camera at any point.

## The Examination process

The Examination of NSIPs follows different processes to those, for example, of a Public Inquiry into a planning appeal following the refusal of planning permission. The main differences are that the Examination of an NSIP application is primarily a written process, and hearings take on an inquisitorial approach as opposed to an adversarial one.

This means that the ExA will probe, test and assess the evidence primarily using written questions. While some hearings are held to provide supplementary evidence, questions to the Applicant or to witnesses will come from the ExA. Questioning or cross-examination of witnesses by other parties will not generally be allowed.

In terms of opportunities to provide evidence in writing, the draft Examination Timetable makes provision for the following written processes:

- Local authorities can submit LIRs if they wish. Whilst these are voluntary, the PA2008 provides that if they are provided, they must be considered by the SoS in reaching a decision. Consequently, LIRs are a very important method for local authorities to communicate issues of concern to the ExA, the SoS and their residents.
- IPs can make Written Representations (WRs) and comment on WRs made by other parties.
- IPs can respond to the ExA's written questions (ExQs) and comment on responses to these written questions provided by others.
- IPs may be asked to contribute to the making of Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) if it appears that there are matters on which they and the Applicant agree, and if it would be useful for this to be clarified. SoCGs most usefully extend to catalogue matters that are not agreed or are outstanding.

The draft Examination Timetable includes a series of numbered Deadlines for receipt of written submissions. Timely submissions received by the relevant Deadline and that address its purpose will be accepted. **Documents received after the relevant Deadline are only accepted at the discretion of the ExA and may not be accepted to ensure fairness to all parties.** Circumstances where documents are submitted late without good reason, causing inconvenience or delay to other parties can amount to unreasonable behaviour. All deadlines are at 23:59 on the day given in the Examination Timetable in Annex D.

These written processes will be the principal means used by the ExA to gather information, evidence and views about the application. However, the Examination will only be effective if all parties resolve to give timely, full, frank, clear and evidenced answers to every question that is relevant to their interests and to engage fully with any other related processes such as the completion of WRs and SoCGs.

There is no merit in withholding or delaying information, or in failing to co-operate, and should it occur, any unreasonable behaviour that caused another party to incur wasted expenditure could lead to an award of costs against the offending party.

The ExA has discretion to make amendments to the Examination Timetable for the wider benefit of the Examination. If possible, events will be arranged for times when all relevant parties are available, but the ExA is under a duty to complete the Examination by the end of the six-month period beginning with the day after the close of the PM. This requirement is set by legislation, and while the ExA will try to rearrange event dates to accommodate all relevant parties, in practice there will be limited scope to alter dates set out in the draft Examination Timetable.

The statutory time limit for the Examination means that where there are matters that still need to be discussed and agreed between the Applicant and IPs, it will be very helpful to the ExA if these could be progressed as early as possible.

## Hearings

The draft Examination Timetable includes provision for hearings, at which the ExA takes oral evidence from the various parties.

Any registered IP may request an **Open Floor Hearing** (OFH) to make oral representations about the application if they believe this to be preferable to relying on their written representation, though both carry equal weight. Oral submissions should be based on representations previously made in writing, but they should not simply repeat matters previously covered in the written submission. Rather, they should focus on specific detail and explanation to help inform the ExA. There should be no new or unexpected material in oral representations. A written summary note with any supporting evidence or references will be requested of each speaker following the hearing.

As with all Examination events, OFHs are subject to the powers of control of the ExA, as set out in the PA2008 and supporting legislation. Participants must register in advance by the Deadline shown in the Examination Timetable and in accordance with the instructions. It is common practice for the ExA to set a time limit for each speaker, and speakers with common points are asked to come together to nominate a spokesperson or representative speakers to cover specific topics, so as to avoid any unnecessary repetition. Speakers representing public authorities, community and membership organisations or multiple IPs are normally provided with an additional time allowance, recognising their representative role.

The Applicant's draft DCO provides for the Compulsory Acquisition of land and rights, and the Temporary Possession of land. Affected Persons (ie those whose land or rights over land are affected) have a right to request and be heard at a **Compulsory Acquisition Hearing** (CAH). If one or more APs request to be heard, then a CAH must be held. Provisional dates for CAHs are included in the draft Examination Timetable along with Deadlines by which requests to be heard must be submitted.

The ExA has the discretion to hold **Issue Specific Hearings** (ISHs) if it would aid in the Examination and there is a specific reason this would be more helpful than reliance on written evidence only. The lack of an ISH on one or more topics does not suggest that that topic is less important than others which are subject to a hearing. Rather, it is an indication that the ExA is satisfied that the issues can be fully



considered through written submissions and responses to its written questions and that each party has had a fair opportunity to put its case.

The draft Examination Timetable includes a number of dates reserved for ISHs and IPs may make suggestions for topics to be discussed at an ISH in their written or oral representations to the PM.

It may be necessary for the ExA to hold more than one ISH on the draft DCO. This is normal practice, and they are held on a without prejudice basis. Parties can suggest modifications and amendments to the draft DCO provided by the Applicant with the application, without prejudicing their overall position on the application.

Holding such hearings does not imply that the ExA has reached any judgements on the merits of the application. Whatever the ultimate recommendation is, the ExA must make sure that the draft DCO is fit for purpose if the SoS decides to grant consent, as any consent will be subject to Requirements (ie conditions) set out in the DCO.

At hearings it will not normally be necessary for parties to make long and detailed submissions that require (for example) PowerPoint presentations. Any supporting detail/ information can be provided in writing following the event by the relevant Deadline.

The draft Examination Timetable includes a deadline, namely, Pre-Examination **Procedural Deadline A (20 January 2025)** for participants to notify the ExA that they wish to speak at **OFH1**, and **Deadline 1 (18 February 2025)** for participants to notify the ExA if they wish to speak at a subsequent **OFH** or a **CAH**.

### Site inspections

As part of the Examination process the ExA may undertake site inspections. These can be either unaccompanied or accompanied.

The purpose of these is for the ExA to see features of the proposals within the context of the evidence put forward. Notes of Unaccompanied Site Inspections (USIs) are published on the [project webpage](#).

Accompanied Site Inspections (ASI) will only be necessary to view land to which there is no public right of access, or with no clear view from nearby locations with open public access. The purpose of ASIs is familiarisation only and no discussion of the merits of the Proposed Development will be entertained during an ASI.

The ExA may decide to hold USIs to relevant nominated locations, supported by the submission of additional written, photographic, video or even drone material if this would be preferable to not visiting sites or holding ASIs in circumstances which could make them difficult and unduly time-consuming to conduct (for example if public health restrictions are in place). The ExA may also consider if it would be appropriate to make arrangements for access only to be provided to specific sites such that they could be inspected as part of a USI on an access required basis (ARSI)

The draft Examination Timetable includes a Deadline for IPs to make submissions suggesting sites and locations that the ExA should visit. These will be used to inform further USIs/ARSIs as well as possible ASIs.

## Initial Assessment of Principal Issues

This is the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues prepared as required under section 88(1) of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). It has been prepared by the Examining Authority (ExA) following its reading of:

- The application documents;
- the Relevant Representations received in respect of the application; and
- its consideration of any other important and relevant matters.

This initial assessment has guided the ExA in forming a provisional view as to how the application is to be examined. It is not a comprehensive or exclusive list of the issues that will be subject to examination and inevitably some issues will overlap or interrelate. The ExA will have regard to all important and relevant matters during the Examination and when it writes its Recommendation Report to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero after the Examination has concluded.

The issues listed have been listed in alphabetic order and that does not imply any order of prioritisation or importance. The items listed under each issue are indicative and do not preclude other sub-items being considered.

The policy and consenting requirements and documents associated with the PA2008 are an integral part of the Examination and are therefore not listed as main issues. Likewise, matters concerning the provisions of the draft Development Consent Order are taken as read as being an important and relevant issue in the Examination and have not been listed below. It should also be noted that whilst the effects of the proposal in relation to human rights and equalities duties are not listed as main issues, the ExA will conduct all aspects of the Examination with these in mind.

Ref	Issue Heading	Issue Description
1	Agriculture and other land uses, ground conditions and soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effects on agricultural land and agricultural land holdings with particular regard to the temporary and permanent use of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, severance and the overall viability of land holdings through land-take.</li> <li>• Effects on individual farm businesses.</li> <li>• Effects on soil quality and ground conditions during construction, operation and decommissioning with particular regard to the potential for erosion, compaction and contamination of soils.</li> </ul>
2	Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consideration of alternatives to the Proposed Development including the various routes, strategies, and design development options with particular regard to the proposed location of the onshore substation and the scope for connecting to an offshore transmission network as an alternative to connecting with an onshore cable corridor with an onshore substation.</li> </ul>

Ref	Issue Heading	Issue Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether the Proposed Development would comply with all specific legal requirements in relation to the considerations of alternatives including the Habitats Regulations.</li> <li>• Whether the Proposed Development would comply with all policy requirements in any relevant National Policy Statements in relation to the consideration of alternatives.</li> </ul>
3	Aviation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The potential effect of the Wind Turbine Generators (WTG) on civilian and defence radar systems, including adequacy of the proposed mitigation and monitoring arrangements, and the means whereby this would be secured by the draft DCO.</li> <li>• Consideration of cumulative effects.</li> </ul>
4	Climate Change and resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The effects that the construction and operation of the Proposed Development would have on climate change with particular regard to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.</li> <li>• Whether the applicant has as far as possible assessed the GHG of all stages of the Proposed Development.</li> <li>• The contribution that the Proposed Development would make to GHG emissions in the UK having regard to the overall change in GHG emissions that would arise.</li> <li>• The adequacy of the proposed mitigation measures and whether the applicant has taken all reasonable steps to mitigate and reduce the construction emissions.</li> <li>• The resilience of the Proposed Development to the climatic change predicted during its operational lifespan.</li> </ul>
5	Compulsory Acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independently from the question of whether development consent should be granted, whether the full extent of the land, rights and powers that are sought to be compulsorily acquired are required for or to facilitate or are incidental to the Proposed Development.</li> <li>• Whether there is a compelling case in the public interest for the compulsory acquisition of the land, rights and powers that are sought by the draft DCO.</li> <li>• Whether all reasonable alternatives to compulsory acquisition have been explored.</li> <li>• Whether adequate funding is likely to be available to enable the promoter to carry out the compulsory acquisition within the statutory period including</li> </ul>

Ref	Issue Heading	Issue Description
		<p>provision for the resource implications of a possible blight notice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether the purposes stated for the acquisition are legitimate and sufficient to justify the inevitable interference with the human rights of those affected.</li> <li>• The acquisition of any statutory undertakers' land or rights over such land and the detriment that may be caused to the carrying on of the undertaking in question.</li> <li>• Adequacy of any Protective Provisions set out in the draft DCO and the need for any other Protective Provisions to safeguard relevant interests.</li> </ul>
6	Cumulative Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cumulative effects of the Proposed Development together with other developments during construction and operation with particular regard to benthic and intertidal ecology, offshore ornithology, loss of agricultural land, onshore ecology, landscape and seascape, climate change and socio-economics.</li> <li>• The scope for co-ordination with other projects in order to minimise any potential cumulative onshore construction effects and the means whereby that would be secured through the draft DCO.</li> <li>• Whether any additional mitigation measures are required to avoid, reduce or compensate for any cumulative adverse impacts identified.</li> </ul>
7	Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The acceptability of the extent, justification and definition of the design choices and parameters, including:</li> <li>• the siting, size and number of WTGs;</li> <li>• the routing for and width of the offshore export cable corridor;</li> <li>• the routing for and width of the onshore cable corridor;</li> <li>• the proposals for the onshore substation, including the role of the Design Champion and factors determining its scale; and</li> <li>• co-ordination with other projects requiring onshore electricity transmission infrastructure, including the proposed substations for the Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm and the East Anglia Connection Node.</li> </ul>
8	Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offshore:</li> <li>• Effects on benthic and intertidal ecology;</li> <li>• Effects on fish and shellfish;</li> </ul>

Ref	Issue Heading	Issue Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effects on marine mammals; and</li> <li>• Effect on offshore ornithology.</li> <li>• Onshore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effects on onshore ornithology;</li> <li>• Effects on terrestrial species;</li> <li>• Effects on protected habitats, ecologically sensitive areas, trees and hedgerows; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Impacts of the horizontal directional drilling and trenchless crossings.</li> <li>• Ecology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The suitability of and means for securing any necessary mitigation and/or compensatory habitat and its monitoring;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Cumulative impacts onshore and offshore; and</li> <li>• Construction impacts both onshore and offshore and the ongoing maintenance, operation and decommissioning impacts.</li> </ul>
9	Flood Risk, groundwater and surface water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequacy of the Flood Risk Assessment in considering the potential effects of flooding from surface water, groundwater, and other sources of flooding taking into account climate change and the application of the sequential and exception tests.</li> <li>• Effects on flood risk, hydrology, drainage, and irrigation including natural and artificial field drainage systems.</li> <li>• Effects on water resources, watercourses and groundwater including any maintenance of well and spring water supplies.</li> <li>• Effectiveness of the proposed mitigation, monitoring, and control measures.</li> <li>• Cumulative effects.</li> </ul>
10	Historic Environment and Archaeology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effect on the onshore and offshore historic environment.</li> <li>• Assessment of the significance of affected heritage assets and their settings.</li> <li>• Assessment of potential harm to the significance of affected designated and non-designated heritage assets and their visual and functional settings during construction and operation, including cumulative impact.</li> <li>• Effects on archaeological features.</li> <li>• Adequacy of the proposed mitigation and monitoring arrangements for the protection of archaeological and historic assets and the means whereby this would be secured by the draft DCO.</li> </ul>

Ref	Issue Heading	Issue Description
11	Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The potential impacts on human health for vulnerable groups during all phases of the project with particular regard to noise and vibration during construction and operation.</li> <li>• Adequacy of the proposed mitigation and the means whereby this would be secured by the draft DCO.</li> <li>• Cumulative effects on human health including those with the Five Estuaries and other projects.</li> </ul>
12	Landscape, Visual and Seascape Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effects of the WTGs and offshore platforms on the character of the offshore seascape, the onshore landscape character and on visual amenity including areas of the coast between The Naze and Orford Ness and users of the Suffolk Coast together with the cumulative effects of the offshore works.</li> <li>• Effects of night lighting and cumulative effects.</li> <li>• Effects of the onshore cable route and substations on landscape character during construction and operation including cumulative effects.</li> <li>• Effects of the onshore works on visual amenity during construction and operation including at Barn Lane and Norman's Farm and the cumulative effects of the onshore works.</li> <li>• Effect of the substations on public vantage points and public rights of way including the cumulative effects.</li> <li>• Effectiveness and adequacy of the proposed mitigation measures to minimise any harm to the landscape and the means whereby this would be secured by the draft DCO.</li> </ul>
13	Navigation & Shipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effects for navigational safety during construction and operation, including in adverse weather conditions.</li> <li>• Effects for shipping movements, including the passage of vessels to and from nearby ports.</li> <li>• Effects on emergency planning, search and rescue operations.</li> <li>• Adequacy of the proposed mitigation and monitoring arrangements, and the means whereby this would be secured by the draft DCO.</li> </ul>
14	Socio Economic Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effects on shipping and navigational industries.</li> <li>• Effects on commercial fisheries and fishing.</li> <li>• Effects on tourism and attractions.</li> <li>• Impacts on holiday accommodation and accommodation for local people.</li> </ul>

Ref	Issue Heading	Issue Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills and jobs in the locality during both construction and operational phases.</li> </ul>
15	Terrestrial Traffic & Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effects on road network and local communities from traffic during the construction phase to include abnormal traffic movements.</li> <li>• Effects for users of public rights of way and other non-motorised users with particular regard to highway safety.</li> <li>• Adequacy of the proposed mitigation, monitoring and enforcement arrangements, and the means whereby this would be secured by the draft DCO including whether any additional measures would be required.</li> <li>• Cumulative effects to include off-site construction traffic noise.</li> </ul>



## Draft Examination Timetable

The Examining Authority (ExA) is under a duty to **complete** the Examination of the application by the end of the period of six months beginning with the day after the close of the Preliminary Meeting.

The Examination of the application primarily takes the form of the consideration of written submissions. The ExA will also consider any oral representations made at hearings.

All updated documents must be provided in two versions: one with tracked changes and the second clean, without tracks. Please provide a cover letter to summarise which documents have been amended.

Draft DCOs (dDCO) are to be submitted by the Applicant in the SI template. When submitting a dDCO the Applicant must provide the email notification from [www.publishing.legislation.gov.uk/validation](http://www.publishing.legislation.gov.uk/validation) confirming the document has successfully passed validation, and the PDF version of the SI validation report obtained from the link in the notification email. The Applicant should also provide a clean (all tracking removed) standalone MS Word version of the dDCO, with no header or cover page.

Ref.	Matters	Date
1.	<p><b>Procedural Deadline A</b></p> <p>Deadline for receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written submissions on the Examination Procedure, including any submissions about the use of virtual methods</li> <li>Register to attend the Preliminary Meeting and OFH1 in w/c 27 January 2025.</li> <li>Requests to be heard at an Open-Floor Hearing (OFH1)</li> <li>Suggested locations for site inspections (accompanied or unaccompanied), including justification, for consideration by the ExA</li> </ul>	<b>20 January 2025</b>
2.	<b>Preliminary Meeting (PM)</b>	<b>28 January 2025</b>
3.	Open Floor Hearing (OFH1) (if requested)	<b>29 January 2025</b>
4.	<p>Issue by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examination Timetable</li> </ul> <p>Publication of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ExA's Written Questions (ExQ1)</li> </ul>	<b>As soon as practicable following the PM</b>
5.	<p><b>Deadline 1</b></p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p>	<b>18 February 2025</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments on Relevant Representations (RR)</li> <li>• Summaries of all RR exceeding 1500 words</li> <li>• Written summaries of oral submissions made at the PM or Hearings</li> <li>• Requests to be heard at notified hearings, see Annex E of the Rule 6 letter</li> <li>• Requests to be heard at any subsequent OFH to be held after OFH1</li> <li>• Requests by Affected Persons (AP) (defined in section 59(4) of the Planning Act 2008) to be heard at a CAH</li> <li>• Notification by any Statutory Parties who have not submitted a RR of their wish to be considered as an Interested Party</li> <li>• Responses to any further information requested by ExA for this deadline</li> </ul> <p><b>From Local Authorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Impact Report (LIR)</li> </ul> <p><b>From the Applicant</b></p> <p>If changes have been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggested Accompanied Site Inspection (ASI) itinerary</li> <li>• Separate Land Rights Trackers for both APs and Statutory Undertakers (SUs)</li> <li>• Initial Statements of Common Ground (SoCG)</li> <li>• Progress with Statements of Common Ground Document (PSoCG)</li> <li>• National Policy Statement (NPS) Accordance Table</li> </ul> <p>If changes have been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated Guide to the Application document tracker</li> <li>• Updated Book of Reference (BoR)</li> <li>• Updated Schedule of Changes to the BoR</li> <li>• Updated draft Development Consent Order (dDCO)</li> <li>• Updated Schedule of Changes to the dDCO</li> <li>• Updated Explanatory Memorandum (EM)</li> <li>• Updated legal agreements, if identified</li> </ul>	
6.	<p><b>Deadline 2</b></p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written Representations (WR), including summaries of any WR exceeding 1500 words</li> <li>• Responses to ExQ1</li> <li>• Comments on SoCGs and PSoCG</li> </ul>	4 March 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments on the Applicant's suggested itinerary for an ASI<sup>1</sup>, if required</li> <li>• Comments on LIR</li> <li>• Comments on any other submissions received at the previous deadline</li> <li>• Responses to any further information requested by ExA</li> </ul> <p><b>From the Applicant</b> If changes have been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated Guide to the Application document tracker</li> <li>• Updated BoR</li> <li>• Updated Schedule of Changes to the BoR</li> <li>• Updated Land Rights Trackers</li> <li>• Updated Consents and Licences Statement</li> <li>• Updated dDCO</li> <li>• Updated Schedule of Changes to the dDCO</li> <li>• Updated EM</li> <li>• Updated SoCG and PSoCG</li> <li>• Updated NPS Accordance Table</li> <li>• Updated legal agreements, if identified</li> </ul>	
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>Deadline 3</b> For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments on WR</li> <li>• Responses to comments on RR</li> <li>• Comments on responses to ExQ1</li> <li>• Comments on any submissions received at the previous deadline</li> <li>• Responses to any further information requested by ExA</li> </ul>	<b>18 March 2025</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Accompanied Site Inspection</b>	<b>1 April 2025</b>
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>Days reserved for Hearings, if required</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue Specific Hearing(s)</li> <li>• Further Open Floor Hearing(s)</li> </ul>	<b>2 and 3 April 2025</b>
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>Week reserved for Hearings, if required</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue Specific Hearing(s)</li> <li>• Further Open Floor Hearing(s)</li> </ul>	<b>Wc 7 April 2025</b>
<b>11.</b>	<p><b>Deadline 4</b> For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses to comments on WR and ExQ1</li> </ul>	<b>22 April 2025</b>

<sup>1</sup> When suggesting locations, please have regard to the places already visited by the ExA on any Unaccompanied Site Inspections (USIs) it undertakes. Suggestions must explain why the location needs to be visited, information about whether the location can be accessed or seen using public rights of way or publicly accessible land, and what access arrangements would need to be made.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post hearing submissions including written summaries of oral submissions made at the Hearings</li> <li>• Natural England's Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS) update</li> <li>• Comments on any submissions received at the previous deadline</li> <li>• Responses to any further information requested by ExA</li> </ul> <p><b>From the Applicant</b> If changes have been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated Guide to the Application document tracker</li> <li>• Updated Land Rights Trackers</li> <li>• Updated Consents and Licences Statement</li> <li>• Updated dDCO</li> <li>• Updated Schedule of Changes to the dDCO</li> <li>• Updated EM</li> <li>• Updated SoCG and PSoCG</li> <li>• Updated NPS Accordance Table</li> <li>• Updated legal agreements, if identified</li> </ul>	
12.	<p><b>Publication by the ExA of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ExA's Second Written Questions (ExQ2), if required</li> </ul>	13 May 2025
13.	<p><b>Deadline 5</b> For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses to ExQ2, if required</li> <li>• Comments on any submissions received at the previous deadline</li> <li>• Responses to any further information requested by the ExA for this deadline</li> </ul> <p><b>From the Applicant</b> If changes have been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated NPS compliance table</li> <li>• Updated Guide to the Application document tracker</li> <li>• Updated BoR</li> <li>• Updated Schedule of Changes to the BoR</li> <li>• Updated Land Rights Trackers</li> <li>• Updated SoR</li> <li>• Updated Consents and Licences Statement</li> <li>• Updated dDCO</li> <li>• Updated Schedule of Changes to the dDCO</li> <li>• Updated EM</li> </ul>	28 May 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated SoCG and PSoCG</li> <li>• Updated NPS Accordance Table</li> <li>• Updated legal agreements, if identified</li> </ul>	
<b>14.</b>	<p><b>Week reserved for Hearings, if required</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue Specific Hearing(s)</li> <li>• Compulsory Acquisition Hearing(s)</li> <li>• Open Floor Hearing(s)</li> <li>• Further ASI</li> </ul>	<b>Wc 16 June 2025</b>
<b>15.</b>	<p><b>Deadline 6</b> For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post hearing submissions including written summaries of oral submissions made at the Hearings</li> <li>• Further PADSS update from Natural England</li> <li>• Comments on any submissions received at the previous deadline</li> <li>• Responses to any further information requested by ExA</li> </ul> <p><b>From the Applicant</b> If changes have been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated Guide to the Application document tracker</li> <li>• Updated Land Rights Trackers</li> <li>• Updated Consents and Licences Statement</li> <li>• Updated dDCO</li> <li>• Updated Schedule of Changes to the dDCO</li> <li>• Updated EM</li> <li>• Updated SoCG and PSoCG</li> <li>• Updated NPS Accordance Table</li> <li>• Updated legal agreements, if identified</li> </ul>	<b>24 June 2025</b>
<b>16.</b>	<p><b>Publication by the ExA of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ExQ3, if required</li> <li>• ExA's commentary on, or schedule of changes to, the dDCO</li> <li>• Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES) and any associated questions, if required</li> </ul>	<b>1 July 2025</b>
<b>17.</b>	<p><b>Deadline 7</b> For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses to ExQ3, if required</li> <li>• Comments on the ExA's schedule of changes to the dDCO, if issued</li> <li>• Comments on any submissions received at the previous deadline</li> <li>• Responses to any further information requested by the ExA</li> </ul>	<b>15 July 2025</b>

18.	<p><b>Deadline 8</b> For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parties closing statements of final position including outstanding matters not resolved by end of examination.</li> <li>• Comments on any submissions received at the previous deadline</li> <li>• Comments on the RIES</li> <li>• Final PADSS update from Natural England in clean and tracked versions</li> <li>• Responses to any further information requested by ExA</li> </ul> <p><b>From the Applicant:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Guide to the Application document tracker in clean and tracked versions</li> <li>• Final updated BoR</li> <li>• Final BoR and schedule of changes to BoR</li> <li>• Final Land Rights Trackers</li> <li>• Final Consents and Licences Statement</li> <li>• Final SoR</li> <li>• Final dDCO, in clean and tracked versions in both MS Word and PDF</li> <li>• Final draft DCO to be submitted in the SI template with the SI template validation report</li> <li>• Final Schedule of Changes to the dDCO</li> <li>• Final EM</li> <li>• Final signed SoCGs including list of any matters not agreed</li> <li>• Final PSoCG</li> <li>• Final NPS Accordance Table in clean and tracked versions</li> <li>• Final signed and dated legal agreements, if any identified</li> </ul>	23 July 2025
19.	The ExA is under a duty to complete the Examination of the application by the end of the period of six months	Monday 28 July 2025

### Submission times for Deadlines

The time for submission of documents at any Deadline in the timetable is 23:59 on the relevant Deadline date, unless instructed otherwise by the ExA.

### Publication dates

All information received will be published on the [project webpage](#) as soon as practicable after the Deadlines for submissions.

## **Hearing agendas**

Please note that for Issue Specific Hearings and Compulsory Acquisition Hearings the ExA will publish a high-level agenda alongside the notification of the hearing to help inform your decision about whether to register to participate. A detailed draft agenda will be made available on the project webpage at least five working days in advance of the hearing date. However, the actual agenda on the day of each hearing may be subject to change at the discretion of the ExA. For Open Floor Hearings agendas may not be published.

## **Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES)**

Where an applicant has provided a No Significant Effects Report or a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Report with the application, the ExA may decide to issue a RIES during the Examination. The RIES is a factual account of the information and evidence provided to the ExA on HRA matters during the Examination up to the date of the publication of the RIES, for the purposes of enabling the Secretary of State, as competent authority, to undertake its HRA. It is not the ExA's opinion on HRA matters. Comments on the RIES will be invited by the ExA and any received will be taken into account as part of the ExA's Recommendation to the Secretary of State. The ExA may also raise questions in the RIES to confirm or clarify matters that remain outstanding.

The Secretary of State may rely on the consultation on the RIES to meet its obligations under Regulation 63(3) of The Habitats Regulations 2017 and/ or Regulation 28 of The Offshore Marine Regulations.

## Notification of initial hearing

The Examining Authority (ExA) provides notice of the following initial hearing:

Date	Hearing	Start time	Venue and Joining details
Wednesday 29 January 2025	Open Floor Hearing	<b>Registration and seating available at venue from:</b>  <b>9.30am</b>  <b>Virtual Registration Process from:</b>  <b>9.30am</b>  <b>Hearing starts: 10.00am</b>	Wivenhoe House Hotel, Wivenhoe Park, Park Road, Colchester, CO4 3FA  And  By virtual means using Microsoft Teams  Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered
<p><b>NOTE:</b> If the above hearing is no longer required then notification that the particular date is no longer required will be published as soon as practicable on the <a href="#">project webpage</a>, providing reasonable notice to Interested Parties of the decision to cancel it.</p>			

**You must register by completing the [Event Participation Form](#) by 20 January 2025 if you intend to participate in the hearing and provide all the information requested (see below).**

If you simply wish to observe the hearing, then you do not need to register as you will be able to either:

1. watch a livestream of the event - a link to the livestream will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin; and/or
2. watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished.

Alternatively, you can attend the physical hearing at the venue to observe the proceedings; however, to ensure there is adequate seating capacity at the venue we request that you register your attendance to **observe only** by **20 January 2025** using the [Event Participation Form](#). Please note that it may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **20 January 2025**

Any request to participate in a hearing **must include** the following information:

- Name and unique reference number (found at the top of any letter or email from the Planning Inspectorate);
- email address (if available) and contact telephone number;
- name and unique reference number of any person/organisation that you are representing (if applicable);



- for blended events, confirmation of whether you will participate virtually or in-person;
- confirmation of the hearing(s) you wish to participate in, the agenda item(s) on which you wish to speak and/or brief details of the topic(s) that you would like to raise;
- for Compulsory Acquisition Hearings, the plot number(s) of the relevant land provided in the Book of Reference and the Land Plans; and
- the [Examination Library](#) reference number (with paragraph/page number where appropriate) of any documents you wish to refer to.

Requests to participate in the Open Floor Hearing to be held on Wednesday 29 January 2025 should be made using the [Event Participation Form](#) on or before **Procedural Deadline A**.

**Please contact the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter if you require any support or assistance to attend the hearing, either virtually or in person.**

### Hearing agendas

A high-level agenda for this hearing has been published alongside this notification on the [project webpage](#) to help inform your decision about whether to register to participate.

For Issue Specific Hearings and Compulsory Acquisition Hearings that may be held during the Examination, the ExA will publish a detailed draft agenda on the project webpage at least five working days in advance of the hearing date. However, the actual agenda on the day of each hearing may be subject to change at the discretion of the ExA. For Open Floor Hearings, any detailed draft agenda to be published will include a speaking order list.

### Procedure at hearings

The Examination of the application will principally be a written process supplemented where necessary by various types of hearings. See the Planning Inspectorate's Advice for members of the public: [The stages of the NSIP process and how you can have your say](#) for more information.

The Planning Inspectorate's Advice for members of the public provides important information about hearing procedures:

- [What to expect at a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project event](#)
- [Registering to speak at, or attend, a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project event](#)

The procedure to be followed at hearings is set out in Rule 14 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010. The ExA is responsible for the oral questioning of a person giving evidence and the process affords very limited scope to allow cross-questioning between parties.

## Hearing livestream and recording

A link to a livestream for each hearing will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before any hearing is due to open. The livestream is available to anybody who wishes to observe a hearing in real time.

All hearings are recorded, and the recordings will be made available on the [project webpage](#) as soon as practicable after the close of the hearing. The recordings allow any member of the public who is interested in the application and the Examination to find out what has been discussed.

## Other Procedural Decisions made by the Examining Authority

The Examining Authority (ExA) has made some further Procedural Decisions as follows:

### 1. Accompanied Site Inspection – suggested locations

The draft Examination Timetable at **Annex D** to this letter includes dates reserved for an Accompanied Site Inspection (ASI).

The ExA requests that Interested Parties submit suggested locations for the ExA to visit as part of an ASI by **Procedural Deadline A (20 January 2025)**. The request must include:

- Sufficient information to identify the location;
- the issues to be observed at the location;
- information on whether the site can be accessed via public land; and
- the reason why the location has been suggested.

**Interested Parties should be aware that ASIs are not an opportunity to make any oral representations to the ExA about the Proposed Development.**

However, participants may be invited by the ExA to indicate specific features or sites of interest.

The Applicant is requested to prepare a draft itinerary for the ASI to be submitted by **Deadline 1**. This should include:

- Relevant locations referred to in the Relevant Representations received;
- any other locations at which the Applicant has predicted likely significant environmental effects; and
- the locations suggested by Interested Parties submitted by **Procedural Deadline A (20 January 2025)**.

Comments by Interested Parties on the Applicant's draft itinerary must be submitted by **Deadline 2 (4 March 2025)**.

The ExA will consider each suggested site location, including those provided in the Applicant's draft itinerary, to determine if it could be viewed from public land on an unaccompanied basis or if it is necessary to view it on an accompanied basis. The ExA will also consider if it would be appropriate to make arrangements for access only to be provided to specific sites such that they could be inspected as part of an Unaccompanied Site Inspection on an access required basis.

The ExA will publish its final itinerary at least five working days before the date of the ASI.

## 2. Additional Submissions

The ExA has exercised its discretion and made a Procedural Decision to accept the following Additional Submissions:

- [AS-001](#) The Coal Authority
- [AS-034](#) Brockthorpe Consultancy Ltd on behalf of Strutt & Parker (Farms) Ltd and Liane Enterprises Ltd
- [AS-035](#) David Snook
- [AS-036](#) Port of Tilbury London Limited
- [AS-037](#) Port of Tilbury London Limited
- [AS-038](#) NATS
- [AS-039](#) Harwich Harbour Fishermens Association

## 3. Notification by Statutory Parties of their wish to be considered as an Interested Party

The ExA has made a procedural decision that, in order to facilitate a timely start to the Examination, Statutory Parties should decide whether they wish to be considered as an IP and should notify the Planning Inspectorate of their decision by **Deadline 1 on 18 February 2025**. The ExA will consider any specific and well-reasoned requests for additional time to be provided before issuing the final timetable.

## Availability of Examination Documents

The application documents and Relevant Representations are available on the [project webpage](#).

All further documents submitted in the course of the Examination will also be published under the [project webpage](#) of the project webpage.

## The Examination Library

For ease of navigation, please refer to the [Examination Library](#) (EL) which is accessible by clicking the blue button under the Documents tab. The EL is updated regularly throughout the Examination.

The EL records and provides a hyperlink to:

- Each application document;
- each representation made to the Examination; and
- each Procedural Decision made by the Examining Authority.

Each document is given a unique reference which will be fixed for the duration of the Examination. Please quote the unique reference number from the EL when referring to any Examination Documents in any future submissions that you make.

## How to stay up to date

All information and documents can be inspected on the [project webpage](#). You can also sign up to get [email updates](#) during the project.

If you have any questions about the process, examination events or how to access the documents, you can email us at [northfalls@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:northfalls@planninginspectorate.gov.uk) or contact us on by telephone on 0303 444 5000.

## Information about the 'Have your say' page

The '[Have your say](#)' page is available on the [project webpage](#).

You will need to enter your unique reference number ('Your ref' found at the top your postcard or email from the Planning Inspectorate) beginning either 2005 or NFOW-AFP, NFOW-S5, NFOW-SO. If you are making a submission on behalf of another person or organisation, and do not have your own unique reference number, then you should enter the unique reference number of the person or organisation you are representing. If you are not a registered Interested Party, then it is at the discretion of the Examining Authority whether or not your submission is accepted.

Submissions will be published on the [project webpage](#) as soon as practicable following the close of the relevant Deadline. For further information about publishing submissions please view our [Privacy Notice](#).

You will be able to submit a document (upload file), make a text representation or both. It is possible to upload multiple files for each individual submission item. Electronic attachments should be clearly labelled with the subject title and not exceed 50MB.

Submissions **must not include hyperlinks** to documents/evidence hosted on a third-party website eg technical reports, media articles etc. See the Planning Inspectorate's Advice for members of the public: [Advice for submitting representations or comments](#) for important information about making written submissions. All submissions must be made in a format that can be viewed in full on the National Infrastructure Planning website. Any submissions that exceed 1500 words should also be accompanied by a summary; this summary should not exceed 10% of the original text.

You should select the relevant Deadline for your submission and then, on the next webpage, select the appropriate Submission item as described in the Examination Timetable at **Annex D** to this letter. Please ensure you make a separate submission for each Submission item and **do not duplicate your submission**. If you consider that your submission does not fit the description of any of the submission items then please select the submission item 'Other' and ensure that it is titled appropriately.

If you experience any issues when using the '[Have your say](#)' page please contact the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter and they will assist.