



# Preliminary Meeting Note

**Application: Rivenhall IWMF & Energy Centre**

**Reference: EN010138**

**Time and date: 09 April 2024 10am**

**Venue: Microsoft Teams**

*This meeting note is not a full transcript of the Preliminary Meeting. It is a summary of the key points discussed.*

## 1. Welcome and Introduction

The Examining Authority (ExA) welcomed those present and introduced himself and the case team, explaining he had been appointed by the Secretary of State.

The ExA explained he would be examining the application made by the Applicant before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State who will decide whether or not to make an Order granting Development Consent for the proposed project.

The ExA explained the purpose of the Preliminary Meeting (PM) and noted that the Examination will commence after the PM closes.

The full video recording of the Preliminary Meeting is available on the National Infrastructure Planning website and can be accessed [here](#).

The ExA explained the Planning Inspectorate's duties under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Further information relating to the GDPR can be found in the Planning Inspectorate's [Privacy Note](#).

## 2. The ExA's Remarks about the Examination Process

The ExA briefly explained the examination process under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). Further information can be found in [Advice Note 8.4](#).

The ExA signposted Annex B of the [Rule 6 Letter](#) which details how the Examination will be carried out.

The ExA confirmed that there will be numerous opportunities during the Examination to make written submissions, including responses to submissions made by others, which will be published on the project-specific page of the National Infrastructure Planning

website. Opportunities will also be provided for people to present their case orally, through hearings.

Annex E of the [Rule 6 Letter](#) was also signposted and the importance of making early, meaningful progress on Statements of Common Ground was highlighted.

### 3. Initial Assessment of Principal Issues

The ExA explained the purpose of the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues (section 88 of the PA2008), which can be found in Annex C of the [Rule 6 letter](#) of 12 March 2024, and asked for any observations on them.

Essex County Council confirmed that they had no observations at this time.

No other comments were received on the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues.

### 4. Draft Examination Timetable

The ExA highlighted some of the provisional key Examination dates including,

- Rule 8 Letter: **16 April 2024**
- Examining Authority Questions 1 (ExQ1): **16 April 2024**
- Deadline 1: **7 May 2024**
- Dates reserved for hearings and Accompanied Site Inspection: **week commencing 3 June 2024**
- Potential Examining Authority Second Written Questions (ExQ2): **25 June 2024**

The above dates are provisional and may change at the Examining Authority's discretion (Post meeting note: the dates have now been confirmed in the [Rule 8 letter](#)).

The ExA noted that the draft timetable does not include provision for the Planning Inspectorate to prepare a Report on the Implication for European Sites. Based on the evidence to date, the ExA has determined that significant effects on Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and the like, are unlikely. The ExA invited questions or comments on this but no comments were received.

The ExA confirmed that due to the likely limited number of attendees, hearings are intended to be held virtually. The Applicant confirmed they were content with this approach and with the dates set out in the timetable. The timetable includes provision for an Issue Specific Hearing and Open Floor Hearing (if requested by an Interested Party by Deadline 1) in the week commencing **3 June 2024**. Annex B of the [Rule 6 Letter](#) explains the purpose and procedures for these hearings.

Currently the need for a second round of hearings is not anticipated, although this can be amended by the ExA if deemed necessary.

Further information relating to hearings and site inspections can be found in [Advice Note 8.5](#)

Finally, the ExA highlighted the importance of making submissions in accordance with the set deadlines and clarified that while they have the discretion to accept late submissions, this should only be in exceptional circumstances to limit disruption to the Examination Timetable.

The ExA invited any final questions or comments on the Examination Timetable.

Essex County Council raised the potential need for evening slots for any potential Open Floor Hearing, as these may be more accessible to those who work in the day.

The ExA acknowledged the suggestion by Essex County Council and stated that it is something that could be kept in mind following Deadline 1, if any requests for an Open Floor Hearing are received.

No other questions or comments were received.

## **5. Procedural Decisions**

The ExA drew attention to Annex E of the [Rule 6 Letter](#) which includes the following,

- Preparation of Statements of Common Ground
- Draft itinerary for the Accompanied Site Inspection
- Acceptance of Additional Submissions

Further detail can be found at Annex E.

The ExA invited any questions or comments on the Procedural Decisions.

Essex County Council confirmed that they had no questions or comments to raise.

The Applicant stated that they have provided a draft Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) to Essex County Council and Braintree District Council and that the parties intend for there to be one, shared SoCG. They hope for this to be available by Deadline 1.

The Applicant stated that they also wrote to the Environment Agency on 28 March 2024 and will continue to engage in order to provide a written submission by Deadline 1.

No other questions or comments were received.

## **6. Any Other Matters**

No further matters were raised.

## **Close**

The ExA thanked everyone for their contributions and closed the meeting.