



National Infrastructure Planning
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All Interested Parties, Statutory Parties
and Other Persons

Your Ref:

Our Ref: TR010031

Date: 24 March 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

Planning Act 2008 – Section 89 and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – Rule 9 and Rule 8(3)

Application by Highways England for an Order Granting Development Consent for the A1 Birtley to Coal House Improvement Scheme

Notification of Procedural Decision and amendment to the Examination Timetable

As previously notified on the project page of the National Infrastructure Planning website: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/North%20East/A1-Birtley-to-Coal-House-Improvement-Scheme/>, in accordance with recent Government advice, the Accompanied Site Inspection, Open Floor Hearing, Compulsory Acquisition Hearing and Issue Specific Hearings that were scheduled to be held from 31 March to 3 April 2020 will no longer take place in order to avoid non-essential travel and large gatherings. I am sure that you will understand the reasons for this in these unprecedented times.

In order to facilitate ongoing progress with the Examination, I have now revised the Examination Timetable to include an additional round of Written Questions by **6 April 2020**. These questions include several matters that I had intended to include in the Hearing agendas. Responses to these questions are required by Deadline 4 (20 April 2020) with comments on responses required by Deadline 5 (1 May 2020).

Interested Parties are also invited to make any written submissions at Deadline 4 which they otherwise would have intended to make at either the Open Floor Hearing, Compulsory Acquisition Hearing or the Issue Specific Hearings.

The Examination process is primarily a written one and I encourage parties to continue discussions on outstanding matters and prepare information and written submissions where it is possible and safe to do so. With this in mind, discussions should continue pursuant to the submission of updated Statements of Common

Ground for Deadline 4. The Applicant should also continue to progress compulsory acquisition and/or temporary possession negotiations.

Where circumstances make it difficult for written submissions to be made, I may exercise discretion on any existing Deadline and I will continue to consider potential changes to the Examination Timetable in the light of the emerging situation. The website project page will continue to be the main point of reference for notifications about the Examination.

At this stage, there is obviously uncertainty regarding the ability to hold future hearings including those scheduled in the Examination Timetable from 9 to 11 June 2020.

The amended Examination Timetable is attached at Annex A.

Further general advice regarding the implications for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project Examinations and events is available here:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-planning-inspectorate-guidance>

For those of you who have received this update by post please be aware that the Planning Inspectorate may not be able to maintain that form of communication during the present circumstances. We therefore urge you to provide us, by return, with an email address which we can use to make contact with you. Please check the website and the project page regularly and sign up to Email Updates via the project page or using the link here: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/email-subscription.php?project=TR010031&email=>, if you have not already done so.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Case Team at A1BirtleytoCoalHouse@planninginspectorate.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully

David Cliff

Examining Authority

Annex A – Examination Timetable (updated on 24 March 2020)

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Examination Timetable (updated on 24 March 2020)

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.

Item	Matters	Due Dates
9	Date reserved for Accompanied Site Inspection (if required) - Postponed	Tuesday 31 March 2020
10	Date reserved for Open Floor Hearing (OFH1) (if required) - Postponed	Tuesday 31 March 2020 (evening)
11	Date reserved to hold an Issue Specific Hearing (ISH2) (if required) - Postponed	Wednesday 1 April 2020
12	Date reserved to hold an Issue Specific Hearing on the draft DCO (ISH3) (if required) - Postponed	Thursday 2 April 2020
13	Date reserved for Compulsory Acquisition Hearing (CAH1) (if required) - Postponed	Friday 3 April 2020 (morning)
14	Publication of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ExA's second Written Questions 	On or before Monday 6 April 2020
15	Deadline 4 (D4) Deadline for receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses to the ExA's second Written Questions Written submissions on matters parties had intended raising at the postponed Hearings Any revised/updated SoCG Applicant's revised draft DCO (if required) Responses to any further information requested by the ExA for this deadline 	Monday 20 April 2020
16	Deadline 5 (D5) Deadline for receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments on any responses to the ExA's second Written Questions Comments on any revised/updated SoCG (if any) Comments on Applicant's revised draft DCO (if any) Comments on any additional information/submissions received by D4 	Friday 1 May 2020

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses to any further information requested by the ExA for this deadline 	
17	<p>Publication of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ExA's third Written Questions (if required) 	Thursday 7 May 2020
18	<p>Deadline 6 (D6)</p> <p>Deadline for receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses to the ExA's third Written Questions (if required) Comments on any additional information/submissions received by D5 Responses to any further information requested by the ExA for this deadline 	Thursday 21 May 2020
19	<p>Publication of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES) (if required) The ExA's proposed schedule of changes to the draft DCO (if required) 	Thursday 4 June 2020
20	<p>Hearings</p> <p>Dates reserved for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further Issue Specific Hearing (if required) Further Issue Specific Hearing on the draft DCO (if required) Further Open Floor Hearing (if required) Further Compulsory Acquisition Hearing (if required) Further Accompanied Site Inspection (if required) 	Tuesday 9 June to Thursday 11 June 2020
21	<p>Deadline 7 (D7)</p> <p>Deadline for receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post Hearing submissions including written submissions of oral case (if required) Comments on responses to the ExA's further Written Questions (if required) Comments on the RIES (if required) Comments on the ExA's proposed schedule of changes to the draft DCO (if required) Comments on any additional information/submissions received by D6 Responses to any further information requested by the ExA for this deadline 	Thursday 25 June 2020

<p>22</p>	<p>Deadline 8 (D8)</p> <p>Deadline for receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to comments on the RIES (if required) • Responses to comments on the ExA's proposed schedule of changes to the draft DCO (if required) • Final DCO to be submitted by the Applicant in the SI template with the SI template validation report • Final updated Book of Reference • Final SoCG • Final Statement of Commonality of SoCG • Final Compulsory Acquisition Schedule • Final updated Guide to the Application • Comments on any additional information/submissions received by D7 • Responses to any further information requested by the ExA for this deadline 	<p>Tuesday 7 July 2020</p>
<p>23</p>	<p>Deadline 9 (D9)</p> <p>Deadline for receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on any additional information/submissions received • Responses to any further information requested by the ExA for this deadline 	<p>Friday 17 July 2020</p>
<p>24</p>	<p>The ExA is under a duty to complete the Examination of the application by the end of the period of 6 months beginning with the day after the close of the Preliminary Meeting.</p>	<p>Tuesday 21 July 2020</p>

Publication dates

All information received will be published on the project page of the National Infrastructure Planning website as soon as practicable after each deadline for submissions.