

1 MR SMITH: Good morning, everybody, and welcome to today's open-floor hearing
2 number 2, for the Lower Thames Crossing. The first open-floor hearing for this
3 examination has already been held. It was held online. This, however, is the
4 first open-floor hearing to be held in person, in a venue, and in Thurrock, in the
5 ceremonial county of Essex. So, this, really, in many ways, is where it starts,
6 with a capital 'S'. But this event is also being held online, via a link that's
7 available on the national infrastructure planning website.

8 Now, before we introduce ourselves, I'll deal with a few preliminary
9 matters. Can I check with the case team, both in the room and virtually, that we
10 can be heard online, and that recordings and live streams have started? And I'm
11 seeing a positive signal from the sound desk at the rear of the room, so we can
12 assure ourselves that those have happened.

13 So to introductions: my name is Rynd Smith and I'm the lead member of
14 a panel, which is the Examining Authority for the Lower Thames Crossing
15 application, and I'm in the chair for the opening part of this hearing today. I'll
16 draw your attention to the fact that we've published frequently asked questions
17 that you can access from a link in our rule 6 letter, which in turn was issued way
18 back in April, I'm afraid now. But it is available on our website, and that's the
19 location that you need to go to if you want to find out about myself and my panel
20 member colleagues. You will find our biographies there.

21 My fellow panel members will introduce themselves shortly. I'm going
22 to start by introducing Mr Ken Pratt and he will be taking the chair and leading
23 the conversation once these introductions have concluded. So, first of all, Mr
24 Pratt.

25 MR PRATT: Good morning, everybody. It's nice to see you in the flesh, as they say.
26 My name is Ken Pratt; I'm a panel member and you'll hear my voice quite a lot
27 today as I'm going to be leading the main elements of this hearing, once the
28 introductions are over and you see who's in front of you. I'm going to pass
29 across to my colleague, Ms Laver.

30 MS LAVER: Good morning, everybody. I'm Janine Laver, panel member. Today, I'm
31 here mostly observing and taking notes. I will ask questions, if I need to, as they
32 arise. I will hand on to my colleague, Mr Taylor. Thank you.

33 MR TAYLOR: Good morning, everybody. My name's Ken Taylor. I'm a panel member
34 and, similarly, I will be largely observing and taking notes today, but I may ask

1 questions if they arise. Finally, I'll hand over to Mr Young, who's joining us
2 virtually.

3 MR YOUNG: Good morning, everybody. As you can see, and as Mr Taylor just
4 explained, I am attending virtually today and I will be mainly observing, taking
5 notes in the background. I'll hand back to you, Mr Smith.

6 MR SMITH: Thank you very much, Mr Young. And that makes a point; we're appointed
7 as a panel of five examining inspectors, and it's perfectly normal, when we're
8 conducting business like this, particularly with the assistance of amazing digital
9 technology that we have these days, for us not necessarily all to be in precisely
10 the same place. However, as you've seen with Mr Young, there, he is able to
11 fully participate as a member of the bench of this Examining Authority, whilst
12 not being in the room. I will also flag that what that does enable us to do, and
13 we will be doing in some hearings, particularly in this examination – and again,
14 this is completely normal practice for large examinations – is allocating specific
15 duties and having individual members of the Examining Authority present and
16 leading in a hearing, whilst other members may be tasked with, amongst other
17 things, preparing for a following hearing or reviewing written evidence to make
18 sure that they are ready to take on a lead role in the next part of the examination.
19 So that's part of our thought process here and I thought it deserved a little
20 explanation.

21 I'm also going to flag that we are here, physically, in person. We have no
22 indication whatsoever that any unforeseen event will prevent us from continuing
23 and completing this hearing here today and needing to leave this venue.
24 However, because we have this mixed pattern of physical and virtual attendance,
25 one of the things we have done is we've all arranged deputies for each other's
26 roles. So we can and will swap around; just because I'm the panel lead, doesn't
27 mean I chair everything etc. And, equivalently, every single event also has a
28 contingency plan, in case of unforeseen matters, like internet failure, meaning
29 that the event struggles.

30 For this particular event, because it's relatively small, and we have a
31 relatively small number of people speaking, the contingency plan is very, very
32 simple. It is that, if we are unable to complete today, for unforeseen reasons, we
33 have a number of prospective open-floor hearings through the remainder of the
34 examination and anybody who, for some reason, is unable to speak today, will

1 be contacted by the case team and asked to join onto a further open-floor event
2 later in the examination. However, I very, very much hope that none of those
3 plans will be required because we will be able to hear everybody smoothly,
4 fairly, and clearly and run this day from beginning to end, with no interruptions.

5 I will introduce our Planning Inspectorate colleagues working with us on
6 these examinations because, in terms of those sorts of events, they're the people
7 that do the thinking, they're the people that do the planning that make those sorts
8 of arrangements occur. You'll have spoken to some of them as you enter the
9 room, whether that be virtually or in person. Bart Bartkowiak and Ted
10 Blackmore are jointly the case managers leading the Planning Inspectorate case
11 team, and they are both physically in the room with us today. Case officers,
12 Ryan Sedgman and Chris Glaister, and planning officer, Alice Humphries,
13 who's over here assisting the Examining Authority, are also physically in this
14 room. And Katy O'Loan and Spencer Barrowman are in the virtual room,
15 looking after the people who are online and keeping our digital systems running.

16 Now, hopefully, the agenda paper that we provided for today gives you a
17 clear explanation of our and your reasons for being here today, and that is, to
18 hold an open-floor hearing. And an open-floor hearing – we hold various
19 different types of hearings in these examinations, but open-floor hearings are
20 distinguished by the fact that they are the opportunity for anybody who is an
21 interested party to say their piece. And it's your opportunity to raise anything
22 that is important and relevant, and that you think we need to know about and
23 consider, before we make any findings, or make our recommendations to the
24 secretary of state, on the application for development consent that is in front of
25 us.

26 Now, in terms of the application, you will find information about it, and
27 the documents produced for this examination, on the Planning Inspectorate's
28 national infrastructure planning website. Now, I suspect everybody in this room
29 probably knows very well how to get to that by now. If you're not familiar with
30 it, however, I would urge you to look for it, because it is the place that we will
31 be using to share all of the examination issues and documents that emerge over
32 the coming six months with you. And simply, to find it, google 'Lower Thames
33 Crossing Planning Inspectorate', and the top hit will take you there. And if you
34 have any trouble finding it whatsoever, do speak to our case team colleagues in

1 the room. There is a web address; it's quite long and complicated, and you will
2 find it in our rule six, and now rule eight, letters. So you know who we are; you
3 know why we're here. I am now going to cut to the chase; I'm going to hand
4 you over to Mr Ken Pratt, and he's going to then draw in individual speakers
5 and chair the remainder of this hearing. So Mr Pratt.

6 MR PRATT: Thank you very much, Mr Smith. Shortly, I will be asking attendees to
7 speak. That's why you're hear and that's what we want to do, is we want to hear
8 what you have to say. Now, from the number who have registered to speak, it
9 is possible that we may extend into an afternoon session today. But, to be honest,
10 we'll see how the time passes. I intend to try and take a break about 11.15,
11 11.30, for 15 minutes, and then, again, about 1.00, 1.30, for lunch. But we'll see
12 how things go; I'm not going to try and curtail your time at all.

13 However, before I call my first speaker, there is a few things that I would
14 like you to remember. We advised you, in the agenda, that we're being
15 live-streamed and recorded. Now, the recordings that we make are retained and
16 published, and from the public record, they contain any personal information
17 that you say, and, to which the UK data protection regulation applies. Now,
18 does anyone have any questions, now, about the terms on which our digital
19 recordings are made? I'm not seeing any hands up in the room, and there's no
20 hands up in the digital platform, so I will move forward on the basis that this is
21 all understood.

22 The agendas for these hearings provided a clear explanation – we hope
23 they provided a clear explanation – of both our and your reasons for being here
24 today, which is to hold an open-floor hearing. Now, this is your opportunity to
25 raise anything that is – it's alright, I'm normally the IT wizard with doing little
26 bits like this. Right, sorry about that. Yeah, this, of course, is your opportunity
27 to raise anything that you think is important and relevant, and that you think we
28 should know about and consider. This hearing is not about a particular location
29 or topic; the topic of your representation about the proposals is up to you. Nice
30 and silent again.

31 I will flag, though, that there will be separate compulsory acquisition
32 hearings to hear anyone who's intersected in land or affected by compulsory
33 acquisition, or temporary possession requests that the applicants have made. If
34 you're an affected person who wants to speak about either of those topics, and

1 if you're wanting to speak about them today, we're not going to stop you, but
2 do be reminded, there are compulsory acquisition hearings that might be another
3 place to make your points.

4 Turning, specifically, to today's hearing, the order that I intend to take
5 speakers in is really alphabetical order, and it sets out the speaking times and
6 guides that apply. So, hopefully, you know when you're likely to speak. Please
7 don't leave until you've had your turn because, if you do, we may not be able to
8 include you in a later session. Once you've since spoken, you can leave, you
9 can stay, you can listen to what we have to say, or you can go away and listen
10 to us on the livestream or pick up on the video once it's been published.

11 I should say that we're going to be strict but fair in managing timings. It's
12 really so everyone has their opportunity to speak. Please don't be offended if I
13 have to ask you to stop speaking near the end of your allotted time. If you have
14 more to say and you haven't managed to get everything within your timescale,
15 then you are more than welcome – you're very welcome – to submit your
16 additional material, in writing, at deadline 1, which is 18 July. And remember,
17 in this process, written and oral contributions carry equal weight.

18 Now, before we get started, can I just check the name of the speaker that's
19 representing the applicant – is it Mr Henderson? Yes, thank you. Because the
20 main purpose, today, is to hear from you, the interested parties, the applicant and
21 ourselves are here to listen. Before I close the hearing, I will give the applicant
22 a brief opportunity to make any remarks on the matters that he considers should
23 be drawn to our attention at this time. Mr Henderson, you will be limited to five
24 minutes' allocation and, of course, as you know, your detailed responses can be
25 provided in writing at deadline 1, which, as you know, is 18 July.

26 Anyone who is speaking today but wishes to leave before the applicant
27 has spoken can watch the applicant's response on the livestream or the
28 recording, once it's been published. And it gets published on the Planning
29 Inspectorate's website, for the Lower Thames Crossing. If there's anything in
30 it that you disagree with, again, you can let us know in deadline 1. And I
31 apologise for the length of time, but I just want to make sure that everybody is
32 clear with what we're trying to do. I will remind everybody of the importance,
33 really, of respecting everybody else. Let everybody else have their say and, in
34 fairness, they should let you have your say as well. We don't want you to be

1 interrupted when you speak, and I would ask don't interrupt anybody else. If
2 you agree or disagree with what they say, then you can make that clear to us
3 during your own speaking time, or, if you've already spoken or are watching on
4 the live stream or the recording, then you can do so in writing at deadline 1.
5 Every speaker should be allowed to make full use of their time to speak. Just a
6 reminder, again, that deadline 1 is 18 July – plenty of time available for you to
7 submit your views.

8 If anyone does interrupt in a way that's unnecessary or disrupts the
9 hearing, I'll warn them. They can continue; I'll warn them again. If that same
10 person interrupts, I will – I don't want to, but I will ask the case manager or the
11 case team to exclude them from the hearing. Please be aware that repeated
12 interruptions that lead to disruption, or what they call vexatious and frivolous
13 behaviour, can be viewed as unreasonable behaviour, for which awards of costs
14 can be sought by other interested parties.

15 And, finally, you'll be glad to hear, for those attending virtually, as Mr
16 Smith said, if anything goes wrong with technology for you today and you
17 struggle to participate, contact the case team by email or telephone. They will
18 try and get you back into the hearing. If that fails, we'll try and get you into a
19 later hearing, and there's always submitting your views in writing. If anything
20 goes wrong with the technology at our end, we'll try and do exactly the same
21 situation, and we'll announce next steps on the Lower Thames Crossing landing
22 page, on the national infrastructure planning website. We have some
23 contingency time set aside to continue this hearing, if needs be, or, as I said, we
24 can invite you to join a later hearing. But, all in all, we'll see how we get on this
25 morning.

26 You'll be glad to know that my introductory spiel and our introductions
27 are now complete. Before I move onto the main business of this session, does
28 anyone have a question, of an introductory or preliminary nature, that you feel
29 needs to be resolved now and will not come out later on in the agenda or at some
30 other point?

31 MR SMITH: We have one online speaker wishing to come in. And I believe that is
32 Stuart Dixon; is that correct?

1 MR DIXON: Yes, that's correct, sir. Good morning. I just wanted to know – I have to
2 walk up to school at 3.00 p.m. to pick my granddaughter up. Will I likely to be
3 required at that time, or will I get away with it?

4 MR PRATT: When you say 'get away with it', are you trying not to go and pick up your
5 daughter from school, or are you trying to find an excuse not to go, or are you
6 hoping that you are not needed here? To be fair, Mr Dixon, I think you'll be
7 safe to go and pick her up at 3.00, whether that's your intention or not. I
8 apologise for having a bit of fun at your expense.

9 MR DIXON: Thank you very much.

10 MR SMITH: Mr Dixon, are you content? We'll do our utmost to get you in before 3.00.

11 MR DIXON: I am indeed, sir.

12 MR SMITH: Thank you very much. Now, we have one further yellow hand, from Mr
13 Graham Reeve, also outside the room. Mr Reeve.

14 MR REEVE: Good morning. I hope you can hear me. I've got a similar question to the
15 previous gentleman. Because my name begins with 'R', I guess I might be fairly
16 late in the day. I don't know whether you can give any indication at all on that,
17 about what time I'm likely to be called?

18 MR PRATT: My apologies. I would say not, because everything fluctuates. My best
19 guess, at this moment in time, is probably one of the first after lunch.

20 MR SMITH: Yeah.

21 MR PRATT: I think that's, roughly, where we're –

22 MR SMITH: Ah, are you in the ramblers, sir?

23 MR REEVE: That's correct, yes.

24 MR PRATT: Oh, no. You'll be shortly, then.

25 MR SMITH: One of the first.

26 MR PRATT: The way I'm intending to do this – and I maybe should have made this
27 clear to begin with – is I'm intending to start off with the representative bodies
28 and then going to the multiple interests – so the two or three people at same
29 addresses, or situations like that – and then individuals at the end. It's just purely
30 and simply so that when we get the timer going, we keep the times for the same
31 length of time and it makes things a lot easier for the case team, without
32 chopping and changing between a five-minute and a three-minute and a
33 10-minute. You'll be one of the early ones.

34 MR SMITH: So, yes, sir, as part of the ramblers, you're going to be up fairly soon.

1 MR REEVE: Thank you, sir.

2 MR PRATT: Is there any other questions?

3 MR SMITH: Yes, no, that hand has just gone down. So, no, we don't have any further
4 questions.

5 MR PRATT: Any further questions in the room? Well, that looks as if it's time to get
6 on with things. Before I introduce our first speaker, I'll just confirm that it's our
7 intention not to interfere with your submissions. As long as you remain relevant
8 and within time, we will not interrupt or make any other comment. You'll have
9 prepared what you've got to say and it's not fair for you to be interrupted when
10 you're saying it. We're going to listen carefully; if my colleagues or I have
11 questions, we'll raise these at the end of your speaking time.

12 Now the first speaker I have on my list is Essex County Council, Mr
13 MacDonnell. Now, as a representative body, you've got 10 minutes to make
14 your points, and, this will happen in all cases, where one of the Planning
15 Inspectorate case team will let you know with a slide – in this case, halfway
16 through, at five-minute intervals – and then, again, for everybody, when you've
17 got one minute left, so that everybody gets the same amount of time. When you
18 begin your contribution, could you also introduce yourself, please, just so that
19 the recordings and everybody who sees you online knows who you are? And,
20 again, I would ask everybody to do that.

21 So, Mr MacDonnell, Essex County Council, if you would please come to
22 the – just before I ask you to start, as a representative body, you will be advised
23 at future issue-specific hearings, and you will have specific invitations to attend
24 those in the future. But we do wish to still hear what you have to say today, so
25 when you're ready, Mr MacDonnell.

26 MR MACDONNELL: Thank you, sir. My name is Gary MacDonnell, and I am here,
27 today, representing Essex County Council. We do note that this process is
28 primarily a written process and all of the points that I make today will be
29 discussed, in detail, within our written representations and, where relevant, will
30 be raised at issue-specific hearings. However, with the invite to address one of
31 the open-floor hearings, we have chosen to go through, briefly, our position and
32 comments on the scheme, in the interests of full visibility.

33 Essex County Council has been actively engaged with the Lower Thames
34 Crossing team throughout the process, from the initial responses back in March

1 2016, and Essex County Council support the Lower Thames Crossing and the
2 proposed location at location C. We primarily support due to the economic
3 benefits of the crossing; there are significant economic benefits at location C, as
4 the greatest potential for regeneration and job creation. There is network
5 resilience that the Lower Thames Crossing will clearly create, and there are also
6 strategic transport benefits. I'm not going to outline them in any particular
7 detail, but they will be tabled in due course. As a supporter of the scheme, we
8 were extremely disappointed, and we are extremely disappointed, with the
9 delays that this project has had in coming forward for the DCO hearings and,
10 also, of the announcement, in March, of a two-year delay, given the benefit that
11 the project will provide both locally and nationally.

12 In general, we believe that through detailed design and, particularly, with
13 the budget-driven cuts, the value of the scheme has been undermined. Given the
14 delays that have been announced, which will surely bring about inflationary cost
15 measures, we would urge National Highways to go back to the project scope that
16 was first presented, to get maximum value for the public purse and make this
17 project the best it can be. Our concerns with the scheme will cross over, broadly,
18 with those representations that other parties are making. But, nevertheless,
19 again, in the interests of full visibility, I will quickly run through these.

20 Firstly, the Tilbury link road: we oppose the lack of a junction link road
21 for Tilbury. As a minimum – and this is not ideal, but as a minimum – we would
22 request some form of assurance that this could be revisited in a future round of
23 roads investment strategy. But it is contrary, at the moment, to the government's
24 strong support for the free port agenda, and we would very much like to see that
25 connection put back into the scheme.

26 We have severe concerns about the lane provisions, southbound, from the
27 M25, junction 29. We have consistently opposed the reduction of lanes from
28 three to two. We do understand the logic, which has been presented by the
29 Lower Thames Crossing team. However, it is a short-sighted move, given the
30 growth that is predicted to happen within the area. And, as a bare minimum,
31 there should at least be passive provision for a future widening.

32 The access from the A13 is also of concern; there is a lack of direct
33 connection, and this is to the scheme's detriment. Also, within that facility, the
34 connectivity from the Orsett Cock, we oppose the lack of connection from Orsett

1 Cock and we note that Thurrock have made some clear – Thurrock Council,
2 sorry – have made some very clear representation on this matter, which Essex
3 County Council support, despite that not being within the Thurrock boundary
4 directly.

5 We have consistently pushed for variable charging through the Lower
6 Thames Crossing. We believe that National Highways should retain control of
7 user charge regimes, so that charges can be adjusted if needed. Current proposal,
8 as we understand it, is for consistent charging between the existing Dartford
9 Crossing – Queen Elizabeth Bridge – and the proposed Lower Thames Crossing.
10 We believe that there should be variable charging processes in place.

11 We're disappointed with the lack of cross-river cycling provision. We
12 would like the project to commit to facilitating cycle travel through the tunnel.
13 We have expressed disappointment that the proposed provision would, actually,
14 be less than is currently at Dartford, and this is clearly contrary to the agenda to
15 make cycling a safe and attractive journey choice.

16 We have concerns with the interface of the Lower Thames Crossing with
17 the Brentwood Enterprise Park. We have asserted, on a number of occasions,
18 that this project should not compromise the viability and access to that enterprise
19 park. This park is part of Brentwood's adopted local plan, and is the main
20 employment site, going forward, for Brentwood. We have requested that the
21 project co-ordinates with Brentwood Council to make sure that there's suitable
22 access, both during construction and post-construction. I will say that we are
23 clear that the project has proactively engaged with Brentwood Council on this
24 matter. However, it does need to reach a conclusion that is satisfactory to both
25 Brentwood and Essex County Council.

26 There is a lack of provision for bus services and public transport within
27 this scheme. Again, we would like to see that improve; there is clear potential
28 here for some form of fast-track, South Essex Rapid Transit service, that could
29 link Essex to Kent. Again, away from the tunnel, the cycle network
30 enhancements – we would like to see more of a coherent cycle network as part
31 of the project, linking South Essex. And we would, as a minimum, like the
32 ability to pursue that via designated funds.

33 Walking, cycling, and horse-riding access to Brentwood Enterprise Park:
34 we have requested that any altered or bridge access to the east of the M25 will

1 need to consider the new structures proposed for the Brentwood Enterprise Park,
2 and that development and maintenance of public rights of way connections are
3 done as appropriate. Modelling that has been provided by the Lower Thames
4 Crossing does highlight numerous junctions experiencing negative capacity and
5 flow impacts. The locations affected are beyond the minimum – beyond the
6 immediate vicinity of the project, due to changes in routing choices.

7 We would like to see a clearer statement around mitigation for these
8 identified impacts. We would like to see National Highways commit to working
9 with highway chiefs, in terms of mitigating the wider road network, and
10 accelerated funding and delivery of those mitigations. This is to maximise any
11 consequential opportunities for housing and economic growth. We need a clear
12 understanding with National Highways about how that required mitigation will
13 be determined.

14 Skills, education, and employment are a big area for Essex County
15 Council. We've been clear that this project needs to encourage early
16 engagement in this sector and secure a strategic approach between highway
17 projects in the county, given the number of schemes that we've got. Essex is a
18 very busy location. I'm not here to speak on behalf of any other authorities, but
19 I'm sure they would say similar. This project does present opportunities, sorry,
20 to provide positive benefits in the form of apprenticeships, training, skills
21 development, jobs, and engagement with local schools and colleges, particularly
22 around STEM subjects.

23 We'd like to see a targeting of provision and a clear emphasis on
24 local-based businesses benefiting from the supply chains, more local focus in
25 terms of workforce origin, and an economic backdrop. In terms of procurement
26 and delivery, we have requested a sharper explanation of targets and how they
27 would be monitored, as opposed to broad statements of ambition. We have
28 flagged the urgent skills and supply chain issues required to work to mitigate the
29 risks of the project. We would be keen to understand and maximise the legacy
30 of skills training and employment; we believe that the project has lacked
31 emphasis in this area. We would like to see the construction sector capacity and
32 productivity to be permanently enhanced by this project, and would help towards
33 gaps in the physical and social infrastructure, if properly carried out. Finally,
34 and it is linked to the modelling proposals, but there has to be proper impact

1 monitoring of this scheme. This scheme needs to have a proper and robust
2 monitoring plan in place, which considers the traffic impacts and compares the
3 effects of the modelling against what will happen post-opening. This will have
4 to include air quality, noise, socioeconomic factors and, of course, traffic. The
5 monitoring plan needs to cover a sufficiently large area in sufficient depth, to
6 ensure the impacts of this project can be properly identified and understood. A
7 robust monitoring plan, with input from affected stakeholders, should be a
8 requirement of the DCO for this scheme. That completes my statement. Thank
9 you for your time.

10 MR PRATT: Thank you very much. Has any of my panel colleagues any questions for
11 Mr MacDonnell?

12 MR SMITH: Not directly. And that is no reflection, in any way, on the lack of relevance
13 or, indeed, importance in relation to the matters that you've raised, Mr
14 MacDonnell. They're all big matters, as we're obviously very clear. But I think
15 we recognise that the county has come forward to put its position, essentially,
16 on the face of the public record, at the beginning of the open-floor hearing
17 process. So we understand why you're here. As my colleague did say, we do
18 have a number of issue-specific hearings that are going to go, at a finer grain,
19 through, I would guess, the great majority of those agenda items that you have
20 placed onto the table. And I think by far the most productive use of our time, in
21 conversation with you as an authority, will be to talk about those issues in detail,
22 both through issue-specific hearings and written questions, in due course. So
23 you'll, I guess, hopefully, then, recognise that that's why we're not asking you
24 detailed questions now. As long as that's understood.

25 MR MACDONNELL: Absolutely. Of course, that is understood. And, as I said in my
26 introduction, we do recognise that there will be issue-specific hearings and we
27 will have that opportunity. But we want to place, as public record, at the outset,
28 concerns and where we stand on the project.

29 MR SMITH: In that regard, that task has been accomplished, that job is done, and we've
30 certainly been taking copious notes through that. And we'll make sure that we
31 align issues to relevant processes moving on through the examination. So thank
32 you very much for your contribution.

33 MR MACDONNELL: Thank you very much.

1 MR PRATT: Thank you very much. Right, the next person on my list is the British
2 Horse Society, Sarah Rayfield, who, I believe, is coming in on the IT. Good
3 morning, Ms Rayfield.

4 MS RAYFIELD: Good morning.

5 MR PRATT: You will have 10 minutes. Hopefully, our colleagues will be able to put a
6 five-minute warning up, and then you'll get a minute's warning –

7 MS RAYFIELD: I've timed myself for five minutes, so we should be comfortable.

8 MR PRATT: That's excellent. Thank you very much. The floor is yours.

9 MS RAYFIELD: Thank you very much. My name is Sarah Rayfield and I am the access
10 field officer for the London and south-east region of the British Horse Society,
11 the UK's largest equestrian charity, with over 120,000 members, representing
12 the country's 3 million horse riders.

13 BHS staff and volunteers from Kent and Essex have worked with National
14 Highways and its representatives since its very first walking, cycling, and horse-
15 riding assessment and review in respect of this project. I wish to represent the
16 British Horse Society and equestrians on behalf of the project south of the
17 Thames. Since the initial consultations and over the ensuing years, we have, on
18 the whole, been very happy with the proposals for equestrian inclusion within
19 this region, south of the Thames. The public paths proposed would provide
20 much-needed connectivity to existing routes, north and south of the A2, and west
21 to east on both sides of the road, as well as over the Lower Thames Crossing, to
22 the north.

23 We have asked, on several occasions, for up-to-date maps, marked to
24 clearly show the status – for example, footpaths, for bridleways, public or
25 permissive etc. – of existing and proposed rights of way. As you will know, I'm
26 sure, sir, footpaths only carry public rights on foot, whereas bridleways, for
27 example, carry public rights on foot, horseback and on cycles. These maps have
28 not been forthcoming, which has made informed responses difficult on more
29 than one occasion.

30 Immediately prior to submitting the DCO, we were informed by National
31 Highways representatives that there would be no 'by right' public paths provided
32 for equestrians south of the A2, between Church Road, Henhurst, and Half Pence
33 Lane, north of Cobham. A permissive path was proposed instead. No
34 clarification as to the terms and conditions of this permissive path were provided

1 then or since. We were informed that it was not possible for the landowners,
2 occupiers, to dedicate the path as a public bridleway. From memory, we've
3 received nothing in writing. The reasons cited for the inability to dedicate the
4 bridleways as public were a) Forestry England stated it was not possible to
5 dedicate a bridleway across Crown land, and b) Woodland Trust stated that land
6 ownership and its trust status meant it was too complicated to obtain a
7 dedication.

8 BHS wrote, confirming that we believe there is legal capacity to create a
9 public bridleway, and we have explained how we believe it would be possible
10 to achieve this. Despite asking for a response to this, none has been received.
11 We would still welcome the opportunity to work with National Highways, the
12 landowners, and Kent County Council, to resolve this. The provision of this
13 public path will provide connectivity for many equestrians south of the A2, to
14 take advantage of the new provision north of the A2 and, indeed, enable those
15 north to visit places such as Jeskyns and Ashenbank, to the south of the road. A
16 permissive path provides no future security for equestrians or, indeed, any users,
17 and so it is imperative that all legitimate steps are taken to ensure this path
18 remains, as originally proposed, a public bridleway – and, we believe, better
19 value for money.

20 Further, since the publication of the documentation on the Planning
21 Inspectorate website, we note that the bridleway has been annotated as a
22 'permissive pedestrian cycle route, new', within the 7.9 transport assessment,
23 appendix A, plate 1.1, 'new provision for WCH south of the River Thames'. To
24 exclude equestrians altogether, here, would be entirely unreasonable and at odds
25 with everything previously discussed and agreed. And that is the end, thank you.

26 MR PRATT: Thank you very much. I'll do the same as I did for the county council, ask
27 any of my colleagues on the panel here, would they like to ask any questions at
28 this stage?

29 MR SMITH: What I will do is put the applicant on notice and revert back to the applicant.
30 And they may wish to pick this up, briefly, at the end of the day, in their time
31 because I think it would assist us for them to point us to the latest position; to
32 point us to, I guess, the rationale around the question about whether permissive
33 or as of right permission is in mind; and also to address clearly the question of
34 whether utilisation as a cycleway that is permissive will or will not entail

1 supporting equestrian use, because I think there's a complex of issues there that
2 need to be teased out. What I won't ask them to do is to place all of the detail
3 of that into their oral submissions this afternoon, because you'll be clearly that
4 they'll have many other things to deal with. However, it should come out, in
5 writing, at deadline 1. That will, in turn, inform us and we can work out how to
6 feed that into subsequent issue-specific hearings, where we do address how non-
7 motorised users interface with the scheme more broadly.

8 So that's the first matter arising. And I guess the second practical question
9 is in relation to your own specific remit and concerns; namely, the strong focus
10 there is south of the river and M2-A2 corridor. And I'm just testing whether or
11 not the society has any particular positions north of the river that you're wishing
12 to advance today at all.

13 MS RAYFIELD: Not for me, thank you, sir. The reason for that is, because we are a
14 region, divided into regions, there are different volunteers and a different
15 member of staff working in relation to the east. So we've had to try and keep
16 things separate. Their issues were very, very different from ours.

17 MR SMITH: Okay. So, in other words, it's not entirely to be excluded that we might
18 have subsequent requests to be heard by the region north of the river.

19 MS RAYFIELD: Yes.

20 MR SMITH: This flags a general point of organisation for these hearings. What we are
21 normally very clear that we need to do is not to allow, essentially, double-
22 dipping, where one organisation, one representative body, is essentially heard
23 twice. However, with entities, for example, like the wildlife trusts, where we
24 have county trusts, we would normally, sensibly, hear Kent and Essex, and treat
25 them as two separate organisations. And I just wanted to test whether, in relation
26 to the way that you structure yourselves, that sort of approach might be sensible.

27 MS RAYFIELD: I think it probably would. The BHS divides down into county
28 committees. My role, as a regional officer, is comparatively new; as a member
29 of staff, it's a comparatively new role. We've only been in place for – well, me,
30 for seven years, so, yes, it is a county committee-driven structure.

31 MR SMITH: Okay. Well, we'll certainly bear that in mind.

32 MS RAYFIELD: Thank you.

33 MR SMITH: And we won't automatically say no if the society emerges again, but on the
34 basis that it is representing Essex and not Kent.

1 MS RAYFIELD: Thank you.

2 MR SMITH: Any – okay, just checking out of the room, Mr Young, no. Okay, back to
3 you, Mr Pratt.

4 MR PRATT: Thank you, Mr Smith, and thank you very much. The next person on my
5 list is the Essex Area Ramblers. And this is Mr Reeve, who is virtual. I think
6 we’ve already seen him this morning. Good morning, Mr Reeve.

7 MR REEVE: Good morning. Thank you, sir.

8 MR PRATT: If, when you start, could you just give your name, for the record? And,
9 again, 10 minutes, and with luck, we’ll get the five-minute and one-minute slide
10 coming up to give you some clue how well you’re doing.

11 MR REEVE: Thank you, sir. Like the previous speaker, I think I’ll be well within the
12 10 minutes. Thank you, sir. Good morning. My name is Graham Reeve, and I
13 represent the Essex Area Ramblers. I am the area walking environment officer.
14 I’m also a retired transport planner, who worked, for many years, for a leading
15 international consult, so I’m familiar with the transport assessments for major
16 schemes such as the Lower Thames Crossing.

17 In terms of the provisions, we’re generally satisfied that the replacement
18 pros are adequate, in principle. However, as there are no detailed plans at this
19 stage, we’ll need to be satisfied, at a later date, that the new crossings have
20 acceptable dimensions and surfacing etc. Excuse me.

21 MR SMITH: There is apparently some sound behind you. If you’re able to close the
22 door or switch something off, that would be massively appreciated.

23 MR REEVE: I think it’s the washing machine, sir.

24 MR SMITH: Right. One of the hazards of virtual events. Before Covid, we never used
25 to do this.

26 MR REEVE: That’s right. Okay. Sorry about this, I’ve shut the door.

27 MR SMITH: And can I just note, for the case team, that we’ll just add on 30 seconds for
28 –

29 MR REEVE: Yes. We’re also concerned that the detailed design will be adequate, in
30 terms of dimensions and surfacing and, particularly, where there are combined
31 uses with water riders and cyclists. And we’ll also need to be assured that when
32 value engineering or cost-cutting is undertaken, things such as pros are not the
33 things that are sacrificed. Now, however, we are concerned about the reliability
34 of the traffic forecasts, as they’re all based on data that was undertaken in 2016.

1 And, of course, since then, we've had the Covid epidemic and there's been a
2 fundamental change in travel patterns brought about by less commuting, people
3 working from home, people, possibly, even, moving home to take advantage of
4 home working. And this is recognised in the government's decarbonising
5 transport document, which says that we need to understand how changing
6 patterns might affect major schemes such as this. Now, I've had a read through
7 the transport assessments in documents 7.7, 7.8, and 7.9, and I see no mention
8 at all of Covid. It's as though Covid never happened. So I am concerned that
9 the traffic forecast patterns could well be different from those which were
10 reported in 2016, which could lead to the impact on local junctions designs[?]
11 and lane provision. So I think there's a real concern about that, from our point
12 of view, as to whether the forecasts are, in fact, valid, because of the changes
13 brought about by Covid.

14 I should have mentioned during the beginning that I'm reading through
15 the note that we provided in September 2021, which, for the reference, is
16 RR-301[?], where these concerns and our comments are set down. That's really
17 all that I want to say, at the moment. Obviously, if there are any questions, I'm
18 willing to answer those.

19 MR PRATT: Thank you very much, again. Do any of my panel colleagues have any
20 questions at this point? I don't have any.

21 MS LAVER: Not a question, Mr Pratt, but, just more a comment, Mr Reeve, that there
22 will be, undoubtedly, an issue-specific hearing in relation to transportation
23 modelling – if not more than one. So the issues that you raise will undoubtedly
24 be picked up at that.

25 MR REEVE: Okay, thank you. I believe there was an issue hearing, last week, which I
26 believe did cover traffic and transport, which I couldn't actually attend. But
27 you're saying that there are likely to be other ones in the future as well.

28 MR SMITH: I think it's probably fair to say that what we did was, we held issue-specific
29 hearings, last week, for two purposes. Essentially, firstly, to look at very broad
30 brush, high-level, strategic questions that the examining questions had, had
31 occurred to us, prior to sight of the written representations that we will receive
32 from all interested parties. We wanted to explore all of those and what we
33 wanted, also, to do was, essentially, what amounted to a show and share.
34 Probably, best thing that you can do is, actually, go back and view that online

1 and then you'll see the degree to which certain public right of way-related issues
2 emerged there. But what that was not was the sole exploration of public right of
3 way and non-motorised user interests and issues, because, the next time we hold
4 a sequence of issue-specific hearings, we are going to go down, at a finer grain
5 of detail. And we will no longer be at the very high level and strategic and, also,
6 by that point, we will have everybody's written representations, which are due
7 in at deadline 1 in front of us. So it will be quite a different – it'll be, essentially,
8 looking down into the individual issues, rather than what we were trying to do
9 last week, which was take a helicopter overview of the whole. Hopefully that
10 helps. And we will certainly be taking some of the issues that you have raised
11 into account as part of our design for those events.

12 MR REEVE: Okay. Thank you, sir.

13 MR PRATT: Thank you very much. If everybody's content, we'll carry on to the next
14 speaker, who's Ms Blake, from the Thames Crossing Action Group.

15 MR SMITH: And our first in-person speaker. Welcome, Ms Blake.

16 MR PRATT: Second.

17 MR SMITH: Apologies, yes.

18 MS BLAKE: Thank you very much. Nice to meet you all. Laura Blake, Thames
19 Crossing Action Group. Thames Crossing Action Group are a community
20 action group representing those that are opposed to the proposed Lower Thames
21 Crossing.

22 The original objective of a new crossing was to solve the congestion at the
23 Dartford Crossing, but this has since morphed into being about delivering a new
24 route to serve the ports in the south-east, through to the midlands and beyond.
25 As we've already heard in hearings last week, there are major issues regarding
26 impacts of LTC on the ports too, so even that is not as rosy as National Highways
27 may try to suggest.

28 The scheme objectives of the project, as detailed in 1.3, introduction to the
29 application, APP-003, are a) to support sustainable local development and
30 regional economic growth in the medium to long term; b) to be affordable to
31 government and users; c) to achieve value for money; d) to relieve the congested
32 Dartford Crossing and approach roads, and improve their performance, by
33 providing free-flowing north-south capacity; e) to improve resilience of the

1 Thames crossings and the major road network; f) to improve safety; g) to
2 minimise adverse impacts on health and environment.

3 So let's take a quick look at each of those objectives. To support
4 sustainable local development and regional economic growth in the medium to
5 long term. The applicant, National Highways, would have us believe that the
6 proposed LTC is the greenest road ever built. Yet there is no evidence to back
7 up this claim, only, it seems, a designation of being a pathfinder project, which
8 seems to be largely made up of hopes and intentions and no real substance. In
9 reality, the project would be hugely destructive and harmful, destroying and
10 impacting homes, lives, health and well-being, businesses, green belt, woodland,
11 including ancient woodland and veteran trees, agricultural land, including grade
12 one land at a time of serious food security issues, solar farms, wildlife and
13 habitats, countryside, including an area of outstanding natural beauty, the
14 environment, heritage, leisure facilities, communities and so much more.

15 The impacts would be huge, both in construction and once opened, if it
16 goes ahead. It is estimated the project would emit 6.6 million tonnes of carbon,
17 hardly in keeping with net zero legal commitments. Breaking news on this
18 aspect is that the climate change commission's report, published today, calls on
19 the DFT, in 2023, to 'conduct a systematic review of current and future road-
20 building projects, to assess their consistency with the government's
21 environmental goals. This should ensure that decisions do not lock in
22 unsustainable levels of traffic growth.' The whole proposed route would fail
23 against the newly set legal targets for air pollution – PM 2.5 – and the areas that
24 would be impacted by LTC are already suffering from illegally high levels of air
25 pollution and extremely high numbers of air pollution-related illnesses.

26 The project would fail against the newly set legal requirements for
27 biodiversity net gain. Plus, we have concerns about the creative accounting that
28 is being used in regard to environmental mitigation and compensation for the
29 project, if it goes ahead. The proposed crossing has no provision for cross-river
30 active travel, and the lack of adequate connections would mean that it is also not
31 viable for public transport such as buses. At a time when government are talking
32 about modal shift, but cutting funding for active travel, to be investing so much
33 in a project that makes no provision for and fails to encourage modal shift,
34 definitely seems wrong and is counter intuitive. Many of the proposed walking,

1 cycling and horse-riding routes are being claimed as new, when the reality is,
2 they are realignments of existing routes that would be needed because of the
3 LTC, and many others offer no actual connectivity. In this regard, it is very
4 much a tick-box exercise to attempt to make an awful project look better.

5 In regard to economic growth, affordability, and value for money,
6 National Highways have repeatedly failed to share a figure of the estimated
7 economic benefit all the way through consultation period. The cost has gone
8 from £4.1 billion and is now up to £9 billion, with many, including some MPs,
9 predicting it would end up being £10 billion-plus. And don't forget, £9 billion
10 is as of August 2020. The estimated cost increased by around £1.9 billion
11 between March and August 2020 alone. Who knows how much extra it will
12 increase since then and would increase due to the two-year delay?

13 The adjusted benefit-cost ratio has gone from 3.1 and has now dropped to
14 1.22 – and, again, based on the cost as of August 2020, and not taking the two-
15 year delay into account. The basic BCR is just 0.48, rating poor value for
16 money. The National Audit Office have concerns about the value for money of
17 the project, too.

18 There are also concerns about false economy aspects of the LTC, whereby
19 works that would be needed as a direct result of the project have either been
20 removed or not included within the project and would generate additional cost
21 that we feel should be considered part of the LTC project and would bring the
22 BCR down further.

23 The LTC is supposed to solve the problems at the Dartford Crossing, yet
24 the Dartford Crossing has a design capacity of 135,000 vehicles per day and
25 regularly sees 180,000 per day. This means we'd need to see a reduction of
26 more than 25% to bring it back below design capacity, yet the proposed LTC is
27 predicted to take only 19% of traffic away from the current crossing, with this
28 reducing further as years go by. Thurrock Council's analyses of official
29 National Highway's traffic modelling concluded that the reduction would
30 actually be as low as 4% in the am peak hour, and 11% in the p.m. peak hour. It
31 is also estimated there would be a 50% increase in cross-river traffic if the
32 proposed LTC goes ahead.

33 Evidence shows that new roads create new traffic, induce demand, and
34 would also add pressure to the existing network. On top of all that, National

1 Highways have not planned for how traffic would migrate between the two
2 crossings when there are incidents and there would not be adequate connections.
3 There are currently more than 3,000 incidents per year at the Dartford Crossing,
4 many as a result of the congestion. So, bearing in mind the Dartford Crossing
5 would still be over design capacity, and still suffering from congestion, we'd
6 still expect the number of incidents to be high.

7 As an example, when there's an incident at the Dartford tunnels and traffic
8 instead attempts to come off the M25 to migrate to the LTC, it would take the
9 A2 coast-bound, only to find there would be just one single lane from the A2
10 onto the LTC. Similarly, when there's an incident at the QE2 bridge, traffic
11 would not have direct access to the LTC via the eastbound A13, instead needing
12 to take what's now known as the Stamford detour or come directly off of five
13 lanes of the M25, onto two lanes of the LTC, until just past the A13.

14 I can detail this more if needed; I did shorten it to fit the breaking news in.
15 The results would be more chaos, congestion and pollution across the region,
16 and in no way improves resilience. It is predicted there would be 2,147
17 additional accidents over 60 years if the LTC goes ahead, including 26 fatalities,
18 229 serious injuries, and 3,122 slight injuries.

19 The proposed LTC would also be a smart motorway by stealth. Despite
20 what National Highways say about it being an all-purpose trunk road, the
21 application documents state it is being coded as a three-lane motorway, with the
22 exception of the southbound stretch between the M25 and the A13. The LTC
23 should therefore be scrapped, in line with the government's recent
24 announcement to scrap the new smart motorways.

25 With the increases in accidents and the dangers of smart motorways, it is
26 clear that proposed LTC would not improve safety and would be an additional
27 drain on already stretched emergency services and healthcare. As already
28 highlighted, the destruction and impacts of the proposed LTC would be huge,
29 and we have serious concerns that the adverse impacts have not been adequately
30 considered, let alone minimised.

31 Many of the issues stem from the fact that in 2016 – the route options
32 stage – National Highways failed to consult on location options that the
33 government had asked them to. Rather than consult on options at locations
34 A and C, National Highways instead presented a biased consultation in favour

1 of options at location C, the one that registered the most opposition. This
2 inadequate consultation was the beginning of a long process of inadequate
3 consultations, and a project being designed and proposed based on misleading
4 information and a distinct lack of adequate consideration of alternatives.

5 National Highways also avoided proper consideration of rail alternatives:
6 improvements between Ashford and Reading that would negate the need for the
7 LTC, and get more freight off of our roads and on to more sustainable rail. At a
8 time of climate emergency, why does the Port of Dover not have rail
9 connectivity? 70% of goods in and out of this port alone use the Dartford
10 Crossing. There has also been a large amount of misleading information,
11 propaganda, and greenwashing attempts with biased presentation of the project.
12 The LTC accounting officer assessment that is meant to offer transparency and
13 guidance to ministers who are making decisions about spending significant
14 amounts of money is now nearly three years old.

15 Failure to deliver the LTC project is detailed in National Highways' own
16 annual reports as an existential threat to the organisation. We have to question
17 whether this fact alone, and the additional works that would be needed as a direct
18 result of the LTC, are a means of future-proofing National Highways and the
19 real reason why National Highways to continue pushing this project forward.
20 As a group, we've spent many hours researching and asking questions about the
21 proposed LTC, with countless meetings over the years. National Highways
22 have, on many occasions, failed to provide us with the information we've
23 requested. We've done our best to – as a community group to make judgements
24 and assessments based on our facts and local knowledge, with evidence to back
25 our claims.

26 Thank you for that little bit of overrun. I'm happy to answer any
27 questions, thank you.

28 MR PRATT: Your overrun was about two seconds.

29 MS BLAKE: I can talk longer if you'd like.

30 MR PRATT: I was about to congratulate you on the exact timing with the...

31 MS BLAKE: Thank you.

32 MR PRATT: Thank you very much for that presentation. Have my colleagues any
33 comments?

1 MR SMITH: Well, I certainly do, and I think Ms Laver does. First question that I just
2 wanted to put to you in very brief and very high level – in summary terms, given
3 the stage in the examination that we’re at, is if you’re able to digest the objectives
4 of your organisation, in very simple terms, are you seeking an alternative
5 solution – be it road-based, rail-based, or both or a mixture – in a different place,
6 or, alternatively, nothing at all? What would be the best characterisation of your
7 membership’s outcomes that you might seek?

8 MS BLAKE: Thank you, sir. Yes, we are in no way denying that there are problems at
9 the Dartford Crossing that need to be resolved. What we are saying is that we
10 do not feel – and the evidence shows to us – that this crossing would not solve
11 those problems. Something would need to be done – as I mentioned in my
12 speech, a rail alternative. We don’t feel that things like the Ashford to Reading
13 rail have been properly considered. When they were looking at rail options
14 previously, they were focusing on cross-river rail connections which then brings
15 the issue of – obviously it is more built up to the north of the river for
16 connections, or pushing it through London which is already at capacity for rail.
17 We don’t feel that that has ever been given adequate consideration, and that’s
18 not something that we have come up with, that rail proposal. That is something
19 that is being investigated and proposed to be moved forward, so feel that that
20 should be taken into account at this stage, bearing in mind how long things have
21 been delayed since that analysis was originally done.

22 MR SMITH: Okay, thank you. Ms Laver?

23 MS LAVER: Yeah, thank you, Ms Blake. We spoke through the issue-specific hearing
24 last week about benefit-cost ratio, as you’ll remember because you were there,
25 and the figures which you’ve just presented, 1.22, that was evidenced there. You
26 said something in your statement then – because you were flying through your
27 10 minutes, I missed the slide point which was – you were talking about there
28 are other things external to the project. Could you just reiterate that for me, from
29 your statement? And you were saying these external factors haven’t been picked
30 up in the benefit-cost ratio, and I just wanted to understand that point.

31 MR SMITH: And certainly the sense I got from that was that you were saying that there
32 are further matters that would specifically, if evaluated, reduce BCR, yeah.

33 MS LAVER: Yes, that was the point you were making, but I missed if you gave any
34 reference to what that was.

1 MS BLAKE: Certainly, Ms Laver. Yes, we feel that there are things; at one point, there
2 was a rest and service area included in the project. That was removed, but we
3 have been told that's still being progressed as a standalone project. The Tilbury
4 link road that obviously we're all more than aware of was, at one point, featured
5 within the design, and has been removed. The Port of Dover have called for A2
6 dualling if the LTC goes ahead. Blue Bell Hill improvements – obviously we
7 know that there are nitrogen deposition requirements for compensation in that
8 regard, and that's been progressed as a separate, standalone project, and
9 Thurrock Council and others have concerns about the work that would be needed
10 to be carried out on the existing road network as a direct result, because of the
11 pressure it would put. All of those things, obviously, are direct result of the
12 LTC, so we feel should be considered as part of the project. That would
13 obviously push the cost up, and in that case, the BCR drops.

14 MS LAVER: Okay, thank you for that clarification. Much appreciated.

15 MS BLAKE: Thank you.

16 MR PRATT: Yeah, anybody with anything else to add? Well, in that case, thank you
17 very much.

18 MS BLAKE: Thank you. Nice to meet you all face to face.

19 MR PRATT: Thank you.

20 MR SMITH: Thank you very much.

21 MR PRATT: Right, in that case, the next groupings – that's the end of this – the first set,
22 the representative bodies. The next groupings are what I would class as the
23 multiples, because I can't really think of a better term. I'll call the speakers up.
24 They're members of the household, of a single household, making short
25 contributions. On this occasion, I'll ask them for – to give them seven minutes
26 to make their points, and one of the Planning Inspectorate team will let them
27 know when they've one minute remaining. Now, I'm going to ask you to
28 introduce yourself when you sit down. I believe that Mr Foster[?] may have
29 arrived or is in the waiting room. Can one of the case team confirm?

30 MR SMITH: Mr Peter Trevor Foster.

31 MR PRATT: Peter Trevor Foster.

32 MR SMITH: Do we have him either physically present or virtually present or outside?
33 Not at present, the case team are indicating to us. In which case, Mr Foster was
34 due to be representing two sets of people; there was [Michael Smith?] and

1 [Corinne Rounds?], and Mr and Mrs Francis Wilson. Do we have either of those
2 two individual representations here today? Okay.

3 MR PRATT: In that case, would you like to come and take your place at the chair, please?
4 And just to go through it again, you'll get seven minutes, with a one-minute
5 warning if you like, and if you could say your name before you –

6 MR WILSON: Yeah, I'm Francis Wilson; I'm a local resident in Orsett.

7 MR PRATT: Thank you very much.

8 MR WILSON: Okay. Well, I've got community objection and a personal objection to
9 the Lower Thames Crossing.

10 The community objection is to do with air pollution and noise pollution.
11 The junction called A13-108, which I refer to as 'spaghetti junction', is one –
12 well, will be one of the largest motorway junctions in Europe, and attracting
13 maybe 100,000 trucks, lorries, motorcars, everything per day. It's an amazingly
14 concentrated source of both air pollution and noise pollution. Orsett, where we
15 are right now, is about half a mile to a mile away from where spaghetti junction
16 will be. The prevailing climatic wind in this area of Orsett is from the
17 south-west. It means spaghetti junction is directly downwind of Orsett, most of
18 the time, most of the year. That means that air pollution and noise pollution will
19 be directed from spaghetti junction to Orsett. The air pollution is obviously from
20 car, lorry, diesel truck source; they're like thermals of noxious gasses. They
21 obviously rise, and then they're swept by the prevailing wind to wherever, and
22 Orsett is the first line of call from spaghetti junction. Therefore, it's a bad thing.
23 I mean these plumes of air pollution contain tiny particles – invisible, but when
24 breathed in by people can give them cancer and other things.

25 The noise pollution can also be considered as a plume which wants to
26 come on the prevailing wind. I mean, if anybody has ever changed a tyre at the
27 side of a motorway, they are filthy, horrendous noisy places, motorways, so the
28 noise pollution will come to Orsett as well. It's interesting that although there's
29 a fancy flythrough produced by Highways England, which is clean and tidy and
30 artistic impression of niceness, there's no vertical cross-section of spaghetti
31 junction. We have no ideas what barriers are at spaghetti junction. Indeed, are
32 there any barriers? You need barriers for air pollution, and you need barriers for
33 noise pollution, and they're different barriers and they do different things. For
34 example, the noise, the waves need to be destructively interfered with each other.

1 Air pollution needs to guide the thermals as high as possible. This is why
2 chimney stacks are so high; you need it up as high as possible into the free
3 atmosphere, otherwise, the surrounding area gets deluged in pollution. I don't
4 see any of that happening, so I object, on a community basis, to the Lower
5 Thames Crossing.

6 On a personal basis, in somebody's infinite wisdom, this consent order
7 has drawn a community gas mains high-pressure pipeline right through the
8 middle of my property. There's no reason why I should have a – accept a gas
9 mains pipeline that isn't there now being there, because for one thing, it means
10 a company like Cadent must have permanent right to go and dig it up and inspect
11 it and do whatever they do with it. So apart from trashing my property, the main
12 objection is that you can't do a thing to your property once you've got a gas
13 pipeline in it. You can't put a spade in it. You can't develop it. There's a field
14 there that could easily take a house, and it would be very beautiful, but you're
15 not allowed any development at all, so it ruins development and therefore is very
16 costly. It's a big cost. Therefore, I object on a personal level to the Lower
17 Thames Crossing doing this. Why on earth they can't make a gas pipeline run
18 from A to B without going through C is beyond me. I mean you can put a man
19 on the moon; you should be able to direct a new gas pipeline around and not
20 through a property.

21 So, to summarise, my objections are community air pollution, community
22 noise pollution, and privately, personally, I don't want a gas pipeline running
23 through my property and the next door neighbours' by the way, and we're the
24 only two houses in the whole road, and we're the only two houses, I think, in the
25 whole scheme that has this happened to them. And I want to see a cross-section
26 of spaghetti junction in the vertical to know where the barriers are, how high
27 they are. Are they permanent? Will they last forever? Will they do their job. I
28 can stop now.

29 MR PRATT: Thank you very much. Has any of my colleagues got any questions?

30 MR SMITH: Just very briefly in relation to the gas pipeline issue – and this isn't a
31 question; this is an observation and just to make clear that, amongst other things,
32 we will be looking much more specifically as we go through this examination at
33 the effect of the utility diversions, the gas pipelines and, indeed, the transmission
34 alignment change, and also in relation to impacts on land and rights over land.

1 The taking of property – the compulsory acquisition process – is part of this
2 examination that we haven't started yet. We will be holding separate
3 compulsory acquisition hearings, and on the working assumption that you are an
4 affected person and in the book of reference – and I'm just checking; I believe
5 you are – then you do have a separate right to be heard, simply on what you have
6 bracketed as the personal dimension of your considerations today, and that's a
7 hearing where we will give you the opportunity to speak, if you wish to, and
8 raise the specifics of that objection in a way that you may have not felt that you
9 have the time to do today. So subject to that being true, subject to you being an
10 affected person identified in the book of reference, do bear in mind that by
11 procedural deadline D – which is the same as deadline 1, 18 July – if you wish
12 to be heard additionally on that particular point, and in more detail, you can.

13 MR WILSON: Thank you, yeah.

14 MR SMITH: Okay.

15 MR PRATT: Right, we have no further questions. Thank you very much for your time.

16 MR WILSON: Okay then.

17 MR SMITH: I will have – just make a general observation, and that is that we have been
18 conscious that Mr Foster has been partially present – I think is probably the best
19 way of describing it – at more than one hearing. We've been informed through
20 the case team that he may be representing certain people. You've very clearly
21 represented yourselves here today. If you're in contact with Mr Foster, could
22 you ask him to speak to either of the case managers by phone at some point after
23 today so that he can just talk through how best he can engage, how best he can
24 represent both yourselves, and indeed anybody else, who he may represent?
25 Because it's critically important to us that we give fair representation, fair space
26 to everybody who wishes to be heard, and what we want to avoid is any
27 confusion in terms of somebody representing somebody and then maybe not
28 appearing. That just leads to difficulty for us and difficulty for the individual
29 who wishes to speak to us as well, so if you could, when you speak to him –
30 assuming you are speaking to him – ask him to contact the case team, and they'll
31 have a conversation with how he might involve himself moving forward.

32 We certainly don't want it duplicated, and also, if he is to be attending an
33 event representing parties, we will make space for him, but we would like to

1 have the certainty of knowing that he is here, and who he will represent. That
2 would really assist us. Thank you very much.

3 MR PRATT: Thank you, Mr Smith. I think, as Mr Foster is not with us, and the other,
4 dare I say, couple, or the two names he's – was going to be given the seven
5 minutes for at this juncture is not going to happen, unfortunately. I think it might
6 be an appropriate moment, before we go in to the single section where people
7 are going to representing themselves, to take a break, and if we could – I think
8 we'll take a break at this point and be back in about 15 minutes.

9 MR SMITH: Yeah, about 35.

10 MR PRATT: So that'll be 11.35, if that's alright, and thank you for your contributions
11 at this point, and we'll see you in about 15 minutes' time.

12 MR SMITH: Excellent, and if case team are – manage to find anything further about Mr
13 Foster during the break, then please feel free to approach us as we resume and
14 we'll see what we can do. Thank you very much.

15

16 **(Meeting adjourned)**

17

18 MR SMITH: Welcome back, ladies and gentlemen, to this resumed second session of
19 open-floor hearing 2 into the Lower Thames Crossing application. My name is
20 Rynd Smith, panel lead, and if I can just make sure that everybody is resuming
21 their seats, and I'll just ask for a quick signal from the AV team and, indeed, the
22 case team, to indicate that we're being recorded and that the livestream has
23 resumed. Those things have happened, in which case, ladies and gentlemen,
24 with no further ado, I will hand you back to my colleague, Mr Ken Pratt, who
25 will return to the hearing of individual submitters, so Mr Pratt.

26 MR PRATT: Thank you very much, Mr Smith. At the end of the last section, apparently
27 I thanked Mr Smith and it should have been Mr Wilson. I've been asked to
28 correct it. If that was the case, I apologise for anything I got wrong there.

29 With that said, the next section I've got down is for individuals. I will
30 say, however, that the case team came to me during the last break and I would
31 like to first introduce Ms Dring. The reason for calling you first, out of the
32 normal alphabetical list is I believe you're representing, well, three individuals,
33 but you're intending to run them as a trio, so to speak, which in that case I would
34 ask if you could – we'll give you seven minutes as opposed to the five. There'll

1 be a minute reminder on the end, but if you could, please, introduce yourself,
2 introduce who you're actually representing, and the floor is yours.

3 MS DRING: Thank you very much. Good morning, my name's Emma Dring. I'm a
4 barrister, and I'm speaking today on behalf of three interested parties with
5 common interests, and they are Kathryn Homes Ltd, Runwood Homes Ltd, and
6 Runwood Properties Ltd. Kathryn Homes owns the site of The Whitecroft Care
7 Home, which just off the A1013 Stanford Road, Orsett. Runwood Homes
8 operates the care home itself, and then Runwood Properties owns adjacent land
9 to the east and to the south which provides part of the rural setting of the care
10 home. Whitecroft itself occupies a square plot of land which is contained by
11 open paddock land to the south and east, by agricultural land to the west, and by
12 Stanford Road to the north, and access is gained via Stanford Road, and there's
13 also a car park on the eastern side of the site.

14 We made representations at procedural deadline C asking the Examining
15 Authority to visit both the inside and outside of the care home, just to understand
16 the nature of the operation and assess the likely impacts from construction and
17 operational noise, vibration outlook and those things, and we understand from
18 seeing the comments on the draft accompanied site inspection itinerary that that
19 is the intention, to conduct that visit, and if we're right about that, then we're
20 obviously grateful.

21 So Whitecroft is a care home in use class C2, which is located immediately
22 adjacent to the works comprised within the proposed Lower Thames Crossing
23 on Stanford Road. It's about 175 metres east of the junction of Stanford Road
24 with Baker St, and it's on the south side of Stanford Road. Hornsby Lane lies
25 some 350 metres to the east. Whitecroft lies to the immediate south-east of the
26 major junction proposed for the Lower Thames Crossing with the A13 and the
27 A1089, with the slip road which connects the A13 westbound to the LTC
28 southbound arcing around Whitecroft to its north, west and south.

29 So in terms of the operation, Whitecroft has been established for 22 years.
30 It's operated by Runwood Homes. It's a well-established care home operator;
31 they currently have 61 homes spread across England, catering for some
32 4,035 residents, and 29 of those homes are in Essex. Whitecroft is regulated by
33 the CQC. Day-to-day management is provided by an onsite home manager. The
34 home employees 55 staff, comprises full-time and part-time carers, plus

1 ancillary support staff. The home has 51 bedrooms with 56 bedspaces, and it
2 caters primarily for persons suffering from dementia and related cognitive
3 impairments. Residents may be placed at Whitecroft either privately or via local
4 authority social services and many residents are referred by Thurrock Council.
5 Residents are typically in the age range 70s to 90s, but some are as young as in
6 their 60s, but for most residents, Whitecroft is their final home, and so it
7 therefore caters for their end-of-life needs. And the length of stay obviously
8 varies, but – depending on residents’ personal circumstances and their medical
9 condition, but a typical period of residence would be between six to 48 months.
10 Most residents spend most of their days and nights at the home with limited
11 visits elsewhere, perhaps for medical treatments, so the physical environment at
12 Whitecroft is therefore very important for their wellbeing.

13 Whitecroft provides residents with individual bedrooms which are mostly
14 single rooms, a small number of double rooms, and they’re predominantly
15 en-suite. There are also communal day rooms and dining rooms, as well as staff
16 and service facilities, including a kitchen and a laundry. The original building
17 is a Grade II listed former farmhouse. However, most of the accommodation is
18 provided is adjoining residential wings, forming a partial quadrangle behind the
19 listed building. Within the centre of the quadrangle is a courtyard garden with
20 a further amenity garden with ponds and mature landscaping to the east of the
21 range of buildings. There’s also an informal amenity area to the south of the
22 buildings. Residents have access to the courtyard garden, to the amenity garden,
23 and the informal amenity area, and having access to fresh air and a tranquil
24 environment is very important for the wellbeing of residents. In addition,
25 persons suffering from dementia can be disproportionately affected by even
26 modest changes in their external environment, especially with regard to noise
27 and disturbance.

28 Historical mapping shows that whilst the farmhouse at Whitecroft has had
29 buildings to its south from the 19th century onwards, the main land to the west
30 has always been open farmland, which remains the case today. In the past, the
31 farmland was farmed in connection with the farm based at Whitecroft, and the
32 setting of the listed building to its west has therefore retained an open,
33 agricultural character which provides both a visual and a functional link to the

1 historic use and function of the Grade II listed building. The ground floor of the
2 building also has windows giving an outlook to the west over that farmland.

3 So moving on to the impacts of the project, if the Lower Thames Crossing
4 proceeds, Whitecroft will become an isolated island within, and surrounded by,
5 significant construction activity for some five plus years. That will include a
6 very long list of activities: the construction of three new bridges on Stanford
7 Road, the repositioning and raising of Stanford road, the construction of a new
8 bridge and associated embankment for the A13 westbound slip road to the
9 A1089 southbound, construction of a new bridge and associated embankment
10 for the A13 westbound slip to the LTC northbound, box jacking of the A13
11 where it is to be carried the Lower Thames Crossing, the construction and
12 operation of the Stanford Road compound and the Brentwood Road compound
13 which also includes the Brentwood Road utility logistics hub, construction and
14 operation of haul roads, cuttings, embankments, highways, construction,
15 lighting, powerlines, and so on.

16 There'll be 24 hour night time and weekend construction activity for
17 extended periods, and then that highway would be retained and operated for an
18 assumed 60-year period, and would be 69 metres from the grounds of Whitecroft
19 at its closest point.

20 That scale of change in such close proximity to a care home
21 accommodating vulnerable persons is an unacceptable juxtaposition of
22 incompatible uses which renders The Whitecroft incapable of effective
23 continued operation, imposes what, for most of its residents, would be a life
24 sentence of unacceptable noise, dust, emissions, vibration, light-intrusion and
25 disturbance. Continued operation would be at serious risk if the project is
26 approved, and its closure is reasonably foreseeable. To that extent, the
27 operational impacts are secondary to the construction impacts, but if Whitecroft
28 did survive construction, its future as a care home would not be sustainable.

29 We say there's been a fundamental failure by National Highways to grasp
30 the essential point of this incompatibility of that use. During consultation stages,
31 we've suggested that each and every member of National Highways needed to
32 ask themselves the simple question, 'If my parent or other family member
33 needed care towards the end of their life, would I willingly choose to place them

1 in Whitecroft for their final months or years once the construction of the LTC
2 was authorised?’ And we say –

3 MR PRATT: Ms Dring, your time’s up. If you have got a set of – you can have a couple
4 of seconds to close. If there’s anything else, please pass it to us in writing.

5 MS DRING: Thank you. I’m sorry; I was under the impression I had 10 minutes,
6 initially, because we were businesses, and that was what was in the –

7 MR SMITH: No, I think that’s – apologies, I do think that’s a reasonably fair request in
8 terms, because the seven-minutes allowance are associated individuals and
9 actually these are companies, and so yes. No, please do continue.

10 MS DRING: Thank you.

11 MR PRATT: I stand corrected. My apologies.

12 MR SMITH: I apologise to you, Mr Pratt.

13 MR PRATT: You were going to get 15 at one stage, five minutes for each.

14 MS DRING: Well, I know. That’s what I was told when I walked in the door, so... No,
15 thank you, and I was trying to speed up, and I will just – I think I should be able
16 to finish what I was going to say in the next couple of minutes.

17 MR SMITH: Yeah.

18 MS PRATT: That would be ideal.

19 MS DRING: I appreciate it, thank you. So we respectfully suggest that question now
20 falls to be considered by the Examining Authority. That human factor is
21 obviously an ever-present background consideration when making planning
22 decisions. It’s something that we say National Highways has lost sight of in its
23 treatment of the Whitecroft, and we suggest it’s relevant and an important
24 consideration in this case, not least because of the need for the Secretary of State,
25 as the ultimate decision maker, to address the public sector equality duty.
26 Obviously that’s a matter of law, and we’ll expand on that within our written
27 representations, but the simple fact is that the juxtaposition of the Lower Thames
28 Crossing and Whitecroft is incompatible and unacceptable, and the answer to
29 that will not be found in making yet further minor changes to the detail of design,
30 whether that’s the raised bund or more landscape planting proposed in the local
31 refinement consultation. What is required is a fundamental rethink.

32 We’ve always accepted that the wholesale relocation of the project away
33 from the vicinity of Whitecroft isn’t a practical possibility, so the only option is
34 to relocate Whitecroft elsewhere. In terms of the mitigation hierarchy, we see it

1 as beyond dispute that the residents of the care home are acutely sensitive
2 receptors to the impacts of the project, that avoidance isn't a practical option and
3 mitigation will not be effective. Offsetting those impacts by the provision of an
4 alternative location for the care home to carry on its operations is therefore the
5 only appropriate response, and that can be seen as a compensatory measure for
6 impacts that can't be avoided or realistically mitigated.

7 We remain ready and willing to engage with National Highways on the
8 question of relocation, and the recently announced two-year delay in the start of
9 construction may open up opportunities that were not previously available when
10 considering the feasibility of that. However, there should be no doubt that the
11 proposals in their current form are woefully inadequate, as regards to the impacts
12 they impose on the residents of Whitecroft are simply not acceptable and so
13 should not be approved. Thank you, and thank you for that extra time.

14 MR PRATT: And thank you very much, and I apologise for the interruption earlier there
15 was.

16 MS DRING: No, thank you.

17 MR SMITH: And I also apologise for cutting across my colleague, but there we go. We
18 don't always get this right, but we do try to be as fair and consistent as we can
19 be.

20 Now, before you disappear, I do have just a couple of clarificatory matters,
21 and also an exploration of the compulsory acquisition and temporary possession
22 position here, noting that your three clients are all, respectively, categories one,
23 two and/or three persons in the book of reference and have live compulsory
24 acquisition objections. So I'm sure you're aware of it, but obviously procedural
25 deadline D/deadline 1 is a point at which we do need to know if they wish to be
26 individually heard, and as I previously indicated to another speaker, where that's
27 the case, that – well, it creates a space in an individual objections compulsory
28 acquisition hearing where some of the detail that you may not have felt you were
29 able to speak to here can actually be drawn out. So do bear that, particularly, in
30 mind, and then there was second point in relation to your clients' request for a
31 site inspection.

32 Now, you may not have seen it yet, because it was only published
33 yesterday, but we have now issued guidance to the applicant on the assembly of
34 an accompanied site inspection set of itineraries. We have accepted the principle

1 that we will need to visit your clients' site. We note, because of its nature, that
2 we will need to be accompanied, but there is a sensitivity here – and this is a
3 point that the applicant will need to do a little work on – which is that whilst a
4 normal accompanied site can be a busload of people decanting and walking
5 through a field to see a specific environmental feature, and that's perfectly fine
6 and appropriate, we are strongly alive to the fact that this is a place that is
7 people's homes, and also they are vulnerable people.

8 And so whilst we will need to do this within the framework of an
9 accompanied inspection, we will be asking for, essentially, agreement and
10 collaboration between parties attending an ASI such that, if we can achieve it,
11 the only people moving into the home itself, interior, will be the Examining
12 Authority themselves, a representative of the applicant, a representative of
13 yourselves, your client, and a representative of the local planning authority to
14 assure due process and fair conduct of the inspection, and we would ask others
15 to agree to remain outside. So that's the nature of arrangements that we are
16 proposing to take.

17 You'll have an opportunity to comment on that, and again, I would flag
18 deadline 1; if you've got specific observations to assist the applicant to finalise
19 the itinerary, then please take that opportunity. Anything else from any of my
20 colleagues?

21 MR TAYLOR: Ms Dring, I appreciate from what you've said that you're essentially
22 putting an in principle objection, and you're saying that matters can't be
23 mitigated. However, it might be helpful that in your – when you make written
24 representations – that any matters that you do think could assist with mitigation
25 – notwithstanding your current in principle concerns – that they could be set out
26 so that the Examining Authority can understand your clients' positions on those
27 matters.

28 MS DRING: Thank you. We'll take note of that.

29 MR SMITH: And in that respect, some of the observations that we make about certain
30 participation and examinations being without prejudice to in principle positions
31 needs to be made clear. If you do put together a set of prospective mitigations,
32 that can proceed in parallel and without prejudice to an underlying case that you
33 believe that the impacts are not mitigable, so we'll consider both.

34 MS DRING: Thank you very much.

1 MR PRATT: Is that all from the panel? Well, thank you very much, and hopefully we're
2 down to the individuals, the individual speakers who are speaking on behalf of
3 themselves.

4 Now, there is a number who apparently are down to speak who are not
5 with us today, so we'll deal with them as we come across, but in the meantime,
6 I think – well, again, I'm going to go through them in alphabetical order, and as
7 Mr Beard starts with a 'B', Mr Robin Beard, if you would care to come to the
8 table, you'll have five minutes. There'll be a one-minute reminder, if you can
9 say your name before you start, and then the floor is yours.

10 MR BEARD: Thank you very much.

11 MR PRATT: There's a little switch on the front, and when you – on the base, silver
12 switch. If you press that, it comes up red.

13 MR BEARD: Got it. Okay, thank you very much, Robin Beard. I don't know if you
14 can see this, but I printed it out.

15 MR SMITH: We certainly can.

16 MR BEARD: Yeah. Everybody knows about how congested the Dartford Crossing is,
17 so I understand why Highways England, or National Highways, wants to make
18 a new crossing, but I have serious reservations about the route that they've
19 chosen and the design that they have for the junctions, specifically the Orsett
20 junction, because it is projected to be very complicated and very expensive as
21 well. They want to demolish dozens of homes, and at least a dozen pylons would
22 need to be moved as well to make space for it, and it would cost a lot of money
23 and take a long time to build, and all of this, I think, could be avoided if they
24 just used a slightly different route.

25 Instead of going across the edge of Orsett, they could take it through the
26 fields just a couple of miles away. It would achieve all the same connections,
27 or almost all of the same connections as the one that they are currently
28 proposing, with a much smaller footprint and the cost will be much reduced as
29 well. They wouldn't have to demolish any homes. No listed buildings would
30 need to be demolished and I think only two pylons would need to be moved,
31 which is a big improvement as well. And also, where the new road is projected
32 to cross the Orsett Fen, the current design, as proposed, is to have it run on some
33 embankments and viaducts which are hundreds of metres long because,
34 obviously, it's a flood plain, so they need it to be elevated otherwise it'll flood.

1 But if it were to approach from the east, as I propose, then it would cross the
2 flood plain at its narrowest point, and those embankments and viaducts would
3 only need to be half as long, if that. There's actually [inaudible] highpoint in
4 the land that the road could run along, so it couldn't be more appropriate, really.

5 Highways England might try to defend themselves by saying that they
6 have considered many different routes over the course of the design of the road,
7 and yes, they did indeed do that, but they never considered this route. At no
8 point was it ever on the table. There were some routes that overlapped with the
9 route that I'm proposing, in one way or another, but those routes were always
10 disqualified for reasons that had nothing to do with this region here, and for that
11 reason, they never actually looked at what I'm suggesting, and it's a shame they
12 didn't because it's obviously a better and smaller design to achieve basically the
13 same thing.

14 One thing that I've not seen anybody mention, so I'm going to mention it,
15 is because the current proposal is to have a lot of the traffic doubling back on
16 itself when it uses the Orsett junction as just part of the design, there's no way
17 that you can have any other type of junction at the current location. But if the
18 junction is an east-facing junction, it would make more sense to build it further
19 to the east where it'll be closer to the traffic that wants to use it, and if you were
20 to do that, it keeps it further away from people's houses, and it means that
21 thousands of journeys would be two or three miles shorter than they would be
22 otherwise.

23 Also, I've tried to keep this design as small as possible to try and make it
24 as attractive as possible, but because it's all fields out here, if you really wanted
25 to, you could expand the design that I am proposing, and build a better junction
26 than the one that National Highways are proposing at Orsett. So you could fulfil
27 all of the same requirements, and more, in a smaller footprint and for less money.
28 I see that I'm running out of time, so I will just say that when you do – or as and
29 when you have an issue-specific hearing about the routes or the design of the
30 junction, I would very much like to be there, and if you've got any questions,
31 I'll happily take them.

32 MR PRATT: Thank you very much, in time as well, excellent. Has any of my colleagues
33 got any questions at this stage?

1 MR SMITH: I do. Firstly, an observation, that is clearly a summary plan view of quite
2 a detailed intersection design.

3 MR BEARD: Yes.

4 MR SMITH: I don't recall having seen it yet, and if that's because I just haven't read
5 that particular piece of your submissions, apologies. However, –

6 MR BEARD: No, it's not. I printed this out yesterday.

7 MR SMITH: Right, there we go, so in which case, could I ask that it please be submitted
8 in a digital form at deadline 1? Because –

9 MR BEARD: Yes, of course. In fact, I could submit it in several different maps, building
10 it up one junction at a time – one slip road at a time so you can compare them
11 more easily. I would have done that today, but it's just not convenient, so...

12 MR SMITH: Yeah. No, look, that's appreciated, and look, deadline 1 is your written
13 representation, so your opportunity to make your case. You've made a detailed
14 case around an alternative design, so we would very much like to see it in
15 specific terms at that point.

16 MR BEARD: I should mention, I suppose, that I also have reservations about the A2
17 junction south of the river, but I didn't want to talk about that today, and I feel
18 less confident about that because I'm not as familiar with those roads, so –

19 MR SMITH: Yeah, well, that was actually going to lead me to my supplementary
20 question, which is to ask you whether you are relying on any specific design or
21 technical qualifications.

22 MR BEARD: No.

23 MR SMITH: You just dreamt this up in your bedroom.

24 MR BEARD: I saw how complicated their design was, and I thought, 'Surely it doesn't
25 need to be that complicated.' And I've actually pitched a couple of designs to
26 them over the years at the public consultations, and they've always told me how
27 I'm wrong, so this is like my new and improved design. When I pitched it to
28 them at the most recent consultation, they said that they didn't have the authority
29 to move the road this far and only the Secretary of State for Transport would be
30 able to, so maybe they would have liked to build this road but they didn't have
31 the authority. I don't know.

32 MR SMITH: Well, look, we're going to have to have a separate conversation with the
33 applicant about design approaches used and the degree to which this sort of
34 option flexibility is something that they have given regard to. We reserve that

1 for a later step in the process, but, most importantly, get it in in writing at
2 deadline 1. Any other observations?

3 MR PRATT: Hi, can I just – I agree with Mr Smith, but also in writing but also digitally
4 as well; a picture paints 1,000 words, as they say.

5 MR BEARD: Yes, that's why I brought it together. I thought the same thing.

6 MR PRATT: Thank you very much for your time this morning.

7 MR BEARD: Thank you.

8 MR PRATT: The next person on my list is Mr Black, Mr Ian Black. Good morning,
9 Mr Black.

10 MR BLACK: Good morning. I'm a Linford resident, and I must just say that I am totally
11 opposed to the Lower Thames Crossing as there were better-placed options. Part
12 of the proposed route, however, does affect me and my family greatly because I
13 live in Beechcroft Avenue in Linford, and there is a section called the Tilbury
14 viaduct. This viaduct is the least amount of visual representation that is just
15 deliberately been hidden.

16 This viaduct starts at a height of a two-storey pitched house, and it will be
17 clear to everyone in all the villages. This is a six-lane motorway viaduct. It will
18 be seen and heard in the surrounding villages, and there is an ever-diminishing
19 air quality and noise. In their representation, they've negated to actually show
20 this viaduct in any form at all. If you have a look through their flyovers,
21 everything appears to be perfectly flat, whereas, from where I live, it will be
22 something like 40 or 50-foot starting height in the air, and it will be visible, but
23 no one seems to actually acknowledge this.

24 I would be very grateful to the Inspectorate if, on their appraisal of this
25 section, that they will say it will have a detrimental effect to the people and
26 communities and their green belt lost forever, and stop this project. That's all I
27 have to say. Thanks very much.

28 MR PRATT: Thank you very much, Mr Black. Has anyone any questions for Mr Black?

29 MS LAVER: Mr Black, thank you very much. Merely an observation that you say that
30 the Tilbury viaduct isn't properly represented – is that on the flyover video or in
31 the plans, or both?

32 MR BLACK: The plans show a very complicated engineering diagram, which you would
33 have to be an engineer to understand. But in all the consultations, whenever I've
34 arrived and I've spoken about the viaduct, everybody seems to just ignore it. It's

1 almost as though it's non-existent whereas, in fact, from the entrance way of the
2 tunnel or the exit on the north side, it's a viaduct at considerable height, and as
3 soon as you say, 'This is going over a major railway line that's got overhead
4 electrified rails' – and they are literally as tall as a two-storey building. Now,
5 when you put a viaduct like that running across, it's – and it's a six-lane
6 motorway. It's not a mean engineering project, and it would be visible to
7 everybody.

8 MS LAVER: So would you like to see a realistic rendition of that viaduct?

9 MR BLACK: Yeah, I think it's impossible because no one seems to actually recognise
10 what's going to happen in that area.

11 MS LAVER: Yeah, thank you. We'll put that to the applicant. Thanks very much.

12 MR BLACK: Lovely. Thank you.

13 MR PRATT: Thank you very much. Right, the next person on my list is
14 Mr Stuart Dixon. I believe he's in the virtual room, if Mr Dixon is there.

15 MR DIXON: Hello there. Can you hear me?

16 MR PRATT: Good morning, Mr Dixon. I said we'd get you in before you went to get
17 your granddaughter, was it, to school?

18 MR DIXON: Yes, it is. Thank you very much for that. Just one other thing though,
19 before I start. You asked me to introduce myself, and this has thrown my timing
20 slightly. Could I possibly beg another minute, please, sir?

21 MR PRATT: I have to say 'no' because the timings have got to be fair to one and all.

22 MR DIXON: That's okay.

23 MR PRATT: A couple of seconds possibly, but not a full minute.

24 MR DIXON: Okay, then.

25 MR PRATT: We all know that you are Mr Dixon, anyway.

26 MR DIXON: Okay. That's great, so my working life included successful roles
27 facilitating change. I've designed business cases that have saved the NHS
28 money, and I'm a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and
29 Commerce, and I've been more interested in world events, technology change,
30 and how some local people are thinking about this project, mostly through the
31 Thames Crossing Action Group and the Transport Action Network. Now
32 retired, I had a recent role as a school governor in a primary school, close by the
33 proposed option C, during the pandemic, so I feel reasonably close to the people
34 whose lives will be most likely affected by the Lower Thames Crossing.

1 I'm a former daily commuter through the Dartford tunnel, and I'm under
2 no illusion how commuting by road affects people's health.

3 First, I wanted to ask about the chosen option to dig a tunnel and drive a
4 length of A-road through the spaces either side of it. As we know, this crossing
5 was offered as the engineering and construction solution to the problems at
6 Dartford. No alternatives to digging were considered despite their presence.
7 You do realise this is the most harmful option for local and global communities,
8 don't you, so how do we know this project has consulted as many diverse groups
9 as possible at the right time? That would be in the early stages when compiling
10 a project requirements is undertaken, wouldn't it?

11 It seems fair to be mindful of local interests, so what steps have been taken
12 during consultations to prevent commercial interests generated across the whole
13 country from overriding the wellbeing of local minorities or, indeed, the rest of
14 the planet? Seemingly, we're all just stakeholders with one vote. But is that
15 appropriate, or is it appropriate to apply weighting during the requirements'
16 analysis?

17 As far as I know, the deliverables here are clean air, less congestion,
18 sustainable development and commercial benefits in that order of priority. This
19 is a paradox. In that order, don't the requirements of people with lung disease
20 outweigh those of people who want to repetitively pollute their air supply? Do
21 the requirements of the riverside towns for maritime jobs, which support their
22 cultural heritage, carry any weight? Where are the simple measurements that
23 say how many people will be saved by digging or describe pollution levels now
24 and afterwards? How will we know how the solution is performing if we don't
25 know that?

26 Things change. Can you guarantee the design solution is both in date and
27 remains fit for purpose in the current political, economic, social, technological
28 and environmental epoch? I'm not the only one saying yesterday's engineering
29 solutions have caused massive change to the planet, which is about to fail. The
30 oil we use is toxic, and its carbon release kills. Bugs are in decline. Nature's
31 failing.

32 The question is: why is digging even necessary for our solution when
33 today we have amazing digital technology and expect to deliver with ease
34 massive commercial gains in ways that are clean and ethical? When everybody

1 else is now thinking about delivering AI or thinking about public transport or
2 active travel, or working from home, and localisation's been identified as part
3 of a solution to climate change, are you sure this old solution to dig is still the
4 best choice to meet the commercial sector's requirements for productivity gains?

5 Let's talk about option C. Now, I've heard the plan to divert all the heavy
6 goods traffic using Dartford currently and shift it across to option C, I'm even
7 more concerned about this choice as a route. People want to know, as option C
8 has many schools, leisure areas and playing fields in close proximity, what
9 consideration has been given to recent statements of various health bodies that
10 PM2.5 has long-term impact on the brains and lungs of children and elderly
11 people? What new options and requirements have been generated? I'm asking
12 this for our granddaughter, who's probably scheduled to be educated within
13 100 metres of the proposed road.

14 To conclude – sorry, I've got more questions. In general, I'm sure you'll
15 agree there are many groups with diverse interests and requirements relevant to
16 this project. I can see statutory bodies are consulted, but I can't see if they
17 produced any functional or non-functional requirements to tell you what they
18 want to achieve and how to do it. Are you satisfied that the ability of statutory
19 contributors is sufficient to generate enough requirements to give a fair outcome
20 for people in this space? When the UK climate –

21 MR PRATT: Okay. I'm sorry, Mr Dixon. Your time is up. You've obviously got one
22 or two other little bits and pieces to say. With that in mind, I'm going to give
23 you the invitation that we've been giving to other people as well, which is the
24 deadline number 1 to put forward your written comments on what you've said
25 today but also those bits that you've obviously not got round to telling us about.
26 We'd love to hear them. We do want to hear what you've got to say. It's just,
27 in order of fairness, we've got to stick to the timetable. With that in mind, has
28 any of my colleagues got any questions for Mr Dixon at this point in time?

29 MR SMITH: No, nothing specifically because, again, I mean that was in very large part
30 a set of high-level and strategic issues, some of which we explored in
31 issue-specific hearing number 1, so Mr Dixon, if you saw that online, good. If
32 you didn't, maybe take a look at it before you write your written representations
33 at deadline 1. And as I've said to a number of participants as well, as we move
34 through, we'll get down into a finer level of detail and some of the consequences

1 of the broad-brush issues that you have painted a picture of. We will then look
2 at in more detail later on in the examination. Okay.

3 MR PRATT: If that is all my colleagues, thank you very much for your contribution,
4 Mr Dixon, and we'll look forward to receiving your document.

5 MR DIXON: Thank you.

6 MR PRATT: I will move on to the next on my list, which is Leigh Hughes. Ms Hughes,
7 if you would like to come forward and – that's the button, please. No, there
8 should be a red light. That's wonderful.

9 MS HUGHES: Thank you. Hope I don't get too emotional, but forgive me if I do. My
10 name is Leigh Hughes and I'm a South Ockenden resident. We all know there's
11 need for a solution for the Dartford Crossing. This is why in 2016, residents
12 campaigned for option A, which was still on the table but National Highways
13 dismissed.

14 We already have the Dartford Crossing in Thurrock, a borough that has
15 one of the highest pollution levels in the country. If the crossing was to go ahead,
16 residents in Thurrock would be surrounded in a toxic triangle, having the M25,
17 the A13 and the proposed new road engulfing them. Other effects in the
18 surrounding area where I live would be on grade 1 agricultural land which
19 supplies food for our local supermarkets, which is sadly in decline. I'm
20 concerned that contaminated soil would be brought into the area for the cut and
21 cover.

22 The Wilderness is a long-established woodland, and rather than going
23 through the nearby landfill site, the LTC would destroy trees, habitats and would
24 affect the natural spring water course, which supplies water for irrigation to the
25 nearby habitats. The Mardyke is a floodplain that floods on a regular basis.
26 Hundreds of tonnes of concrete being added to accommodate a viaduct would
27 only make it worse. It would also have a higher elevation than any existing
28 crossing but has no provision for wind barriers.

29 This area has been known for windmills throughout history. My
30 200-year-old cottage, which has no foundations, is on the red line. Like many
31 other residents in the borough, we face an impossible situation where we are at
32 the mercy of National Highways discretionary process. Our future has been
33 taken out of our hands. Having personally not gone down this route, I now find
34 myself in a dreadful and stressful situation of essential 24/7 works, limited

1 access to my property and limited services and utilities due to being
2 approximately 75 metres away from the proposed new green bridge at North
3 Road.

4 I've been working for the past seven years, liaising with National
5 Highways. My experience hasn't been positive. Consultations have been very
6 poor, with inexperienced or no staff on hand to answer my questions, generally
7 leaving me with more questions than answers. I find it incredibly distressing
8 with the attitudes of some staff with comments like, 'Couldn't you live closer to
9 the project?' and, when asking what benefit the proposed road would have for
10 the residents of Thurrock, being told that workmen would always need
11 newspapers and teabags.

12 I am glad to be here today to bring up my points to a body that can hold
13 them accountable and recommend against this project since it would not meet
14 scheme objectives nor be value for money or sustainable, and would leave a
15 legacy of greenwashing, destruction and a multitude of health issues for the
16 future generations. As for unlocking economic growth, breathing clean air has
17 far more value than an out-of-date smart motorway by stealth.

18 I would just like to comment on a question the panel asked last week at
19 one of the hearings. It was on heritage and why National Highways was saving
20 the Orsett windmill and destroying other historic buildings. I just wanted to
21 bring to your attention that when councillor and residents asked why the whole
22 route couldn't be tunnelled to save the heritage in Thurrock, we were told that
23 Thurrock had nothing of importance to save. I beg to differ. The tunnels and
24 the road cut through the great field where Queen Elizabeth I made her speech.

25 I would just like to appeal to all the residents along the route, especially
26 in Thurrock, where 70% of the borough is being carved up, causing communities
27 to be cut off, for each of them, please, to have their say and to sign up to be heard
28 at the hearings. Thank you very much for your time.

29 MR PRATT: Thank you very much. The one question which I think I'll ask this time –
30 you made comment about the Mardyke and it's being in floodplain.

31 MS HUGHES: That's correct.

32 MR PRATT: Does that floodplain affect the area where you live just now, or is it more
33 along the banks or –

34 MS HUGHES: No.

1 MR PRATT: – the field surrounding the Mardyke?

2 MS HUGHES: It affects the houses further down. They get on a regular basis from the
3 Environment Agency letters to say, ‘Put the sandbags out,’ which is just further
4 down the hill from North Road.

5 MR PRATT: Flooding always goes downhill, doesn’t it?

6 MS HUGHES: Yeah, of course it does, yeah.

7 MR PRATT: Thank you. Has any of my colleagues got any questions at this point in
8 time?

9 MS LAVER: I did seek a clarification, actually, but I think you just answered it. You
10 mentioned that you live in proximity to one of the green bridges, and I was going
11 to ask: did you say North Road?

12 MS HUGHES: Yes, that’s correct.

13 MS LAVER: But I think you just said that. Great. The other thing I would say, you
14 mentioned the Wilderness in your submission there.

15 MS HUGHES: I did, yes.

16 MS LAVER: We are proposing to do an accompanied site inspection to the Wilderness.
17 It did come up in the hearings last week if my – I don’t know if it was Ms Blake
18 that raised it, but it certainly got mentioned, and we have put it in our suggested
19 –

20 MS HUGHES: That would be really –

21 MS LAVER: – site inspection, so we will be paying a visit to that area.

22 MS HUGHES: It’s a very magical place. And National Highways will be putting a wall
23 to stop, to divert, so perhaps they could show you –

24 MS LAVER: Yes, we will be looking at that.

25 MS HUGHES: Yeah, it is beautiful.

26 MS LAVER: Thank you very much.

27 MS HUGHES: Thank you very much for your time.

28 MR PRATT: Thank you very much for coming this morning.

29 MR SMITH: Thank you very much.

30 MR PRATT: Thank you. Right, the next half a dozen or so that I have on my list either
31 had difficulty signing in this morning or haven’t turned up, so the next person
32 on my list is Ms Sisterton, Cathy Sisterton. Good morning.

33 MS SISTERTON: Good morning. Thanks for having me here. That came around
34 quickly after ‘H’, so I’m not quite ready. Anyway...

1 MR SMITH: Can you just confirm your name just before you start?

2 MS SISTERTON: Yeah, my name's Cathy Sisterton. I'm a resident of Thurrock, live
3 in Aveley. Thanks for allowing me to speak. My three main areas of concern
4 regarding the crossing are the huge carbon costs and the loss of natural habitats,
5 the lack of public transport and active travel options and what I haven't really
6 heard mentioned: the effect on the northern section of the M25, which I have to
7 drive quite frequently.

8 First, the carbon emissions, both embedded through the construction and
9 afterwards during its use. And it's been shown, as we've heard before from
10 Transport Action Network, that the roads will produce 5 million tonnes of
11 carbon – 2 million during construction and 3 million during the first 60 years of
12 use. And I know the actual amounts quoted vary, and it's difficult to predict,
13 I'm sure, but they're such vast amounts that there's no amount of carbon
14 offsetting or tree-planting that will be sufficient to make this anything near
15 carbon neutral. And promising it will be a pathfinder project is really not very
16 reassuring.

17 Secondly, the lack of public transport and active travel options. As we've
18 heard and it was reiterated today, the Climate Change Committee said we need
19 to – there needs to be a modal shift away from car travel. And every National
20 Highways planning response I've seen states that at the bottom. They say it;
21 they clearly aren't acting on it. It does the very opposite. It's only allowing car
22 and lorry access. As we've heard again, there's no protected cycle lanes. The
23 only rail crossings are from central London. The lack of local access points, as
24 Laura said, make local bus routes across to Kent through the tunnel very
25 unlikely.

26 There's 20% of households in Thurrock that have no car. We're trying to
27 decrease our dependency on car ownership. And this scheme will do nothing to
28 take cars off the road. Something like the KenEx tram scheme, which I'm sure
29 you're aware of, that would actually help those people who would, at the
30 moment, have real problems getting into Kent. And it's true: there's no real
31 travel if you haven't got a car across to Kent.

32 Now, the separate issue I wanted to talk about, which I'm aware of
33 because, like I say, I often drive to the north side of the M25, is the problem of
34 induced demand, which will affect traffic further around there. I've frequently

1 heard one major purpose of this proposed road is to hasten the journeys of freight
2 travelling from Dover to the Midlands. And clearly, I mean, we're all aware,
3 there's hold-ups at the moment at the Dartford Crossing, especially coming
4 north. But the hold-ups I experience are much more common further round at
5 the M1 junction in particular – I think it's junction 21 – around the A10, the M11
6 junction. They're all – it's not just the Dartford Crossing that gets delays.
7 There's really serious delays further round as well.

8 Now, when I raised this at an early consultation exercise, I was told that
9 work was planned to increase capacity around these other junctions to help with
10 the extra demand placed on the road by the Lower Thames Crossing traffic.
11 Now, I've got to ask, 'When is this going to end?' because we know we simply
12 cannot continue building roads because of climate change, because of damage
13 to the natural environment. And at some point, we have to stop. And the Lower
14 Thames Crossing is set to be so expensive; why don't we use this money to look
15 at alternatives and take this moment in time to seriously look at alternative forms
16 of solving our transport problems? We could be forward-thinking and
17 sustainable.

18 Just a few examples that come to mind: as an alternative to Dover, ferries
19 could go Harwich and freight could be driven along the A14 to the Midlands.
20 Already there are fewer lorries on the Dartford Crossing as a result of Brexit,
21 with various diverting directly to Ireland instead of using England and Wales as
22 a road bridge. The current crossing could definitely be improved by a second
23 bridge northwards to remove the need for traffic lights while tankers are escorted
24 through the tunnels. A tram, as I've mentioned, would help get cars off the
25 roads. The use of freight, as Laura said, but a rail line from Ashford to Reading
26 should also be looked at.

27 So I think, what's unfortunate to me is that solutions are only being
28 considered by National Highways, and what we require is a multiagency
29 approach if we're really going to look at reducing pressure on our roads. That's
30 about it, I think. Thank you.

31 MR PRATT: Thank you very much. Within the time limit as well.

32 MS SISTERTON: Just about.

33 MR PRATT: Yeah. Does any of my colleagues have any questions at this point for this
34 lady? Mr Smith.

1 MR SMITH: No, not directly, but again, as you'll have seen with all of these matters,
2 we're at an early stage, and, therefore, all of the points that you've raised are matters
3 that we've put into the great melting pot of considerations that we need to evaluate
4 over the six-month period. Thank you very much for your contributions.

5 MS SISTERTON: Thank you.

6 MR PRATT: Thank you very much. The next person on my list is Jackie Thacker –
7 Ms Thacker. One question before you start, if I may: are you talking with – the
8 other person I had on my list was a John Thacker. Is he...?

9 MS THACKER: He's [inaudible] my husband.

10 MR PRATT: Well, do tell him we're asking for him anyway if he's not well. In that
11 case, if you're going to talk on behalf of you both, you have seven minutes.

12 MS THACKER: Okay, thank you. My name is Jackie Thacker, and I live the Baker
13 Street end of Orsett. I am totally opposed of the LTC, always have been. The
14 huge environmental impact that it will have on society, the health issues that will
15 be brought along its way by all the pollution. It's not only – it's due to go on for
16 five-plus years. Could run longer than that. During that time, the huge amounts
17 of construction traffic and cement works, whatever means they need to produce
18 this road, is going to be absolutely monumental.

19 On the edge of where we live, so to the north of Stifford Clays Road, is
20 going to be the biggest compound. We have three compounds in the Orsett area.
21 The one that is by far the biggest, where the viaduct goes across the fens, is yards
22 away from our house – 200, 400 yards, metres, when it's proposed. Haven't
23 seen anything on the documentation recently saying whether that is still going
24 to be there. We've been told it was going to be a minor compound and
25 temporary. The last hearing was it's going to be permanent. It's going to be
26 full-time, and a lot of it could be 24 hours a day.

27 We did ask years ago for mitigation to be put in place, to plant trees to
28 screen across there already, not wait till the production of the road starts but
29 prior to that, so there's a natural screening in place, not fencing or the
30 constructional fencing and provisions that they make, but something that is
31 pleasant on the eye, that you've got to live with for six years. At my age, I might
32 be dead by the time it's finished. But I'm concerned about other people in the
33 area. And as we said, the prevailing winds are going to come across our land
34 into Orsett. We get it from all directions. You can see our cars are forever

1 covered in dust at this time, without the compound. We've asked for it to be
2 moved away from there.

3 The height of the road as it goes across the fens – that is also going to
4 bring the noise and pollution across our way, and to the east of the lower Thames
5 is going to be badly affected by it. It's going to be damaging to health and the
6 environment itself it's impacting on: wildlife, homes, people's pleasure in
7 walking, riding, cycling. It's all going to be impeded and severely impacted by
8 the Lower Thames Crossing and its path.

9 We've asked at times for a construction model, a scale construction model
10 of the progress of the whole route of the Lower Thames Crossing, so that the
11 general public would have an eye and would be able to see exactly what the
12 Lower Thames Crossing will mean to them in its construction. The videos,
13 they're all very nice, and they can be helpful, but having actually something that
14 you can look at would be – I'm sure you would have had a lot more opposition
15 to the LTC if this had been done. And it's adjustable. You've got technologies
16 these days. And I can't for the life of me see why they haven't produced one.

17 But, as with the other people, with cost and with the traffic environment,
18 we should be looking more means of public transport, more affordable, more
19 regular, moving freight by rail, as we say, making crossings available into Kent.
20 I agree with those that have spoken before me, and I would back them up entirely
21 in what they're saying. But freight should be reduced. More of it should go by
22 rail. Take traffic away from the roads. Reduce the impact, not increase it, and
23 the problems on the M25 along the route – I experienced that several times.
24 Everybody must know it. It's known as the local car park. I don't know where
25 I am.

26 Yes, the smart motorway by stealth – I'm not happy with that one. They're
27 dangerous and they should be scrapped. There should be facilities for travellers,
28 cyclists and everything going across to the south side of the river and north,
29 backwards and forwards.

30 And the standalone projects of disguising the cost of the LTC, such as the
31 Tilbury link road and the Blue Bell Hill project – they are being run as separate
32 projects. They were part of the LTC. It's part of the LTC as a whole, but that's
33 been taken away as a side effect, so we're not convinced of that. I think that's
34 about me. Thank you.

1 MR PRATT: That's about you, yes. Thank you very much for that. One thing I will say
2 is – and it's probably too late for today's hearing, but if somebody says
3 something before, just reference it, and we know what you're talking about. But
4 lovely to hear you go through this stuff as well. Has any of my colleagues got
5 any questions at this stage?

6 MS LAVER: Ms Thacker, thank you for your submission. You referenced in some detail
7 about the compound, Stifford Clays compound. Is that the one you were
8 referring to?

9 MS THACKER: Yes, it's the north of Stifford Clays. I believe there's one south of
10 Stifford Clays as well.

11 MS LAVER: Yeah, you say 'north' and 'south'. The reason I ask is because, on the list
12 that the applicant has provided, they call them 'east' and 'west', so I'm trying to
13 understand. I don't know where your property –

14 MS THACKER: I should imagine it's west. It's towards the M25.

15 MS LAVER: Right, okay. Thank you. There is also a utility logistics hub. That's also
16 proposed.

17 MS THACKER: Sorry.

18 MS LAVER: A utility logistics hub, which is in relation to the electricity work that will
19 go on. There's also one of those referenced for Stifford Clays Road. Without
20 the plans in front of me, I don't know –

21 MS THACKER: Sorry. I'm really struggling to hear you.

22 MS LAVER: Sorry. I'm so sorry. There's also a utility logistics hub, which is referenced
23 for Stifford Clays Road. Unfortunately, I haven't got the plan in front of me.
24 Now, that may be part of the main compound.

25 MS THACKER: Right.

26 MS LAVER: But you're specifically referring to the compound. Is that correct?

27 MS THACKER: Yeah. Well, they said they'll just be – it could be the cement production
28 works. It could be construction vehicles. They said it's the main one for the
29 Orsett A13 junction.

30 MS LAVER: Yeah.

31 MS THACKER: So it's going to be absolutely massive. There'll be accommodations
32 there, storage of all the construction vehicles, utility vehicles. Apparently, it's
33 going to be the whole range of construction and staffing areas around there.

34 MS LAVER: Okay, that's really helpful. Thank you for the clarity.

1 MR SMITH: Well, as a brief follow-up from that, Mrs Thacker, what I'm going to
2 suggest is, if you are able to at deadline 1, and you're putting in written
3 submissions at that point, and it could be as simple as taking a photograph of the
4 relevant part of the plan, which you might be able to do on screen – and if you're
5 struggling with being able to do that, then there are probably people in other
6 groups, organisations, locally who would, I think – Ms Blake is immediately
7 putting up her hand, so talk to the action group if you haven't already about how
8 to do that, so you can actually include with your written representation a
9 snapshot of a component of the plan which says, 'This is the specific site that
10 we are worried about,' bearing in mind the points that we –

11 MS THACKER: I'm worried about the whole site, the whole –

12 MR SMITH: The whole thing.

13 MS THACKER: – as a whole, but this particular one is going to have a health impact
14 and environmental impact of huge proportions.

15 MR SMITH: It just helps us to be – we note the broader objections, and we're not
16 discounting them, but it certainly just helps us to be clear about you and your
17 concerns. If you can literally get a piece of red texture and go around the outside
18 of the particular locations that you –

19 MS THACKER: It's definitely west; the sun sets over there. I got a picture of it the other
20 night.

21 MR SMITH: Yeah, and actually, that goes for people making written representations as
22 well. As my colleague Mr Pratt has already said, pictures, maps, etc, do speak
23 1,000 words. And if you can save writing five pages by describing your
24 concerns by attaching of the photograph and then giving us a map, showing us
25 where it was taken and what it's of, that will often be far more helpful to us than
26 a lot of words, so again, I'll – and that's not just an invitation to you. That's an
27 invitation to anybody considering how to shape what they put in at deadline 1.

28 Final observation I was going to make is referencing the compulsory
29 acquisition position. And without referring to your individual address, I do note
30 that there are members of your family who are mentioned in the book of
31 reference, which is the applicant's record of land where they're proposing to
32 seek either rights or land. I mean, I'm looking at the name John Thacker, and
33 that's your husband.

34 MS THACKER: That's my husband, yeah.

1 MR SMITH: Yeah. Well, on that basis, if there are members of your family in the book
2 of reference, that means that there is a suggestion from the applicant that they
3 would be seeking rights over land that is in your ownership or to take land that
4 is in your ownership. If you haven't already checked that out, do. And again,
5 flagging that omnipresent deadline 1. You can request to be heard, or members
6 of your family that are affected can request to be heard, at a compulsory
7 acquisition hearing at deadline 1, where we can go over these things in more
8 detail.

9 Now, again, if you're left thinking, 'Well, what was all that about?' do
10 please speak to Mr Blackmore or Mr Bartkowiak, the two case managers in the
11 back of the room, at the next break. Talk to them about how you can do the
12 checks you might need to do to see whether that's something you want to do.

13 MS THACKER: Right. Well, we have – I just can't remember now. I think we've had
14 some compulsory purchase letters come through. That's been changed. They
15 moved the boundary. But we've had a lot of discretionary purchases in the
16 Baker Street area. Our area is not the same. Our friends and neighbours have
17 moved. I don't wish to move. We've been there 37 years in our house. It's
18 been in the family since the 1960s, and I don't wish to give it up. I don't wish I
19 could move. Personally, I don't feel I could move at this stage in my life. I'm
20 stressed enough without trying to pack up a home and find somewhere else to
21 live away from friends, family and places that I've known for that long. I don't
22 want to go, nor did the other people that have gone.

23 They really did not want to go, but they were so worried about the impact
24 that the LTC will have on the whole area, they've chosen to move further afield,
25 not where they want to be. People are having to travel to see their families now.
26 I don't want to do that.

27 MR SMITH: I'm very conscious of that, and what we're not going to do today is to delve
28 into those very difficult personal and emotional circumstances. However, I did
29 think it was important that I flagged up that there is another opportunity to have
30 that conversation in a place specially set aside, a compulsory acquisition hearing,
31 that is for any people who are affected by this, where we will be in a different
32 mode of operation than we are here today.

33 MS THACKER: Thank you for the opportunity.

34 MR SMITH: So do speak to the case team after this session, just to check.

1 MS THACKER: Could I just come back on that one more time –

2 MR SMITH: Yes.

3 MS THACKER: – because the people that have moved have had a lot of issues with
4 Highways England and the way they have conducted themselves during their
5 discretionary purchases. And when the time has come, they have had to move
6 every tiny scrap of thing out of their premises, out of their garden, by a given
7 deadline, and they have been out there regimentally at that deadline to make sure
8 everything's done. We've been involved in two or three of the moves. We've
9 got two lorries on our field from the last ones – lorryloads of people's home
10 equipment, their home, because they've got nowhere to store it. It's not been a
11 good experience, and I really don't wish to go through that.

12 MR SMITH: I'm going to again say today isn't the place to have that conversation.

13 MS THACKER: Yeah, okay. I see.

14 MR SMITH: So I'm going to draw a line under that now, but we will be holding
15 compulsory acquisition hearings, and if you want to engage in those, please do.
16 Okay.

17 MS THACKER: Right. Thank you.

18 MR PRATT: Thank you very much. Anything else, Mr Smith, or can I continue?

19 MR SMITH: No, by all means, please continue.

20 MR PRATT: That, ladies and gentlemen, is the last of my list. I have a couple of notices
21 that people haven't showed, some for hospital appointments; others just haven't
22 turned up.

23 So what I would like to do now is that, as Ms Thacker was the last person
24 on my list who has actually asked to be heard, is there anybody who I've missed
25 that we think – who have asked to speak today but for some reason, we never
26 managed to catch you as you came in, so you haven't come to our attention that
27 you've arrived, now I can – or if, I suppose, secondly after that, is there anybody
28 here today – we've got a little bit of time. If there's anybody here who's come
29 in and would like to say something to us, now is your opportunity as well. We
30 do have a little bit of time before we – in this patch.

31 MR SMITH: And I will say there that that is principally an invitation for somebody who
32 is an interested party, clearly. But let's just see. Is there anybody online who
33 was expecting to be called to speak and hasn't been called to speak yet? And if
34 you are, just raise a yellow hand. And I'm looking at the screen very carefully,

1 and I'm not seeing any yellow hands – and again, equivalently in the room. Is
2 there anybody sitting here who was expecting to be called to speak and has not
3 yet been called to speak? No.

4 MR PRATT: No. And is there any other interested party who's come on spec and would
5 like to give us the benefit of any submission? I'm looking at both the online and
6 in the room, and there's been no hands going up.

7 MR SMITH: Yes, we have Stuart Dixon.

8 MR PRATT: Mr Dixon.

9 MR SMITH: Who we have already heard from.

10 MR PRATT: Yes, we have.

11 MR SMITH: In that respect, what I will say, Mr Dixon, is that, of fairness, we do need
12 to be clear that we don't just kind of busk into additional time. We don't start
13 playing the next overture, so what I'm not going to permit – and this is a general
14 rule that will apply across all open-floor hearings, is just opportunistically, due
15 to the accident of the fact that we've had one or two people drop out, that we
16 then ask for additional time from others. There are time limits, and the time
17 limits are there to apply an equality of access to this process and to enable us to
18 be fair to everybody.

19 So Mr Pratt did invite you to make submissions to us to close out your
20 comments in writing, and we'll be looking forward to receiving those
21 submissions in due course. But I don't think we can extend anybody's individual
22 time today because, of course, if we extend somebody's time by five minutes
23 today, why should we not do so in Dartford next week? Why should we not do
24 so in September? That's where we are.

25 MR PRATT: Thank you, Mr Dixon. In that case, we're now really at the end of this
26 session or even this hearing.

27 MR SMITH: Well, we do need to hear from the applicant.

28 MR PRATT: Well, we do need to hear from the applicant. That's what I was going to
29 ask Mr Henderson, if he would like to come forward, and I can give him
30 five minutes on responding or otherwise to what he's heard this morning, or
31 what we've all heard this morning. And if you could introduce your colleague
32 as well, please, that would be helpful.

33 MR HENDERSON: Good afternoon, sir. Thank you. My name's Tom Henderson. I'm
34 the legal representative for the Lower Thames Crossing project today. Next to

1 me is Dr Tim Wright, who is the head of consents, and he's just sitting here in
2 case there are any questions that he can assist with.

3 Firstly, I wanted to say thank you for the contributions from those in the
4 room and online on behalf of National Highways. Noting your direction in the
5 agenda, we'll be mainly responding to what we've heard in writing. I should
6 say we're still formulating exactly how we do that by deadline 1, but I'd
7 anticipate they'll be some direct responses to what we've heard today but also
8 some signposting to where else in the application or other parts of the process
9 we would anticipate responding, so written representations, so just to make that
10 initial point.

11 Then turning to the matter you specifically wanted us to address you on,
12 which was the British Horse Society's representation in relation to Jeskyns
13 wood. Again, there's quite a lot of detail here, so we'll put something in writing
14 about this. But my understanding of the basic position is that the project is not
15 severing an existing bridleway south of the A2. What's happening is there's a
16 temporary impact on national cycle route 177, and, because of that, a temporary
17 diversion has been put through Jeskyns wood, using temporary possession
18 powers, and that involves an upgrade of that route so it's suitable for cyclists.

19 Now, that route is available for horse riders as well if they would wish to
20 use it, along with other existing permissive rights of way through Jeskyns. And
21 then, once national cycle route 177 is permanently diverted, that goes on a
22 separate route, so not through the woodlands. So, as I said, there's no severance
23 of an existing bridleway. And the situation is that Jeskyns wood already contains
24 existing permissive routes for horse riders.

25 Originally, the project did explore and proposed creating a permanent
26 bridleway through that woodland, but that was opposed by Forestry England,
27 who are the landowner. And the land is Crown land, so we have no ability, as
28 you will appreciate, through the DCO process to acquire that land compulsorily.
29 It would have to be by agreement, but the key stakeholder[?] here wishes us to
30 retain the position of providing, or them providing, permissive footpaths and
31 bridleways and the like.

32 So that's, in a nutshell, I think, the situation as we see it. And as I say, we
33 will produce that into writing, and obviously the British Horse Society will be

1 able to respond to that in due course. So I hope that answers your questions on
2 that, but have you got any questions on that now?

3 MR SMITH: No, I think that's reasonably clear. I mean, one of the things we'll take
4 away is consideration of the issues that have arisen as potential action points
5 from this hearing, and it would assist – we typically don't publish action lists
6 arising out of open-floor hearings unless there are matters that very clearly need
7 to be addressed. And certainly, if it would assist you if we render that one down
8 into writing, we're happy to do so.

9 MR HENDERSON: Yeah, that would be helpful. Thank you very much.

10 MR SMITH: Okay, right.

11 MR HENDERSON: Moving on then, and conscious of the time, as I say, we weren't
12 proposing to respond substantively. I know that's not what you've asked us to
13 do. I would say that a number of statements have been made today in relation
14 to government policy, environmental targets, traffic and economic numbers,
15 funding, which, with respect, we do not agree as being correct and we will
16 respond appropriately on those.

17 MR SMITH: You will submit to us on that.

18 MR HENDERSON: We did, in particular, want to point out a figure of the 4% reduction
19 at Dartford is not a number that we recognise in terms of the traffic impact at
20 Dartford, so that was one particular item that we wanted to put on the record
21 today.

22 That apart, there are a number of documents that we could usefully
23 reference today which respond to some of the comments stakeholders have
24 made, and it may assist them in preparing their written representations if we give
25 them a bit of signposting. Now, this might extend beyond the five minutes. This
26 has got four or five references that I thought might be useful to flag.

27 MR SMITH: Look, I think there is a distinction here between you putting your
28 in-principle response, which must be contained within the five minutes, but you
29 telling people here where you believe you have answered their points – I think
30 we can allow a little time for that because it is useful; it will help people write
31 better written representations.

32 MR PRATT: I did notice, Mr Smith, that it wasn't just the British Horse Society this
33 morning who have, in a roundabout way, asked questions of the applicant. A
34 number of other individuals and organisations have done likewise, so as long as

1 it isn't going to take too long to reference them, I think we should allow that. So
2 if you care to –

3 MR SMITH: Absolutely, and I will assist also in that by saying that, just as I'd indicated
4 that it may be helpful if we render the British Horse Society matter into writing
5 and actually publish a list, that there are other observations that have been made
6 that were, essentially, questions to yourselves where we can also set that out in
7 a list so that you've got an opportunity to respond to those in writing formally at
8 deadline 1 if that would help.

9 MR HENDERSON: That would. Thank you very much. So the other point that was
10 made by the British Horse Society was information about the interface between
11 existing rights of way and new proposed rights of way under the application.
12 And we would just draw their attention to the population in human health
13 assessment, figure 13.4, which is APP-320, which does provide a plan showing
14 the interface between existing and proposed new rights of way or changes to
15 rights of way, so that may be a document they find particularly useful if they
16 haven't seen it already.

17 Similarly, in relation to the Essex Ramblers, who asked about information
18 insofar as detailed design is concerned, and we would draw their attention to the
19 design principles document APP-516, which contains a number of design
20 principles which contain an additional layer of information and commitment
21 around design, particularly commitments PEO.04 and PEO.09, so we would
22 draw their attention to that.

23 A couple of contributors commented on the phrase 'pathfinder project',
24 and I thought it would be helpful just to draw the panel's attention and their
25 attention to a document published by National Highways called 'Net zero
26 highways'. And this is the company's plan in terms of how it's going to meet
27 the pathway to a net zero by 2050. And at page 18 of that document – I'm afraid
28 I don't have a date. There isn't a date on the document when it was published,
29 but I think it's been published for at least a year, maybe longer now. But at
30 page 18 of that document, which is available online, it identifies Lower Thames
31 Crossing specifically as a key project to test low-carbon innovation and
32 approaches.

1 And that's where, as I understand it, the 'pathfinder' phrase is coming
2 from, so it's not been created just on a whim. It is actually a specific
3 commitment within a published document in relation to the project.

4 Just moving through, I think it was Mr Black that was asking for where he
5 could find out more information about the visual effects of the Tilbury viaduct.
6 And we would just draw his attention to the relevant photo montage, which is
7 application document APP-245, which contains a photo montage image of the
8 viaduct. And I think that concludes the signposting, so I hope that was helpful.

9 MR PRATT: Thank you very much for that. And I'm sure the different people will have
10 a look at those documents and will comment by deadline 1 if they agree or
11 disagree with the points.

12 Now, I am aware that the British Horse Society, Ms Rayfield, has had her
13 hand up for a little while. It's not common to have question-and-answer sessions
14 in this particular open-floor hearing. If Ms Rayfield would like to come on and
15 tell us what the point is, we can deal with it quickly, but it might really be
16 something that really needs to go back to your written representation rather than
17 in this forum, because normally we don't allow second and third coming back,
18 if that makes sense, so if it's a point that's relevant for this time, or is it
19 something that's basically for your representation?

20 MS RAYFIELD: Okay. I hope it may be a point for this time. There are comments that
21 have just been made that, yes, I would absolutely take issue with in a written
22 representation. My problem is that we are going to have it in writing for National
23 Highways, and the written representations need to be in by 18 July, and I am on
24 annual leave now until 18 July, so by the time I get back from my annual leave,
25 read their response, check it against the documents that they've got and construct
26 a response, I am not going to find it at all easy, given I'm not a planning person
27 – I'm an equestrian – to get that response in by 18 July, so I just wanted to check
28 what could be done as far as that was concerned, so procedural, if you will.

29 MR PRATT: I'll leave that to you, Mr Smith.

30 MR SMITH: Thank you very much. Now, look, I mean, I think there are two issues that
31 arise here, the first being the in-principle necessity for us to maintain an orderly
32 process of examination, which means that, when we do set out a deadline, we
33 do know that human life intervenes. And it's extraordinarily difficult

1 sometimes, even for members of this Examining Authority to deliver our part of
2 this process in relation to elements of the timetable.

3 However, we do have to have fairness. We do have to set out that certain
4 things are done by certain times. And what we will always try to resist, unless
5 in the most of exceptional circumstances, are a whole range of special pleadings
6 about the release or remission from individual deadlines because somebody has
7 a booked holiday or whatever, particularly when an organisation is an
8 organisation, and there are prospectively other people in that organisation who
9 might be able to deputise. We would ask you to try and achieve some means of
10 responding at deadline 1 on behalf of the society, even if that's not through you.

11 To flag, then, that the deadlines go in bounce-downs, so in terms of
12 responding to what the applicant says, arising from this event, you will see their
13 submissions at deadline 1, and the place to put your comments on those will be
14 in deadline 2 in any case, so you don't have to guess what they might say and
15 just throw something in speculatively. If what you wish to do is to specifically
16 respond to what they have said, wait, read what they've put in and is published
17 at deadline 1, and have your say at deadline 2.

18 But that shouldn't take away the principal obligation, which I can't
19 remove from you, I'm afraid, which is that if the British Horse Society wants to
20 state its case, in principle, irrespective of what the applicant says, then deadline
21 1 will be the date when that happens, and I'm afraid, if you're on leave, there
22 will be a conversation that needs to happen inside the society about finding a
23 volunteer, or another staff member, or something of that nature who might assist,
24 so that we do get there at deadline 1. Is that reasonably clear?

25 MS RAYFIELD: It is clear. Thank you, sir.

26 MR SMITH: Thank you very much.

27 MR PRATT: Thank you. Thank you, Mr Smith. Well, I think that it's come to that time,
28 to be honest. Thank you for coming, both the applicant and everybody else
29 who's contributed to this morning. I found it interesting as well as informative.
30 Just to repeat what Mr Smith has said to the other speakers, if there's something
31 that the applicant has just said that you disagree with, or once you've seen the
32 documents that he has pointed you to, deadline 1, please respond to us in writing
33 by that deadline in July. Do you wish to resume your seats, gentlemen?

34 MS LAVER: Sorry, Mr Pratt. I have a query for the applicant before you move on.

1 MR PRATT: My apologies.

2 MS LAVER: Mr Henderson, you referred us to the photo montage of Tilbury Viaduct at
3 APP-245? Because I've just opened up that document. It's a 40-page document
4 of, obviously, different parts of the project, and I'm trying just to understand,
5 because we're trying to signpost people.

6 MR SMITH: Yeah. Is there a figure number that would help there?

7 MS LAVER: I'm only pressing you on it because it may form an action on the action
8 list.

9 MR HENDERSON: So I think the reference you're asking for is viewpoint S28, and
10 hopefully, if you type that in to a search, it will take you to the image that we're
11 referring to.

12 MR SMITH: I captured that into the action list.

13 MS LAVER: Thank you very much.

14 MR PRATT: Thank you very much. Is there anybody else got any questions for the
15 applicant from the panel? No. Thank you, gentlemen, if you want to resume
16 your seats. So that was agenda item 5. I'm going to move on to agenda item 6,
17 and Ms Laver, it's all yours.

18 MS LAVER: Sorry. From Mrs Thacker, I understood maybe you can't hear me at the
19 back. I'm feeling really awkward on this seat, if I'm honest. I did ask for a
20 booster seat. I'm a little bit short and this seat's a little bit low.

21 I'm on to the point about actions. We would generally do this after the
22 fact and not really give firm action list today, but just a few things that did come
23 up. Certainly, the applicant's just referenced a response they will make to the
24 British Horse Society and that would have been something we will capture on
25 the actions, and that will come in writing at deadline 1. We referred to the
26 Whitecroft Care Home. We referred to the need for the applicant to liaise with
27 Whitecroft Care Home, and for Whitecroft Care Home to also be involved with
28 Thurrock Council in trying to arrange the opportunity for the panel to inspect
29 internally. That is something which we'll capture on the action list.

30 Forgive me a second. As I said, I'm sort of sitting awkwardly on the seat
31 and trying to prop with the screen. It has come up twice – it came up in an
32 issue-specific hearing last week, and it came up again today, about there being
33 a lack of vertical section plans of some of these major junctions, and I think we

1 may be trying to pick that up in an action, so I'm putting the applicant just on
2 notice that we may be trying to capture that in an action from today.

3 There are engineering plans, of course, in the document set, but for the
4 non-engineer they are difficult to understand, and we did recently, at procedural
5 deadline B, receive from the applicant, a much better set of junction plans, which
6 meant that we could see the main junctions in one plan, instead of trying to look
7 across the different variety, and it might be that we will be requesting some
8 vertical sections of that, not necessarily in engineering plan form. So again, it's
9 something we'll follow up, potentially, as an action from this.

10 I have an action that Mr Beard – Mr Smith suggested that you submitted
11 your alternative junction design as part of your written representation, so we
12 again would encourage you to do that.

13 In terms of Tilbury Viaduct, we just had a discussion around that. We
14 ordinarily would have been requesting as an action a realistic rendition of that,
15 but you've referred us to a particular photo montage, so that may very well be
16 an action that falls away from today.

17 I don't believe I've got anything else that was a formal action to be
18 reported.

19 MR SMITH: That looks good, as far as I'm concerned, so we will follow those up, and
20 we're very conscious, I think, that we are outstanding publication of actions from
21 last week. One of the things that we took the view about was that, because there
22 is a reasonable amount of time between now and the next deadline, that it would
23 be better to put carefully judged actions, where we don't have reiterative actions
24 bouncing to and fro between hearings, and that are carefully considered after the
25 closure of this hearing, rather than rush out a publication on the action list from
26 last week. So you will be seeing them, but once we've sat down, read them
27 through in draft, and resolve the best means to actually ask the questions that
28 need to be asked. Most of those, of course, will be proceeding to the applicant.

29 MR PRATT: Thank you, Mr Smith. This is Ken Pratt again. Right, it's really getting to
30 the end of this morning's session, or this afternoon's session, and agenda item 7
31 is next steps. This has been open-floor hearing number 2. For those of you who
32 are observant in the notice for this hearing, we identified time reserved to
33 continue this hearing tomorrow from 10.00 in the morning, should we have had
34 some disruption, or if there was any other issues. Having reached this point, I

1 can be clear that no adjournments – get my mouth sorted out – no adjournments
2 will be needed, so I’m announcing that there will be no adjourned open-floor
3 hearing held tomorrow.

4 I would respond those watching online or on the recording that our next
5 open-floor hearing in the examinations will be open-floor hearing number 3, and
6 it will be held on Wednesday, 5 July 2023, with a potential 6 July if required,
7 but on 5 July, at 10.00 in the morning, at Dartford Bridge Hilton Hotel, in
8 Dartford in Kent. Interested parties can still request to be heard until Thursday
9 29 June. That’s this Thursday.

10 A reminder also that if you want to be heard at an open-floor hearing but
11 haven’t managed to make your request in time for 1, 2 or even 3, please submit
12 your request by deadline 1 on Tuesday, 18 July. I must point out that this
13 deadline is the last occasion on which we ask for requests to be heard at
14 open-floor hearings. You can also request us to hold them in the evening or in
15 a general location. We want to hear from you, and we’ll try to accommodate
16 your request if possible, but I must reiterate that the last date for you to request
17 to be heard at an open-floor hearing is deadline 1, which is Tuesday, 18 July.

18 I’m sorry for just repeating the same date time and time again, but I’m just
19 trying to give an indication of how important that date is, if you like.

20 A reminder, too, that if you’ve already spoken at an open-floor hearing –
21 now that’s open-floor hearing 1 or here today – you will not be offered a second
22 speaking appointment. Speaking opportunities are available for those who have
23 not yet had their chance to speak. You heard us playing around with time today.
24 Everybody’s given their fair chance. We want to make sure it’s fair. You can
25 augment your oral submissions by providing additional material by the deadline
26 1.

27 Other hearings were conducted by the panel last week, as Mr Smith has
28 already indicated, and I recognise one or two from those. The issue-specific
29 hearing number 1 examined the definition of the Lower Thames Crossing
30 project, and issue-specific hearing 2 started to look at the draft development
31 consent order. You can now see these recordings of these events on the Planning
32 Inspectorate website, and if you want to make any comments on those events,
33 please do so by deadline 1.

1 We'll be holding further hearings in September, October and November,
2 and we'll be providing more detail of those hearings on the website shortly. The
3 examination timetable in the rule 8 letter is now published, and that includes all
4 the hearing arrangements. Do take a look at the website. Do have a look at the
5 rule 8 letter and its appendices.

6 I want to take this opportunity to thank you all today, both in the room and
7 also online, all the speakers for your contributions. We do appreciate that you
8 may have preferred to be here with us to hear you in person. We're trying our
9 best to conduct the examination in ways to include as many people as possible,
10 whether that be online, whether that be in person, and I think I can probably say
11 that Covid has got a lot to answer for – being able to work in this dual person
12 and online sphere. I'm trying to get used to it, and I know some of my colleagues
13 are likewise. It's like juggling all the time, but anyway, everything you've said
14 today, whether it's in person, whether it's online, will be carefully considered.

15 If necessary, the Examining Authority may need to pursue the matters
16 identified in written questions or in other hearings. At this stage, I'd like to
17 thank the gentlemen at the back, the case team, and our colleague at the side.
18 Thank you for supporting these hearings. Without them, it wouldn't go ahead,
19 and not be as smooth as it has been, but do remember: do forward your written
20 submissions of your oral comments by the deadline.

21 Now, is there anything else that anyone wants to bring to our attention at
22 this point that's relevant? I'm not seeing any hands up, and I'm not seeing any
23 hands on the virtual screens either.

24 Now, at this stage, I'm now going to ask all my colleagues to come and to
25 either say their goodbyes here or our colleague who's virtually, if he's to come
26 on and say, if he's still there. Has he –

27 MR SMITH: Mr Young is not with us at present, so we'll just run goodbyes from the
28 bench, but – Mr Taylor.

29 MR TAYLOR: Yes. Thank you, everyone. So yeah, goodbye from me.

30 MS LAVER: Thank you, everyone. Really grateful to have you turn out today. I've
31 written quite copious notes and all your input has been very beneficial to me, so
32 thank you very much for your time. Goodbye.

33 MR SMITH: And indeed, speaking as panel lead, I've taken away a lot of useful
34 information from today's hearing, and a big thank you to everybody who's made

1 the issue to participate and put issues in front of us. We know that this is not the
2 normal and familiar way in which many people like to work and hold
3 conversations. It's stilted. It's formal. It's different. There's a lot of
4 technology. We're trying to make sure that, nevertheless, you can still talk to
5 us, human to human, and thank you very much for all of the effort you've put in
6 to try and do that. Much appreciated on our part.

7 MR PRATT: And from myself, thank you very much, and have a good rest of the day.

8 Thank you.

9 MR SMITH: Open-floor hearing 2 is now closed.

10

11

(Meeting concluded)