



The Planning Inspectorate

National Infrastructure Planning
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All Interested Parties, Statutory Parties and any Other Person invited to the Preliminary Meeting

Your Ref:

Our Ref: TR010032

Date: 18 September 2023

Dear Sir/ Madam

Planning Act 2008 – Sections 91, 92 & 93 and the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – Rule 13

Application by National Highways for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Lower Thames Crossing

Notification of Hearings to be held in October 2023

The ExA has decided to hold the following hearings between 16 and 24 October 2023. Notice is provided of them below.

Hearing	Date/time	Venue	Joining
Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 3 (CAH3)	Tuesday 17 October 2023 at 10am In-venue and virtual registration open from 9-15am	Mercure Dartford Brands Hatch Hotel & Spa & Online (Blended)	In person at Mercure Dartford Brands Hatch Hotel & Spa, Brands Hatch, West Kingsdown, Dartford, DA3 8PE
Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 4 (CAH4)	Wednesday 18 October 2023 at 10am In-venue and virtual registration open from 9-15am	Mercure Dartford Brands Hatch Hotel & Spa & Online (Blended)	Virtually on Microsoft Teams: joining instructions will be sent to all attendees in advance of the event.
Issue Specific Hearing 8 (ISH8) – Construction & Operational Effects (Non traffic)	Thursday 19 October 2023 at 10am In-venue and virtual registration open from 9-15am	Mercure Dartford Brands Hatch Hotel & Spa & Online (Blended)	

Hearing	Date/time	Venue	Joining
Issue Specific Hearing 9 (ISH9) – Environment & Biodiversity	Monday 23 October 2023 at 10am In-venue and virtual registration open from 9-15am	Mercure Dartford Brands Hatch Hotel & Spa & Online (Blended)	
Issue Specific Hearing 10 (ISH10) – Traffic & Transportation	Tuesday 24 October 2023 at 10am In-venue and virtual registration open from 9-15am	Mercure Dartford Brands Hatch Hotel & Spa & Online (Blended)	

Hearings will be held as Blended events. Blended events allow attendance in-person and online through Microsoft Teams. All Hearings will be livestreamed, and a link will be posted on the [project webpage](#) before the start of the event.

The Examining Authority (ExA) will publish a detailed agenda on the project webpage at least five working days in advance of the Hearing date. However, the actual agenda on the day of each Hearing may be subject to change at the discretion of the ExA.

If any Interested Parties (IPs) wish to attend and speak at any of the above Hearings, please inform the Case Team no later than Deadline 5, 3 October 2023 by emailing or writing to the Case Team using the contact details at the head of this letter to confirm your participation. Please address any letter to the ‘Lower Thames Crossing Case Team’, include the case reference TR010032 and a contact telephone number. Postal communications must be posted in good time to be received by the Planning Inspectorate by Deadline 5.

If any Affected Persons (APs) objecting to Compulsory Acquisition (CA) or Temporary Possession (TP) requests wish to be heard then they should request to be heard in a Compulsory Acquisition Hearing (CAH3 or 4) both of which are to hear individual CA or TP objections. Please note that whilst you may express a preference to be heard at one or the other of the CAHs, the ExA’s primary consideration will be to ensure that a reasonable opportunity to be heard has been provided to all APs requesting to be heard: you may not be offered a hearing on your preferred date.

There is no Open Floor Hearing (OFH) being held in October 2023. It is anticipated that any outstanding requests to be heard at an OFH will be accommodated at a hearing to be held in November 2023.

If you wish to observe the Hearings, this can be done at a Blended event from public seating in the venue. It can also be done virtually, by accessing the livestream link, which will be made available on the project website on the morning of the Hearings. Recordings and transcripts of all hearings will be published shortly after each event.

The procedure to be followed at Hearings is set out in Rule 14 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules. The ExA is responsible for the oral questioning of Interested Parties or Other Persons giving evidence. Cross-questioning between parties is not normally allowed.

The Planning Inspectorate has prepared [Advice Note 8.5](#) to assist those attending hearings of all types and [Advice Note 8.6](#) to support any virtual event participants. Please refer to this advice.

If any of the above Hearings are no longer required, then notification will be published as soon as practicable on the project webpage, providing reasonable notice to all parties of the decision to cancel them.

IPs and APs are reminded that these are the penultimate hearings in the Examination. The final hearings will be held between 20 and 28 November 2023. Notice of and agendas for these will be provided in due course. If you are an AP wishing to be heard at a CAH, you are advised to make use of the opportunity to be heard in October if you can, as by November, remaining hearing capacity will be limited. It is particularly important that you are aware that if you request to be heard at a hearing but do not attend, the ExA is not under a duty to provide you with another hearing, as you will have been provided with a reasonable opportunity to be heard. Finally, you are reminded that not all issues in the Examination will be addressed in hearings. Examinations conducted under the Planning Act 2008 are primarily conducted using written procedures, and the ExA obtains the information that it needs from a range of written procedures in addition to hearings.

If you have any queries, please contact the case team using the details at the head of this letter.

Yours faithfully,

Rynd Smith

Rynd Smith
Lead Panel Member for the Examining Authority

This communication does not constitute legal advice.
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