



# The Planning Inspectorate

## Preliminary Meeting Note

**Application: A57 Link Roads Project**

**Reference: TR10034**

**Time and date: 16 November 2021 – 10:00 AM**

**Venue: Microsoft Teams (virtual)**

*This meeting note is not a full transcript of the Preliminary Meeting. It is a summary of the key points discussed. Full digital recordings of the Meeting are available on the project page of the Planning Inspectorate's National Infrastructure website (NI website), which can be found using the link below*

*Preliminary Meeting:*

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/north-west/a57-link-roads-previously-known-as-trans-pennine-upgrade-programme/?ipcsection=docs&stage=3&filter1=Recording+of+preliminary+meeting>

### **Welcome and Introduction 0:00 – 17:50**

Stuart Cowperthwaite (SC) welcomed those present and introduced himself as the lead member of the Panel of Examining Inspectors, the Examining Authority (ExA). SC explained that the other member of the panel, Ian Dyer, was due to join them today but had fallen ill so would not be attending.

SC explained the appointment was made by delegation from the Secretary of State (SoS) for the Department of Transport on 2 August 2021.

SC explained that the ExA would be examining the application made by National Highways ('the Applicant') before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State who will decide whether an Order granting Development Consent for the proposed project, which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), should be made. SC noted that the Applicant submitted under the name Highways England, but their name had since changed to National Highways.

SC explained the purpose of the Preliminary Meeting (PM) and stated that the Examination will commence after the PM closes.

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

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

SC confirmed that all documents and submissions received and accepted during the Examination will be published on the [project page of the National Infrastructure website](#).

### **ExA's remarks on the Examination Process 17:51 – 47:12**

SC explained the Examination process under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) and further information can be found in [Advice Note 8.4](#). SC emphasised how this is an inquisitorial and predominantly written process, to test evidence put forward before being submitted to the SoS. Hearings should build on written submissions. SC explained that the ExA wanted to run a hybrid Examination model, using both virtual and in person events, but this was subject to change in relation to the current COVID-19 guidance. SC gave an overview of the National Infrastructure project website and demonstrated how to make submissions and view documents.

### **Submissions on the Examination Process**

SC stated that all comments should be directed through them, and not directly to other attendees. SC stated that Haley Simpson's request for a Compulsory Acquisition (CAH) hearing was noted and that a CAH will be held. SC addressed Hayley Simpson's points on accessibility of the Examination process due to the predominantly virtual processes.

SC emphasised the importance for Interested Parties to look at the Examination Timetable to further understand the timescales and opportunities to respond and contribute. Michaela Bromley raised concerns about accessibility and the times of day that hearings would take place. SC noted these concerns.

SC addressed Peak District National Park Authority's concerns regarding their invitation to submit a Local Impact Report by confirming an invitation would be issued to Local Authorities in the Rule 8 letter.

SC addressed the Applicant's suggestion that a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council and Transport for Greater Manchester would cover those that have been requested to be provided by Greater Manchester Combined Authority. SC had no objection to this but requested written confirmation that all parties are happy with this approach.

SC confirmed that a SoCG between the Applicant and United Utilities only needs to cover the matters listed under the heading of statutory undertakers.

SC stated a SoCG between the Applicant and Historic England would be of benefit to the Examination. The Applicant confirmed that they are in correspondence with Historic England. SC further encouraged the applicant to consider a SoCG with CPRE.

CPRE and South Yorkshire County Council queried the appropriate time to raise Examination issues in relation to the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO). SC responded by explaining the various deadlines where written representations can be submitted. CPRE also suggested an Issue Specific Hearing (ISH) on Carbon appraisal should be considered.

In response to a submission from Mr Peter Simon, SC encouraged him to submit a written submission for Deadline 2, detailing the rationale behind his request for a specific ISH topic and the ExA will then consider this request.

## **Hearings and Site Inspections**

SC confirmed that recordings of hearings are to be published after the hearings are complete. Mr Wimberly provided topics that he believed should be discussed at future hearings. SC confirmed they would consider these topics for future agendas and asked for further details to be provided in Mr Wimberley's Written Representation at Deadline 2.

The Applicant stated that they did not believe Accompanied Site Inspections were necessary due to the visibility of the Proposed Development from publicly accessible locations.

SC provided a demonstration on how to view other Relevant Representations as requested by Mr Wimberley.

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

## **ExA comments on draft Examination Timetable**

SC gave an overview of the draft Examination Timetable found in [Annex A](#) of the ExA's letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021. SC detailed the submissions expected at each Deadline. SC explained how some dates could be subject to change due to hearings not being required.

## **Submissions on draft Examination Timetable**

The Applicant requested that the publication of First Written Questions (WQ1) be published one week prior to the date in the draft Examination Timetable (10<sup>th</sup> December 2021 instead of 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021). SC explained that this would be difficult but offered to publish a draft WQ1 on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and a final WQ1 on the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

The Applicant stated they required more time to respond to Written Representations. SC confirmed that a change to the Timetable will be made to Deadline 4 to allow for the Applicant to respond to any Written Representations that had been missed in the previous Deadlines. The Applicant confirmed they were happy with this approach

Mr Wimberley expressed concern about Deadlines and short timescales. SC explained that the timescales are all statutory, and that late submissions can be accepted or denied at their discretion.

## **Any other matters**

SC asked if anyone wished to raise any other matters regarding procedural matters not set out in the agenda. No comments were made by any of the parties in attendance

SC confirmed that all items on the Agenda had been covered, therefore the Preliminary Meeting Part 2 scheduled for 10 AM on 17 November 2021 would no longer be required. SC thank everybody for their contributions and closed the meeting.