



# Preliminary Meeting Note

**Application: A47 Wansford to Sutton**

**Reference: TR010039**

**Time and date: 10am Tuesday 11 January 2022**

**Venue: Microsoft Teams**

This meeting note is not a full transcript of the Preliminary Meeting. It is a summary of the key points discussed. A recording of the event is available on the National Infrastructure Planning website and can be accessed via the following link: [Recording of the Preliminary Meeting.](#)

## 1. Welcome and Introduction

Robert Jackson welcomed those present and introduced himself as the single Examining Authority to examine the A47 Wansford to Sutton Dualling application.

The ExA explained the appointment was made by delegation from the Secretary of State (SoS) for the then Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 27 August 2021.

The ExA explained he would be examining the application made by National Highways (formerly Highways England), the Applicant, before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport who will decide whether an Order granting Development Consent for the proposed project, which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), should be made.

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

The ExA explained that, while the National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPSNN) was under review, the existing 2014 NPSNN remained as a substantive decision. The ExA further clarified that the Application would be examined against the parameters set by the NPSNN.

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

The ExA invited those present at the PM to introduce themselves. The Applicant, Natural England, Wansford Parish Council, Milton Estate and Fight4Upton introduced themselves/ their representatives.

## **2. Examination Process**

The ExA briefly explained the examination process under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008), further info can be found in the Planning Inspectorate's [Advice Note 8.4](#).

The ExA noted that, in light of the public health situation, the hearings due to be held in the third week of March would be held in a virtual format. The ExA explained that there remained the possibility that hearings in May could be held in-person, using a blended format. However, given that these hearings may not be required, the ExA noted that Interested Parties (IP's) should engage with the earlier virtual hearings if they so wish.

The ExA explained that their preference would be to conduct an Accompanied Site Inspection and noted this had been scheduled for the third week of March. If this would not be possible, then the ExA would consider whether an Access Required Site Inspection (ARSI) could be undertaken which the ExA would conduct alone and in which access would be granted to private land. If an ARSI does not prove possible, then an alternative would be arranged whereby photography of chosen sites would be published and IP's would have the opportunity to comment on any matters as they so wished.

The ExA noted that further information can be found in [Annex B of the Rule 6 Letter](#).

The ExA requested any comments. No comments were made.

## **3. Initial Assessment of Principal Issues**

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

The ExA requested comment from Wansford Parish Council who suggested the addition to the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues of Geotechnical risk particularly in the area of the river, as a specific item to be discussed. It further suggested the expansion of cross-cutting matters to include 'Geotechnical risk' and 'cost'.

The Applicant's response noted that Detailed Design was the standard method to take account of Geotechnical risks, and further added that a Geotechnical report would be submitted in due course. The Applicant queried whether Geotechnical risk should be considered a Principal Issue but stated it had no strong objection to this. The Applicant challenged the appropriateness of adding 'cost' to 12.2 as it stated that it felt it was not a matter related to 'Cumulative and Cross-cutting effects'.

The ExA stated they would take on board comments when drafting the Rule 8 letter.

The ExA invited any further comments. No further comments were raised.

## **4. Examination Timetable**

The ExA noted requests, already received in writing, to amend the draft Examination Timetable contained in [Annex D of Rule 6 letter](#) and also welcomed further suggestions from the parties in attendance.

The Applicant explained to participants that it had made a [Procedural Deadline A submission](#) which suggested changes to the Examination timetable. It noted that the A47 Wansford to Sutton NSIP was one of multiple active A47 NSIPs and therefore stated its suggested changes to the Examination timetable were to ensure adequate staffing resources were available for the deadlines.

The Applicant suggested a short extension of 3 days on Deadline 1, 3 and 7. It further suggested amendments to Deadlines 5 and 6 on the grounds that these fell after Bank Holidays. The ExA clarified that submissions for these deadlines could be provided in advance of the Bank Holidays. The Applicant noted this, adding the further comment that the tendency was for documents to be submitted on the date of the deadline.

The ExA noted that an extension to the suggested date for Deadline 7 may require an alteration to the date for the publication of the Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES). This may in turn result in a shortening of the period to respond to the RIES. The Applicant responded that its position was that it felt this would leave adequate time for it to respond.

The ExA requested any further comments. No further comments were raised.

The ExA thanked participants and explained that comments would be taken into account when drafting the Rule 8 Letter.

The Examination Timetable can be found in the [Rule 8 letter](#) published on 18 January 2022.

## **5. Procedural decisions**

The ExA clarified the procedural decisions made under section 89(3) of the PA2008 and asked for any observations.

Procedural decisions can be found in [Annex F of the Rule 6 Letter](#). The ExA invited any comments.

The Applicant queried the request for a Statement of Common Ground with Upton Community Council and sought clarification on their legal basis. Fight4Upton stated that Upton Community Council was an individual and had no legal standing. It stated that following community meetings Fight4Upton had been chosen to represent the village of Upton. The ExA thanked them for their comment and stated they may wish to follow up on this issue during the Examination.

The ExA noted it had located the matrix for the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and requested a word version. The Applicant responded to confirm this request was noted and would be fulfilled at Deadline 1.

The ExA requested any comments on Local Impact Reports (LIR). Sutton Parish Council requested for an opportunity to respond to the comments made by Peterborough City Council with regard to The Drift in Upton. The ExA explained that Sutton Parish Council were entitled to respond to these points and clarified that all

submissions made within the Examination had equal standing. The ExA further suggested that it may wish to have a conversation with Peterborough City Council outside of the Examination and could submit a joint statement if it so chooses.

The ExA noted that the most recent Guide to the Application, submitted by the Applicant, included references to documents which have since been superseded. The ExA requested that the Applicant ensure that the next time an updated version of the Guide to the Application is submitted this is resolved. The Applicant confirmed these comments had been noted.

## **6. AOB**

The ExA noted it had published a Draft ExQ1. It asked for comments on how others would wish the final ExQ1s to be published. The Applicant suggested a tracked changes version would be preferable. No further comments were raised.

The ExA thanked everyone for their attendance and engagement and closed the PM.