



The Planning Inspectorate

National Infrastructure Planning
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol, BS1 6PN

Customer
Services: 0303 444 5000
E-mail: A417MissingLink
@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

All Interested Parties, Statutory Parties
and Other Persons

Your Ref:

Our Ref: TR010056

Date: 30 September 2021

Dear Sir/ Madam

Planning Act 2008 – Section 88 and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – Rules 4, 6 and 9

Application by Highways England for an Order Granting Development Consent for the A417 Missing Link

Notice of appointment of the Examining Authority, and date, time and place of the Preliminary Meeting

I write to you following my appointment by the Secretary of State as the lead member of a Panel who will be the Examining Authority (the ExA) to carry out an examination of the above application. I am Ken Stone and the other member of the Panel is David Wallis. A copy of the appointment notice can be viewed on the [project webpage on the National Infrastructure Planning website](#) (here).

I would like to thank those of you who submitted Relevant Representations. These representations have assisted us when preparing our proposals regarding how to examine this application.

Examinations during Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The lifting of restrictions on 19 July 2021, with subsequent relaxations on 12 August 2021, does not signify that the threat of Coronavirus has dissipated. The Planning Inspectorate's [guidance related to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) has more information on the most up-to-date Government guidance and Inspectorate practices in this regard. Should public health controls allow, we may have the option of holding fully physical 'in person' events during the Examination if it is safe to do so. At this time however we will proceed with conducting events with a virtual element in the interests of public health.

If you have received this letter and intend to participate in virtual events held during this Examination, including the virtual Preliminary Meeting, please read the Planning Inspectorate's [Advice Note 8.6: Virtual Examination events](#) carefully. Advice Note 8.6

contains important information about how virtual events will be held and how you can participate.

If you wish to make representations to us about the use of virtual procedures to carry out this Examination, please make them by **Procedural Deadline A** (Friday 22 October 2021) which is established before the Preliminary Meeting takes place (see the draft Examination timetable at **Annex D** to this letter).

Invitation to the Preliminary Meeting

As a recipient of this letter you are invited to the Preliminary Meeting to discuss the procedure for the examination of this application.

Dates of meeting: **Preliminary Meeting Part 1 – Tuesday 2
November 2021**
**Preliminary Meeting Part 2 – Tuesday 16
November 2021**
(if required)

Arrangements Conference: **From 9:30am on both days**

Meeting begins: **10:00am on both days**

Venue: **Virtual event (Microsoft Teams)**

Please note that the Preliminary Meeting will adjourn at the end of Part 1. Tuesday 16 November 2021 has been reserved for the Preliminary Meeting to resume, if required.

Purpose of the Preliminary Meeting

The purpose of the Preliminary Meeting is to enable views to be put to us about how the application should be examined. We cannot hear representations about the merits or disadvantages of the application at the Preliminary Meeting. The merits or disadvantages of the application will only be considered once the Examination starts, which is after the Preliminary Meeting has closed. See **Annex B** to this letter and the Planning Inspectorate's [Advice Note 8.3: the Preliminary Meeting](#) for more information.

The agenda for the meeting is at **Annex A** to this letter. This has been set following our Initial Assessment of Principal Issues arising from our reading of the application documents and the Relevant Representations received. The Initial Assessment of Principal Issues is set out in **Annex C** to this letter.

The draft Examination Timetable is set out at **Annex D** to this letter and we wish to hear from you by **Friday 22 October 2021** (see **Procedural Deadline A** at **Annex D** to this letter) if you consider changes need to be made to the timetable.

Attendance at the Preliminary Meeting

Because participation in a virtual Preliminary Meeting relies on the Planning Inspectorate providing you with a joining link or telephone number in advance, **if you intend to participate you must register by Friday 22 October 2021** (see **Procedural Deadline A** at **Annex D** to this letter).

If you wish to participate at the Preliminary Meeting, to assist the management of the meeting it is important that when you register you tell us on which agenda items you wish to speak, listing the points you wish to make.

The Preliminary Meeting is scheduled in two parts, separated by an adjournment period. During the adjournment period any Interested Parties who did not, or could not, make oral representations at Part 1 of the Preliminary Meeting can make written submissions about the examination procedure by **Wednesday 10 November 2021** (see **Procedural Deadline B** at **Annex D** to this letter).

To facilitate this process a link to a public livestream of Part 1 of the Preliminary Meeting will be made available on the [project webpage on the National Infrastructure Planning website](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin. A recording of Part 1 of the Preliminary Meeting will also be published on the website as soon as practicable after the event takes place. Part 2 of the Preliminary Meeting, if held, will also be livestreamed and a recording published in the same way.

In the event that submissions to **Procedural Deadline B** do not necessitate the resumption of the Preliminary Meeting at Part 2, the Examining Authority may decide to close the Preliminary Meeting in writing, without Part 2 taking place. Therefore, **Interested Parties should not rely on Part 2 of the Preliminary Meeting to make oral representations about the examination procedure.**

Please note that **you are not required to make oral or written submissions at the Preliminary Meeting in order to participate in the Examination.** Whether or not you attend the Preliminary Meeting, if you are an Interested Party you can make a Written Representation and comment on the Written Representations made by other Interested Parties during the Examination. You will also be able to participate in any hearings that are arranged. Should you no longer wish to be an Interested Party and do not wish to be involved in the examination process, you can notify the Case Team of this in writing using the contact details at the top of this letter.

After the Preliminary Meeting

After the Preliminary Meeting you will be sent a letter (known as the Rule 8 letter) setting out the finalised Examination Timetable. A note of the meeting will also be published on the [project webpage on the National Infrastructure Planning website](#).

The Examination will principally be a written process (see [Advice Note 8.4: The Examination](#)), supplemented where necessary by various types of hearings (see [Advice Note 8.5: Hearings and site inspections](#) and [Advice Note 8.6: Virtual Examination events](#)).

The Planning Act 2008 establishes a principally written process for the examination of applications for Development Consent Orders and **representations made in writing carry equal weight to oral representations** at all stages of the process.

All relevant and important matters will be taken into account when we make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will take the final decision in this case.

Other Procedural Decisions made by the Examining Authority

We have made some further Procedural Decisions which are set out in detail at **Annex E** to this letter. They are summarised as follows:

- Request for Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) from named parties.
- Request for Local Impact Reports from local authorities by **Deadline 1** (see **Annex D** to this letter).
- Request for Written Representations by **Deadline 1** (see **Annex D** to this letter).
- Deadline for Notification by Statutory Parties of their wish to be considered as an Interested Party (IP) by the Examining Authority.
- Request for the Applicant to submit low-resolution documents for possible sharing on screen at virtual events.
- Acceptance of Additional Submissions into the Examination.

Managing Examination correspondence

Given the volume and frequency of letters the Planning Inspectorate needs to send to Interested Parties during an Examination, we aim to communicate with people by e-mail as electronic communication is more environmentally friendly and cost-effective for the taxpayer.

If you have received a postcard but are able to receive communications by e-mail, please inform the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter as soon as possible.

As the examination process makes substantial use of electronic documents, it will be useful for you to become familiar with the [project webpage on the National Infrastructure Planning website](#).

There is a function on the right-hand side of the project webpage called 'E-mail updates'. This provides you with an opportunity to register to receive automatic e-mail updates at key stages during the Examination.

A 'Make a submission' tab will become available on the website which provides a portal through which parties will be able to make written submissions at relevant deadlines during the Examination. Further information about the 'Make a submission' portal is provided at **Annex G** to this letter.

Your status in the Examination

You have received this letter because you fall within one of the groups described in the Planning Inspectorate's document [What is My Status in the Examination?](#)

If your reference number begins with '2002', 'A417-ISP', 'A417-AP', 'A417-S57', or 'A417-APL' you are in Group A. If your reference number begins with 'A417-SP' you are in Group B. If your reference number begins with 'A417-OP' you are in Group C. The meaning and purpose of those groups are explained in the document published at the link above.

If having read this document you are still unsure about your status, please contact the Case Team using the details at the top of this letter.

Awards of costs

We also draw your attention to the possibility of the award of costs against Interested Parties who behave unreasonably. You should be aware of the relevant costs guidance [Awards of costs: examinations of applications for development consent orders](#).

Management of information

Information, including representations, submitted in respect of this Examination (if accepted by the Examining Authority) and a record of any advice which has been provided by the Planning Inspectorate is published on the [project webpage on the National Infrastructure Planning website](#).

Examination Documents can also be viewed electronically at the locations listed in **Annex F** to this letter.

Please note that in the interest of facilitating an effective and fair Examination, it is necessary to publish some personal information. To find out how we handle your personal information please view our [Privacy Notice](#).

We look forward to working with all parties in the examination of this application.

Yours faithfully

Ken Stone

Lead Member of the Examining Authority

Annexes

- A Agenda for the Preliminary Meeting
- B Introduction to the Preliminary Meeting
- C Initial Assessment of Principal Issues
- D Draft Examination Timetable
- E Other Procedural Decisions made by the Examining Authority
- F Availability of Examination documents
- G Guidance on using the electronic 'Make a submission' portal

This communication does not constitute legal advice.
Please view our [Privacy Notice](#) before sending information to the Planning Inspectorate.

Agenda for the Preliminary Meeting PART 1

Because participation in a virtual Preliminary Meeting relies on the Planning Inspectorate providing you with a joining link or telephone number in advance, **if you intend to participate at Part 1 you must register by Friday 22 October 2021** (see **Procedural Deadline A** at **Annex D** to this letter).

- Date:** **Tuesday 2 November 2021**
- Arrangements Conference:** **9:30am**
- Meeting start time:** **10:00am**
- Venue:** **Virtual event (Microsoft Teams)**
Full instructions on how to join online or by phone will be provided in advance of the meeting to those who register to participate
- Attendees:** **Invited Parties who have pre-registered**

A public livestream of the meeting will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the meeting is due to open. The livestream is available to anybody who wishes to observe the meeting.

9:30am	Event lobby Please arrive at 9:30am to enter the lobby. From here you will be admitted to the Arrangements Conference by the Case Team, greeted and given further instructions.
9:50am	Arrangements Conference The Arrangements Conference will commence at 9:50am. This will be hosted by the Case Team and cover the housekeeping arrangements for Part 1 of the Preliminary Meeting and allow for any questions to be asked about how to take part.
10:00am Item 1	Preliminary Meeting The Preliminary Meeting will formally open at 10:00am. The Examining Authority (ExA) will join, welcome participants and lead introductions.
Item 2	The ExA's remarks about the virtual Preliminary Meeting and the Examination process – Annex B to this Rule 6 letter.
Item 3	Initial Assessment of Principal Issues – Annex C to this Rule 6 letter.
Item 4	Draft Examination Timetable – Annex D to this Rule 6 letter.

Item 5	Procedural Decisions taken by the ExA – Annex E to this Rule 6 letter.
Item 6	Any other matters.
Adjournment of the Preliminary Meeting	

Agenda for the Preliminary Meeting PART 2

Because participation in a virtual Preliminary Meeting relies on the Planning Inspectorate providing you with a joining link or telephone number in advance, **if you intend to participate at Part 2 you must register by Wednesday 10 November 2021** (see **Procedural Deadline B** at **Annex D** to this letter).

Date: **Tuesday 16 November 2021**

Arrangements Conference: **9:30am**

Meeting start time: **10:00am**

Venue: **Virtual event (Microsoft Teams)**
Full instructions on how to join online or by phone will be provided in advance of the meeting to those who register to participate

Attendees: **Invited Parties who have pre-registered**

A public livestream of the meeting will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the meeting is due to open. The livestream is available to anybody who wishes to observe the meeting.

9:30am	Event lobby Please arrive at 9:30am to enter the lobby. From here you will be admitted to the Arrangements Conference by the Case Team, greeted and given further instructions.
9:50am	Arrangements Conference The Arrangements Conference will commence at 9:50am. This will be hosted by the Case Team and cover the housekeeping arrangements for Part 2 of the Preliminary Meeting and allow for any questions to be asked about how to take part.
10:00am Item 1	Preliminary Meeting The Preliminary Meeting will formally resume at 10:00am. The ExA will join, welcome participants and lead introductions.

Item 2	The ExA’s remarks about written submissions received to Procedural Deadline B.
Item 3	Any procedural representations on matters that could not be raised at Part 1 of the Preliminary Meeting.
Item 4	Any other matters.
Close of the Preliminary Meeting	

If you are joining as an active participant at Part 1 and/or Part 2 of the Preliminary Meeting, please join the Arrangements Conference lobby promptly using the instructions that are sent to you. In common with Preliminary Meetings held in physical locations, the event will start at 10:00am irrespective of any late arrivals, for whom access to the event may not be possible.

The agenda for both parts of the Preliminary Meeting is subject to change at the discretion of the ExA, although in making changes the ExA will be mindful of the need to provide opportunities for fair involvement to all Interested Parties.

Introduction to the Preliminary Meeting

Background

The Preliminary Meeting (PM) for the A417 Missing Link Project will take place virtually using Microsoft Teams, but the format, content and procedure will be very similar to the physical, face-to-face PMs that have been held for other National Infrastructure Examinations.

The Examining Authority (ExA) is conscious of videoconferencing fatigue and will aim to keep the proceedings focussed and as efficient as possible. This annex provides advance access to information that would usually be included in the ExA's introductory remarks following the opening of the PM. **Please read this carefully.** The ExA will only present a summary of the key points set out here at the Preliminary Meeting, in order to ensure that the time available for participants to speak is maximised.

The Examining Authority

The ExA, Ken Stone and David Wallis, appointed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, will introduce themselves at the start of the PM. The ExA's appointment letter can be found in the Examination Library under reference [[PD-004](#)].

The Case Team

The ExA will be supported by the Planning Inspectorate Case Team. George Harrold is the Case Manager, and James Bunten and Joe Saffer are the Case Officers. During the Arrangements Conferences a member of the Case Team will welcome and admit participants into the virtual PM, and will be available to answer questions by e-mail before and after the PM. The contact e-mail address is: A417MissingLink@planninginspectorate.gov.uk.

The purpose of the Preliminary Meeting

The PM is being held to discuss the arrangements for the examination of the application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the A417 Missing Link, which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), and which will generally be referred to in the PM and Examination as the 'Proposed Development'. The application has been made by Highways England, which will be referred to as 'the Applicant'.

You will find information about the application and, in due course, documents produced for the Examination on the Planning Inspectorate's National Infrastructure Planning website ('NI Planning website'). This has a dedicated landing page for the project with links to examination procedure, the Examination Timetable, Relevant Representations and Examination documents. The relevant NI Planning website landing page is: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-west/a417-missing-link/>

You are encouraged to explore the NI Planning website landing page if you haven't already done so, because it will be used to communicate with you and to provide access to documents throughout the Examination. There is the option on the project page to register to receive automatic e-mail updates and we would also encourage you to do this so that you will receive a notification via e-mail at key stages during the Examination.

The main purpose of the PM is to discuss how the application should be examined. It focuses on the process only, and it will not be looking at the substance of the Proposed Development: questions, discussions and representations about the merits or disadvantages of the Proposed Development are for the Examination itself which will begin the day after the close of the PM.

The PM will be your opportunity to influence the process that we intend to follow, and you should read this Rule 6 letter and all accompanying annexes thoroughly beforehand. The agenda for the PM is attached to this Rule 6 letter at **Annex A**. It is important to have the letter and the agenda in front of you and to refer to them during the course of the PM. If you are not experienced with videoconferencing and using multiple documents on screen, you may wish to print these in advance of the PM for reference.

Government guidance and policy

The application is a NSIP under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) as a consequence of sections 14(1)(h) and 22(1)(a): it includes the construction of a highway wholly in England and the area of development being greater than 12.5 hectares in size. The designated National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPSNN) applies to this Examination and to decision-making relating to this application.

The ExA will consider the Proposed Development in accordance with the NPSNN and any other applicable policy or considerations the ExA deem to be important and relevant. The PA2008 makes it clear that, in making a decision, the relevant Secretary of State (SoS) "**must decide the application in accordance with any relevant NPS**" (s104(3)), subject to certain provisos. Essentially, the provisos are that the application must not breach legal or treaty obligations, and that any adverse impact of the Proposed Development would not outweigh its benefits.

The SoS is entitled to disregard any representations that relate to the merits of the designated National Policy Statement (NPS). In practice, this means that the ExA will not spend time examining representations that challenge policy set out in NPSs, or the validity of NPSs themselves. The focus will be on the merits or disadvantages of the Proposed Development, tested to the appropriate extent using the tests set out in relevant designated NPSs that are in force.

Other important and relevant planning policies that the ExA may consider include policies in the relevant local authorities' development plans. However, if these conflict with policy in the NPS, then the NPS will take precedence.

In summary, the PM will establish the procedures and timetable for the Examination of the Proposed Development. It will set a framework for the ExA to

enable the SoS to consider and decide the application, by identifying relevant policy and examining the application in light of it. In doing so, the ExA will have regard to:

- the positions and representations of all Interested Parties (IPs);
- any Local Impact Reports (LIR) prepared and provided by relevant local authorities;
- other prescribed matters; and
- any other matters that appear to be both relevant and important to the relevant SoS's decision.

Preliminary Meeting invitees

The Applicant is invited to the PM and is generally given the opportunity to reply to any representations made, either orally at the time or in writing during the adjournment of the meeting.

Everyone who has made a Relevant Representation has been registered as an IP and has been sent a copy of this Rule 6 letter. Each IP is entitled to participate in this Examination.

Each person or organisation with an interest in land or rights that are affected by a Compulsory Acquisition request in this application is an Affected Person (AP). In addition to a general entitlement to involvement in the Examination, APs have a right to be heard in relation to any objection about the effects of Compulsory Acquisition on their interests in land, and a right to be notified of any Compulsory Acquisition Hearing. APs are IPs, whether or not they have made a Relevant Representation.

Certain bodies are Statutory Parties. Statutory Parties can elect to become IPs without having made a Relevant Representation.

The ExA has the power to involve people who are not IPs in the Examination as though they are IPs, including by inviting them to the PM. However, this is only done in exceptional circumstances, for example if it was clear that the application would materially affect a person, they are not automatically or eligible to elect to become an IP and they had been unable to take the necessary action to register as an IP.

Conduct of the Preliminary Meeting

Past experience suggests that a PM for a project of this size and complexity could take half a day to complete. However, in running the event virtually there are limitations on the number of people who can speak at any one time. Therefore, in order to ensure that everyone who wishes to speak can do so, one day has been timetabled for Part 1. One day has also been timetabled for Part 2 of the PM, subject to the progress made at Part 1 of the PM. The reasons for programming the PM in two parts, and the circumstances in which Part 2 may not occur, are explained in the cover to this Rule 6 letter.

During the PM participants may have to make allowances and be patient if there are delays associated with the technology used. In recognition of the fatigue associated with on-screen communication, the ExA will provide breaks during the PM as appropriate. For those who pre-register to be involved, your joining instructions will provide more information about this.

A digital recording will be made available on the project page of the NI Planning website as soon as practicable following Part 1 of the PM and again following Part 2 (if the PM is resumed). The digital recording allows any member of the public who is interested in the application and the Examination to find out what has been discussed at the PM, whether they are able to attend or observe the meeting or not. The making and publication of these recordings are a means by which we meet the legal requirement to hold these events in public. In this regard, anyone speaking at the PM will need to introduce themselves each time they speak, to ensure that someone listening to the recording after the event is clear who was speaking. A written note of the PM will be produced and published as soon as practicable following the closure of the PM.

As the digital recordings are retained and published, they form a public record that can contain personal information to which the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) applies. Participants must do their best to avoid making public any information which they would otherwise wish to be kept private and confidential. If there is a need to refer to such information, it should be in written form. Although this will also be published, personal and private content can be redacted or removed before it is made publicly available. Any person who is unclear on this point should ask the Case Team for guidance before they include personal and private information in any submissions.

The Planning Inspectorate's practice is to publish the recordings and retain them for a period of five years from the SoS's decision on the DCO. If you actively participate in the PM, it is important that you understand that you will be recorded and that the recording will be made available in the public domain. Please see our [Privacy Notice](#) for more information about how we handle your data.

Following the ExA's introductions, each participant who has been registered to speak will be asked to introduce themselves, including any organisations or groups that they represent. The ExA will then conduct the meeting in accordance with the agenda. If you prefer not to have your image recorded, you can switch off your camera at any point.

The Examination process

The examination of NSIPs follows different processes to those, for example, of a Public Inquiry into a planning appeal following the refusal of planning permission. The main differences are that the examination of NSIPs are primarily a written process and hearings take on an inquisitorial approach as opposed to an adversarial one.

This means that the ExA will probe, test and assess the evidence primarily using written questions. While some hearings are held to provide supplementary evidence, questions to the Applicant or to witnesses will come from the ExA.

Questioning or cross-examination of witnesses by other parties will not generally be allowed.

In terms of opportunities to provide evidence in writing, the draft Examination Timetable makes provision for the following written processes:

- Local authorities can submit LIRs if they wish. Whilst these are voluntary, the PA2008 provides that if they are provided, they must be considered by the SoS in reaching a decision. Consequently, LIRs are a very important method for local authorities to communicate issues of concern to the ExA, the SoS and their residents.
- IPs can make Written Representations (WRs) and comment on WRs made by other parties.
- IPs can respond to the ExA's written questions (ExQs) and comment on responses to these written questions provided by others.
- IPs may be asked to contribute to the making of Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) if it appears that there are matters on which they and the Applicant agree, and if it would be useful for this to be clarified. SoCGs most usefully extend to catalogue matters that are not agreed or are outstanding.

The draft Examination Timetable includes a series of numbered deadlines for receipt of written submissions. Timely submissions received by the relevant deadline and that address its purpose will be accepted. Documents received after the relevant deadline are only accepted at the discretion of the ExA and may not be accepted to ensure fairness to all parties. Circumstances where documents are submitted late without good reason, causing inconvenience or delay to other parties, can amount to unreasonable behaviour.

These written processes will be the principal means used by the ExA to gather information, evidence and views about the application. However, the Examination will only be effective if all parties resolve to give timely, full, frank, clear and evidenced answers to every question that is relevant to their interests and to engage fully with any other related processes such as the completion of WRs and SoCGs.

There is no merit in withholding or delaying information, or in failing to co-operate, and, should it occur, any unreasonable behaviour that caused another party to incur wasted expenditure could lead to an award of costs against the offending party.

The ExA has discretion to make amendments to the Examination Timetable for the wider benefit of the Examination. If possible, events will be arranged for times when all relevant parties are available, but the ExA is under a duty to complete the Examination by the end of the six-month period beginning with the day after the close of the PM. This requirement is set by legislation, and while the ExA will try to rearrange event dates to accommodate all relevant parties, in practice there will be limited scope to alter dates set out in the draft Examination Timetable.

The statutory time limit for the Examination means that where there are matters that still need to be discussed and agreed between the Applicant and IPs, it will be very helpful to the ExA if these could be progressed as early as possible.

Hearings

The draft Examination Timetable includes provision for hearings, at which the ExA takes oral evidence from the various parties.

Any registered IP may request an Open Floor Hearing (OFH) to make oral representations about the application if they believe this to be preferable to relying on their written representation; though both carry equal weight. Oral submissions should be based on representations previously made in writing, but they should not simply repeat matters previously covered in the written submission. Rather, they should focus on specific detail and explanation to help inform the ExA. There should be no new or unexpected material in oral representations. A written summary note with any supporting evidence or references will be requested of each speaker following the hearing.

As with all Examination events, OFHs are subject to the powers of control of the ExA, as set out in the PA2008 and supporting legislation. Participants must register in advance by the deadline shown in the Examination Timetable and, in accordance with the instructions, an agenda may be circulated. It is common practice for the ExA to set a time limit for each speaker, and speakers with common points are asked to come together to nominate a spokesperson or representative speakers to cover specific topics, so as to avoid repetition. Speakers representing public authorities, community and membership organisations or multiple IPs are normally provided with an additional time allowance, recognising their representative role.

The Applicant's draft DCO provides for the Compulsory Acquisition of land and rights, and the Temporary Possession of land. Affected Persons (ie those whose land or rights over land are affected) have a right to request and be heard at a Compulsory Acquisition Hearing (CAH). If one or more APs request to be heard then a CAH must be held. Provisional dates for CAHs are included in the draft Examination Timetable along with deadlines by which requests to be heard must be submitted.

The ExA has the discretion to hold Issue Specific Hearings (ISHs) if it would aid in the Examination and there is a specific reason this would be more helpful than reliance on written evidence only. The lack of an ISH on one or more topics does not suggest that that topic is less important than others which are subject to a hearing. Rather, it is an indication that the ExA is satisfied that the issues can be fully considered through written submissions and responses to its written questions and that each party has had a fair opportunity to put its case.

The draft Examination Timetable includes a number of reservations for ISHs and IPs may make suggestions for topics in their written or oral representations to the PM.

It may be necessary for the ExA to hold more than one ISH on the draft DCO. This is normal practice, and they are held on a without prejudice basis. Parties

can suggest modifications and amendments to the draft DCO provided with the Proposed Development applications by the Applicant, without prejudicing their overall position on the application.

Holding such hearings does not imply that the ExA has reached any judgements on the merits of the application. Whatever the ultimate recommendation is, the ExA must make sure that the draft DCO is fit for purpose if the SoS decides to grant consent, as any consent will be subject to Requirements (ie conditions) set out in the DCO.

At hearings it will not normally be necessary for parties to make long and detailed submissions that require (for example) PowerPoint presentations. Any supporting detail/information can be provided in writing following the event by the relevant deadline.

The draft Examination Timetable includes a deadline of 14 December 2021 (**Deadline 1**, see **Annex D**) for participants to notify the ExA that they wish to speak at an OFH or a CAH.

Site inspections

As part of the Examination process the ExA may undertake site inspections. These can be either unaccompanied or accompanied, though all would be subject to any Government restrictions relating to COVID-19 in force at the time.

The purpose of these is for the ExA to see features of the proposals within the context of the evidence put forward. Notes of Unaccompanied Site Inspections (USI) are published on the project webpage on the NI Planning website. [Notes of the ExA's first USI](#) were uploaded on 17 September 2021.

Accompanied Site Inspections (ASI) will only be necessary to view land to which there is no public right of access, or with no clear view from nearby locations with open public access. The purpose of ASIs is familiarisation only and no discussion of the merits of the Proposed Development will be entertained during an ASI.

The draft Examination Timetable includes a deadline for IPs to make submissions suggesting sites and locations that the ExA should visit. These will be used to inform further USIs as well as possible ASIs. It should be noted that public health restrictions may limit the scope for ASIs and, if these have not been lifted by the end of the Examination, the ExA may decide that holding USIs to relevant nominated locations, supported by the submission of additional written, photographic, video or even drone material would be preferable to not visiting sites or holding ASIs in circumstances which could make them difficult and unduly time-consuming to conduct.

Initial Assessment of Principal Issues

This is the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues prepared under s88(1) of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). It has been prepared by the Examining Authority (ExA) following its reading of:

- the application documents;
- the Relevant Representations received in respect of the application; and
- its consideration of any other important and relevant matters.

It is not a comprehensive or exclusive list of all the issues that will be subject to examination and inevitably some issues will overlap or interrelate. The ExA will have regard to all important and relevant matters during the Examination and when it writes its Recommendation Report to the Secretary of State for Transport after the Examination has concluded.

The order of the issues listed is alphabetic and does not imply any order of prioritisation or importance.

The policy and consenting requirements and documents associated with the PA2008 are an integral part of the Examination and are therefore not listed as main issues.

It should also be noted that:

- whilst the effects of the proposal on the achievement of sustainable development including the mitigation of, and adaption to, climate change are not listed as specific Principal Issues; and
- whilst the effects of the proposal in relation to human rights and equalities duties are not listed as specific Principal Issues;

the ExA will conduct all aspects of the Examination with these objectives in mind.

Principal Issues	Including (but not limited to) issues relating to:
1. Air Quality and Emissions (AQ) (to include consideration of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions)	1.1 Adequacy of baseline assessment. 1.2 Construction effects of the Proposed Development. 1.3 Operational effects of the Proposed Development. 1.4 Ability for the UK to meet the Air Quality Directive. 1.5 Effects on Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA).

	<p>1.6 Operational and embedded GHG emissions.</p> <p>1.7 Effect on the achievement of the Government’s carbon reduction targets and latest carbon budget.</p> <p>1.8 Any cumulative impacts.</p>
<p>2. Biodiversity, Ecology and Natural Environment</p>	<p>2.1 Adequacy of baseline assessment.</p> <p>2.2 Loss of, or change to, the ecological value of terrestrial and aquatic habitats and their species, including impacts on the ecological value.</p> <p>2.3 Implications for statutorily and locally protected sites including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Wildlife Reserves, Special Areas of Conservation, and Local Wildlife sites (including potential sites).</p> <p>2.4 Effects on specific fauna and flora species and their habitats (including European protected species).</p> <p>2.5 Effects on hedgerows and trees, including ancient woodlands, important hedgerows and veteran trees.</p> <p>2.6 Use of appropriate metric to determine overall effect.</p> <p>2.7 Biodiversity Net Gain developing policy position.</p> <p>2.8 Other biodiversity effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation/compensatory measures. • Timing of works and potential seasonal effects. • Need for Habitat Regulations Assessment/Appropriate Assessment.
<p>3. Compulsory Acquisition (CA) and or Temporary Possession (TP)</p>	<p>3.1 The case for CA/TP generally.</p> <p>3.2 The need for the land proposed to be compulsorily acquired and/or</p>

	<p>temporarily possessed where specific objections remain.</p> <p>3.3 Effects on those affected by CA and/or TP, including statutory undertakers/infrastructure and infrastructure providers.</p> <p>3.4 Adequacy and security of funding for compensation.</p> <p>3.5 Current position in relation to National Trust land, particularly that held as inalienable.</p> <p>3.6 Current position in relation to other special category land including open space and common land.</p> <p>3.7 Access for construction and maintenance.</p> <p>3.8 Human Rights Act considerations and the Public Sector Equality Duty.</p> <p>3.9 Consideration of alternatives to CA/TP.</p> <p>3.10 Tests set out in sections 122/123/127/132/135/138 of the Planning Act 2008.</p> <p>3.11 Book of Reference.</p>
<p>4. Cultural Heritage (CH)</p>	<p>4.1 The adequacy and appropriateness of the approach to the consideration of heritage matters.</p> <p>4.2 Effects on designated heritage assets and their settings.</p> <p>4.3 Effects on non-designated heritage assets.</p> <p>4.4 The effects on and strategy for dealing with archaeological remains.</p> <p>4.5 Cumulative and in-combination effects on and with other major projects and proposals.</p>
<p>5. Draft Development Consent Order (dDCO)</p>	<p>5.1 The structure of the dDCO.</p> <p>5.2 Definitions.</p>

	<p>5.3 Scope of the Proposed Development and its Associated Development.</p> <p>5.4 The appropriateness of Articles and Requirements.</p> <p>5.5 The appropriateness of proposed protective provisions.</p> <p>5.6 Relationships with other consents.</p> <p>5.7 Whether the dDCO is satisfactory in all other respects.</p>
<p>6. Landscape and Visual (LV)</p>	<p>6.1 Effect on landscape character.</p> <p>6.2 Effect on the special qualities of the Cotswolds AONB.</p> <p>6.3 Short and long-term visual impacts.</p> <p>6.4 Effects of lighting.</p> <p>6.5 Construction effects.</p> <p>6.6 Design of the landscape mitigation, including bunds, walls and fencing.</p> <p>6.7 Cumulative and in-combination effects on and with other major projects and proposals.</p>
<p>7. Noise and Vibration (N&V)</p>	<p>7.1 Baseline assessment.</p> <p>7.2 Construction effects including mitigation.</p> <p>7.3 Operational effects including mitigation.</p>
<p>8. Socio-economic</p>	<p>8.1 The effects of the Proposed Development in terms of economic and social considerations, both during construction and in operation.</p> <p>8.2 Effects on local businesses.</p>
<p>9. Traffic and Transport (T&T)</p>	<p>9.1 The case for, and benefits of, the scheme.</p> <p>9.2 Strategic vision and objectives for national networks.</p> <p>9.3 Adequacy of baseline assessment.</p> <p>9.4 Adequacy of the modelling.</p>

	<p>9.5 Alternative routes/solutions.</p> <p>9.6 Effects on the existing road network during and after construction, including the scope of the Construction Transport Management Plan.</p> <p>9.7 Scheme context – M5/M4 connectivity A417, A436, A40 corridors.</p> <p>9.8 Construction effects on the use of the Public Right of Way (PRoW) network.</p> <p>9.9 Displaced traffic during construction, including highway safety.</p> <p>9.10 Operational effects including on the surrounding road network and the provision for Non-Motorised Users/effects on PRoW.</p> <p>9.11 Junction designs.</p> <p>9.12 Links with the local network.</p> <p>9.13 Mitigation/traffic calming for the surrounding roads.</p> <p>9.14 Any cumulative effects.</p>
<p>10. Water Environment (WE)</p>	<p>10.1 Surface and groundwater effects.</p> <p>10.2 Drainage.</p> <p>10.3 Flood risk.</p> <p>10.4 Management of climate change effects on hydrology.</p> <p>10.5 Management and mitigation of pollution effects on watercourses.</p> <p>10.6 Future management and maintenance of drainage.</p>

Draft Examination Timetable

The Examining Authority (ExA) is under a duty to complete the examination of the application by the end of the period of six months beginning with the day after the close of the Preliminary Meeting.

The examination of the application primarily takes the form of the consideration of written submissions. The ExA will also consider any oral representations made at hearings.

Item	Matters	Date
1.	<p>Procedural Deadline A</p> <p>Deadline for receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written submissions on the examination procedure, including any submissions about the use of virtual procedures; and • Requests to be heard orally at the Preliminary Meeting Part 1. 	Friday 22 October 2021
2.	Preliminary Meeting - Part 1	Tuesday 2 November 2021
3.	<p>Procedural Deadline B</p> <p>Deadline for receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written submissions on examination procedure including responses to matters raised orally at the Preliminary Meeting Part 1; and • Requests to be heard orally at the Preliminary Meeting Part 2. 	Wednesday 10 November 2021
4.	Preliminary Meeting - Part 2 (if required)	Tuesday 16 November 2021
5.	<p>Issue by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination Timetable. <p>Publication of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ExA's Written Questions (ExQ1). 	As soon as practicable following the Preliminary Meeting
6.	<p>Deadline 1 (D1)</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to ExQ1; • Local Impact Reports (LIR) from Local Authorities (see Annex E); 	Tuesday 14 December 2021

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Representations (WRs), including summaries of all WRs exceeding 1500 words (see Annex E); • Responses to Relevant Representations; • Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) requested by the ExA (see Annex E); • Updated Statement of Commonality for SoCG; • The Compulsory Acquisition Schedule; • Notification by Statutory Parties of their wish to be considered as an Interested Party (IP) by the ExA (see Annex E); • Notification of wish for any Interested Party to participate in an Open Floor Hearing; • Notification of wish for any Affected Person to participate in a Compulsory Acquisition Hearing; • Submission by the Applicant, IPs and APs of suggested locations for the ExA to include in any Site Inspection, including the reason for nomination and issues to be observed, information about whether the location can be accessed using public rights of way or what access arrangements would need to be made; and • Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Rules¹. 	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Deadline 2 (D2)</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on responses received by D1; • Comments on WRs; • Comments on responses to ExQ1; • Progressed Statements of Common Ground; • Progressed Statement of Commonality for SoCG; • Comments on LIR(s); • Applicant's updated Guide to the Application; 	<p>Thursday 6 January 2022</p>

¹ The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An updated version of the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) in clean and tracked versions; • Schedule of changes to the dDCO; • An updated Compulsory Acquisition Schedule in clean and tracked versions; • Submission by the Applicant of low-resolution documents (see Annex E); and • Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Rules. 	
8.	<p>Hearings</p> <p>Dates reserved for any:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue Specific Hearing(s) (if required); • Open Floor Hearing(s) (if required); and • Compulsory Acquisition Hearing(s) (if required). 	w/c 17 January 2022
9.	<p>Deadline 3 (D3)</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written summaries of oral submissions to Hearings held during the week commencing 17 January 2022; • Comments on responses received by D2; • Progressed Statements of Common Ground; • Progressed Statement of Commonality for SoCG; • An updated Guide to the Application; • An updated version of the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) in clean and tracked versions; • Schedule of changes to the dDCO; • An updated Compulsory Acquisition Schedule in clean and tracked versions; and • Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Rules. 	Wednesday 26 January 2022
10.	<p>Deadline 4 (D4)</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on responses received by D3; • Progressed Statements of Common Ground; 	Monday 7 February 2022

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressed Statement of Commonality for SoCG; • An updated Guide to the Application; • An updated version of the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) in clean and tracked versions; • Schedule of changes to the dDCO; • An updated Compulsory Acquisition Schedule in clean and tracked versions; and • Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Rules. 	
11.	<p>Hearings</p> <p>Dates reserved for any:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue Specific Hearing(s) (if required); • Open Floor Hearing(s) (if required); • Compulsory Acquisition Hearing(s) (if required); and • Accompanied Site Inspection (if required). 	w/c 28 February 2022
12.	<p>Deadline 5 (D5)</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written summaries of oral submissions to Hearings held during the week commencing 28 February 2022; • Comments on responses received by D4; • Progressed Statements of Common Ground; • Progressed Statement of Commonality for SoCG; • An updated Guide to the Application; • An updated version of the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) in clean and tracked versions; • Schedule of changes to the dDCO; • An updated Compulsory Acquisition Schedule in clean and tracked versions; and • Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Rules. 	Wednesday 9 March 2022
13.	<p>Publication of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ExA's Further Written Questions (ExQ2) (if required). 	Thursday 17 March 2022

<p>14.</p>	<p>Deadline 6 (D6)</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to ExQ2 (if required); • Comments on responses received by D5; • Progressed Statements of Common Ground; • Progressed Statement of Commonality for SoCG; • An updated Guide to the Application; • An updated version of the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) in clean and tracked versions; • Schedule of changes to the dDCO; • An updated Compulsory Acquisition Schedule in clean and tracked versions; and • Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Rules. 	<p>Wednesday 30 March 2022</p>
<p>15.</p>	<p>Deadline 7 (D7)</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on responses to ExQ2 (if required); • Comments on responses received by D6; and • Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Rules. 	<p>Monday 11 April 2022</p>
<p>16.</p>	<p>Publication of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES) (if required); and • The ExA's proposed schedule of changes to the dDCO (if required). 	<p>Wednesday 13 April 2022</p>
<p>17.</p>	<p>Deadline 8 (D8)</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to the RIES (if issued); • Responses to the ExA's proposed schedule of changes to the dDCO (if issued); • Comments on responses received by D7; • Progressed Statements of Common Ground; • Progressed Statement of Commonality for SoCG; 	<p>Wednesday 4 May 2022</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An updated Guide to the Application; • An updated version of the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) in clean and tracked versions; • Schedule of changes to the dDCO; • An updated Compulsory Acquisition Schedule in clean and tracked versions; and • Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Rules. 	
18.	<p>Deadline 9 (D9)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on responses to the RIES (if issued); • Comments on responses the ExA's proposed schedule of changes to the dDCO (if issued); • Comments on responses received by D8; • Finalised Statements of Common Ground; • Finalised Statement of Commonality for SoCG; • Finalised Guide to the Application; • Final version of the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) in clean and tracked versions; • Final dDCO to be submitted by the Applicant in the SI template with the SI template validation report Schedule of changes to the dDCO; • Finalised Compulsory Acquisition Schedule in clean and tracked versions; and • Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Rules. 	Friday 13 May 2022
19.	<p>The ExA is under a duty to complete the examination of the application by the end of the period of six months beginning with the day after the close of the Preliminary Meeting.</p> <p>The ExA may close the Examination before the end of the six-month period if it is satisfied that all relevant matters have been addressed and discussed.</p>	Monday 16 May 2022

Submission times for deadlines

The time for submission of documents at any deadline in the timetable is 23:59 on the relevant deadline date, unless instructed otherwise by the ExA.

Publication dates

All information received will be published on the [project webpage on the National Infrastructure Planning website](#) as soon as practicable after the deadlines for submissions. See **Annex F** of this letter for more information.

Hearing agendas

Please note that for Issue Specific Hearings and Compulsory Acquisition Hearings the ExA will publish a high-level agenda alongside the notification of the hearing to help inform your decision about whether to register to participate. A detailed draft agenda will be made available on the project webpage on the National Infrastructure Planning website 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.

For Open Floor Hearings an agenda may not be published.

Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES)

Where an applicant has provided a No Significant Effects Report or a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Report with the application, the ExA may decide to issue a RIES during the Examination. The RIES is a factual account of the information and evidence provided to the ExA on HRA matters during the Examination up to the date of the publication of the RIES, for the purposes of enabling the Secretary of State, as competent authority, to undertake its HRA. It is not the ExA's opinion on HRA matters. Comments on the RIES will be invited by the ExA and any received will be taken into account as part of the ExA's Recommendation to the Secretary of State.

The Secretary of State may rely on the consultation on the RIES to meet its obligations under Regulation 63(3) of The Habitats Regulations 2017 and/ or Regulation 28 of The Offshore Marine Regulations.

Other Procedural Decisions made by the Examining Authority

The Examining Authority (ExA) has made the following Procedural Decisions:

1. Statements of Common Ground (SoCG)

In relation to some of the Principal Issues identified in **Annex C**, the ExA would be assisted by the preparation of SoCGs between the Applicant and certain Interested Parties. The draft Examination Timetable at **Annex D** therefore provides a deadline for submission of initial and finalised SoCGs. The deadline for initial SoCGs is **Deadline 1** and the deadline for finalised SoCGs is **Deadline 9**.

The aim of a SoCG is to agree factual information and to inform the ExA and all other parties by identifying where there is agreement and where the differences lie at an early stage in the examination process. It should provide a focus and save time by identifying matters which are not in dispute or need not be the subject of further evidence. It can also usefully state where and why there may be disagreement about the interpretation and relevance of the information. Unless otherwise stated or agreed, the SoCG should be agreed between the Applicant and the other relevant Interested Party or parties, and submitted **by the Applicant**.

For each of those areas that are in dispute, it would be beneficial if each party would put their estimation as to the likelihood that disagreement will remain at the end of the Examination. This should be done on a "High", "Medium" and "Low" traffic light model. This will allow the ExA to assess those areas where oral discussions may be most beneficial.

The ExA notes that the Applicant has already commenced SoCGs with the following Parties:

1. The 'Joint Councils' comprising Gloucestershire County Council, Cotswold District Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council
2. Natural England (NE)
3. Environment Agency (EA)
4. Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (HBMCE), more commonly known as 'Historic England'
5. Cotswolds Conservation Board (CCB)
6. Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT)
7. National Trust (NT)
8. Walking, Cycling and Horse riding Technical Working Group (WCH TWG), which includes:

- Active Gloucestershire;
- British Horse Society (BHS);
- Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Gloucestershire;
- Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Cycle Campaign;
- Cotswold District Council;
- Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly Cotswolds Conservation Board);
- Cotswold Trail and Access Partnership;
- Cycling UK;
- Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) PRoW officer;
- GCC transport officer;
- GCC ThinkTravel Coordinator;
- Gloucestershire Local Access Forum (GLAF);
- Gloucestershire Ramblers;
- Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust;
- National Trust;
- Natural England;
- Sustrans;
- The Disabled Ramblers; and
- Trail Riders Federation.

Additional SoCGs are requested to be prepared between the Applicant and:

9. Relevant Statutory Undertakers (including BT Openreach, Gigaclear Ltd, Severn Trent Water Ltd, and Western Power Distribution), to include (but not limited to):

- Matters related to relevant Protective Provisions in the draft DCO.
- The impact of the Proposed Development on their existing infrastructure.
- Whether the re-purposing of the A417 to 'Air Balloon Way' creates any future issues in terms of access or maintenance.

10. Forestry Commission, to include (but not limited to):

- Those issues raised in the Relevant Representation [[RR-038](#)].

11. Council for British Archaeology, to include (but not limited to):

- Those issues raised in the Relevant Representation [[RR-022](#)].

12. Coberley Parish Council, to include (but not limited to):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those issues raised in the Relevant Representation [RR-019].
13. Cowley and Birdlip Parish Council , to include (but not limited to):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those issues raised in the Relevant Representation [RR-059].
14. Daglingworth Parish Council , to include (but not limited to):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those issues raised in the Relevant Representation [RR-024].
15. National Star Foundation , to include (but not limited to):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those issues raised in the Relevant Representation [RR-039] & [RR-078].
16. FlyUp Ltd , to include (but not limited to):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those issues raised in the Relevant Representation [RR-037].
17. Alan Dick , to include (but not limited to):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those issues raised in the Relevant Representation [RR-011].
18. Cellnex UK , to include (but not limited to):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those issues raised in the Relevant Representation [RR-012].

All of the SoCGs listed above should cover the Articles and Requirements in the draft Development Consent Order. Any Interested Party seeking that an Article or Requirement is reworded should provide the form of words which are being sought in the SoCG.

Where a particular SoCG cannot be agreed between the parties by **Deadline 1**, or if any local authority position needs to be signed off at a higher level, draft versions of that SoCG are requested to be submitted **by the Applicant to Deadline 1**. The position of the relevant Interested Parties should then be confirmed during the course of the Examination.

The content of SoCGs will help to inform the ExA about the need to hold any Issue Specific Hearings during the Examination, and to enable the ExA and the Applicant to give notice of such hearings at least 21 days in advance of them taking place.

2. Local Impact Reports

The ExA requests Local Impact Reports (LIRs) from the host Local Authorities and welcomes LIRs from any other relevant Local Authorities who may wish to submit one. All LIRs are requested to be submitted into the Examination no later than by **Deadline 1** in order to front-load the Examination and maximise the available time. Please note that this deadline will remain in effect

notwithstanding any subsequent revisions to the Examination Timetable (if required).

3. Written Representations

The ExA has made the Procedural Decision that Written Representations will be required at **Deadline 1** in order to front-load the Examination and maximise the available time. Please note that this deadline will remain in effect notwithstanding any subsequent revisions to the Examination Timetable (if required).

4. Deadline for Notification by Statutory Parties of their wish to be considered as an Interested Party (IP) by the Examining Authority

The ExA has made a Procedural Decision that, in order to facilitate a timely start to the Examination, Statutory Parties must have decided whether they wish to be considered as an IP and notified the Planning Inspectorate of their decision by **Deadline 1**.

5. Low-resolution documents for possible sharing on screen at virtual events

As the events are likely to contain a virtual element, it would considerably assist the ExA if the drawings could be provided by the Applicant at a small electronic size. Several of the drawings are over 20MB in size which is likely to make them unwieldy for display in the MS Teams environment.

The ExA therefore requests the Applicant to re-provide the drawings in accordance with the following specification by **Deadline 2**. For the avoidance of doubt this also includes Figures to the Environmental Statement.

- No individual drawing/set of plans to exceed an absolute maximum of 10 MB; as a guide 5 to 6 MB should be achievable.
- If the scheme has a large plan set, consider splitting the plans set into more than one 'book'.
- Pay attention to the output of plans on .pdf from, for example, CAD systems, as certain systems output these in multiple layers which load successively and thus take a long time to load; layers should be merged/switched off.
- Files should be given intelligent short names that enable the ExA and others to understand the content of the file from its filename or the beginning of its filename (ie 'Worksplans sheet 1' not, eg 'E-may7746943_projecct_449_xbleep_large works_sheets44'); the name should be intelligible in the tab when multiple document windows are open in a browser.
- Files should be read-checked before submission to ensure that all relevant details can still be read when zoomed in; eg plot numbers on land plans and labels for road, field or property names.
- Files should be given a 'screen share' test before submission, ensuring that when shared over the internet the plan distributes to multiple viewers in a timely manner, the cursor remains mobile and no

unexpected behaviours (screen freezing, pixilation, judder, etc.) are experienced by multiple users.

6. Acceptance of Additional Submissions into the Examination

Since the acceptance of the Application, the following document has been accepted into the Examination:

- Additional Submission from Tiina Tuli [[AS-002](#)].

In addition, the following document from the Applicant has been accepted into the Examination:

- Validation report for the A417 Missing Link draft Development Consent Order [[AS-001](#)].

Availability of Examination Documents

The application documents and Relevant Representations are available on the [project webpage on the National Infrastructure Planning website](#).

All further documents submitted in the course of the Examination will also be published under the [Documents](#) tab at the above location.

The Examination Library

For ease of navigation, please refer to the Examination Library (EL) which is accessible by clicking the blue button under the 'Documents' tab. The EL is updated regularly throughout the Examination.

The EL records and provides a hyperlink to:

- each application document;
- each representation made to the Examination; and
- each Procedural Decision made by the Examining Authority.

Each document is given a unique reference which will be fixed for the duration of the Examination. A hyperlink to each document on the project webpage is also provided. **Please use the unique reference numbers applied in the EL when referring to any Examination Documents in any future submissions that you make.**

Electronic deposit locations

Documents can be viewed electronically, free of charge, at the electronic deposit locations listed in the table below. At Tewkesbury Library, free computer access is available to library members on production of their library card, however it may also be possible for others to use a computer on a "guest" card. Please note that you may need to bring a form of identification with you to view documents at the electronic deposit locations.

The opening hours and availability of information technology set out in the table below may be subject to changes or limitations to address public health requirements as a result of Coronavirus (COVID-19). Bearing in mind the availability of the documents on the National Infrastructure Planning website and the effect of public health restrictions, please consider your need to attend these locations with care. Please check the current circumstances with the relevant locations before you attend.

Local authority	Venue/address	Opening hours	Printing costs
Cotswold District Council	Cotswold District Council Offices Trinity Road	Monday: 8:45am – 5pm Tuesday: 8:45am – 5pm Wednesday: 8:45am – 5pm	A4 10p* per sheet

Annex F

	Cirencester GL7 1PX	Thursday: 8:45am – 5pm Friday: 8:45am – 5pm Saturday: Closed Sunday: Closed	A3 30p* per sheet *Cash payments not accepted
Gloucestershire County Council	Shire Hall Westgate Street Gloucester GL1 2TG	Monday: 9am – 5pm Tuesday: 9am – 5pm Wednesday: 9am – 5pm Thursday: 9am – 5pm Friday: 9am – 5pm Saturday: Closed Sunday: Closed	A4 B&W 15p per sheet A4 colour 30p per sheet A3 B&W 80p per sheet A3 colour £1 per sheet
Gloucestershire County Council	Tewkesbury Library Sun Street Tewkesbury GL20 5NX	Monday: 9:30am – 5pm Tuesday: 9:30am – 7pm Wednesday: 9:30am – 1pm Thursday: 9:30am – 7pm Friday: 9:30am – 5pm Saturday: 9:30am – 4pm Sunday: Closed	A4 B&W 15p per sheet A4 colour 30p per sheet A3 B&W 80p per sheet A3 colour £1 per sheet

Guidance on using the electronic 'Make a submission' portal

The Planning Inspectorate will be using an electronic portal, which parties will be able to use to make their written submissions at the relevant deadline.

A 'Make a submission' tab will become available on the [project webpage of the National Infrastructure website](#). The portal operates on a system where submissions are separated according to the deadline submission type requested (see the Examination Timetable at **Annex D**). Please ensure documents are submitted in respect of the associated deadline and are the relevant document submission type. Where this is not possible, please use the 'Other' drop-down option.

Interested Parties will be able to submit documents ('Upload files'), make a text representation or both. It is possible to upload multiple files for each individual submission item. Electronic attachments should be clearly labelled with the subject title and not exceed 50MB. Providing links to websites where your submissions can be viewed is not acceptable. Submissions must not include hyperlinks to third-party websites; the Examining Authority, Interested Parties and the Secretary of State cannot rely on documents/evidence that the Planning Inspectorate cannot directly control in respect of availability and content (including from a UK GDPR perspective), and any hyperlinks of this type will be redacted prior to publication. All submissions must be made in a format that can be viewed in full on the National Infrastructure Planning website. Any submissions that exceed 1500 words should also be accompanied by a summary; this summary should not exceed 10% of the original text.

We would encourage everyone in the first instance to use the 'Make a submission' portal to make your submissions however, if necessary, Interested Parties will be able to send electronic copies of their submission via e-mail to the project mailbox, a417missinglink@planninginspectorate.gov.uk, on or before the applicable deadline.

If you experience any issues when using this portal, please contact a member of the Case Team to assist using the e-mail address above. The Inspectorate will be monitoring the use of the portal. Any feedback is much appreciated and will help the Inspectorate identify and prioritise future service enhancements for our customers.