



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

Customer Services: 0303 444 5000

email: M5Junction10@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

All Interested Parties, Statutory Parties and any Other Persons invited to the Preliminary Meeting

Your Ref:

Our Ref: TR010063

Date: 7 May 2023

Dear Sir/ Madam

Planning Act 2008 – Section 88 and 89 and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – Rules 4, 6, 9 and 13

Application by Gloucestershire County Council for an Order Granting Development Consent for the M5 Junction 10 Improvement Scheme

Appointment of the Examining Authority and invitation to the Preliminary Meeting and Notification of Hearings

Following my appointment by the Secretary of State as the lead member of the Examining Authority (ExA) to carry out an Examination of the above application I am writing to introduce myself and the other member of the ExA. My name is Edwin Maud and the other member the ExA is Luke Regan. A copy of the appointment notice can be viewed at the [documents tab](#) on the [M5 Junction 10 Improvement Scheme](#) project webpage of the National Infrastructure Planning website.

We would like to thank those of you who submitted Relevant Representations. These representations have assisted us when considering how we will examine this application.

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 the above application.

Date	Start time	Venue and joining details
------	------------	---------------------------



<p>4 June 2024</p>	<p>Registration and seating available at venue from: 09:30am</p> <p>Virtual Registration Process from: 09:30am</p> <p>Preliminary Meeting starts: 10.00am</p>	<p>Leonardo Hotel Cheltenham Gloucester Road, Cheltenham, GL51 0TS</p> <p>and</p> <p>By virtual means using Microsoft Teams</p> <p>Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered</p>
---------------------------	--	---

IMPORTANT: The Preliminary Meeting should be completed before 1:00pm on 4 June 2024. However, a reserve period has been scheduled for 5:00pm on the same day to allow for the meeting to be resumed in exceptional circumstances e.g. to account for a failure of technology. Normally the reserve period will not be required and confirmation of this will be provided by the ExA at the end of the Preliminary Meeting and subsequently notified on the [project webpage](#).

You must register by completing the [Event Participation Form](#) by **Tuesday 28 May 2024 if you intend to participate in the Preliminary Meeting and provide all the information requested (see below).**

If you simply wish to observe the Preliminary Meeting then you do not need to register as you will be able to either:

1. watch a livestream of the event - a link to the livestream will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin; and/or
2. watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished.

Alternatively, you can attend the physical event at the venue to observe the proceedings; however, to ensure there is adequate seating capacity at the venue we request that you register your attendance to **observe only** by **28 May 2024** using the [Event Participation Form](#). Please note that it may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **28 May 2024**.

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. The ExA will therefore limit the scope of the Preliminary Meeting to consideration of **how the application will be examined**. See **Annex B** to this letter and the Planning Inspectorate's [Advice Note 8.3 - Influencing how an application is Examined: the Preliminary Meeting](#) for more information.



The Preliminary Meeting is **not** an opportunity for you to give your views about what you like or don't like about the application. The merits or disadvantages of the application will only be considered once the Examination starts, which is after the Preliminary Meeting has closed. 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.

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.

Written submissions about how the application should be examined

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.**

We are now requesting written submissions from recipients of this letter about how the application should be examined. We particularly wish to hear from you if:

- You consider changes need to be made to the draft Examination Timetable set out at **Annex D** to this letter; and/or
- you wish to comment about the arrangements for future Examination hearings, including the use of virtual/blended methods.

You are invited to make a written submission about how the application is to be examined by **Procedural Deadline A** (23:59 28 May 2024) (see **Annex D** to this letter).

We request that all submissions are made using the '[Have Your Say](#)' tab on the project webpage on or before **Procedural Deadline A. Annex H** to this letter provides further information about using the Make a submission tab.

Requests to participate at the Preliminary Meeting

Please note that **you are not required to attend, or make written submissions to, the Preliminary Meeting in order to participate in the Examination.** 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.

If you wish to participate at the Preliminary Meeting you are required to notify the ExA in writing on or before **28 May 2024** (see **Procedural Deadline A**).

Any request to participate in the Preliminary Meeting **must include** the following information:



- Name and unique reference number (found at the top your letter or email from the Planning Inspectorate);
- email address (if available) and contact telephone number;
- name and unique reference number of any person/organisation that you are representing (if applicable);
- for blended events, confirmation of whether you will participate virtually or in-person; and
- the agenda item on which you wish to speak and a list of the points you wish to make.

Requests to participate should be made using the [Event Participation Form](#) on or before **Procedural Deadline A**.

Please contact the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter if you require any support or assistance to attend the Preliminary Meeting, either virtually or in person.

Format of Examination Events – Preliminary Meeting and Hearings

The Examination of the application 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](#)).

Both blended (part in-person and part virtual) and fully virtual events form part of the Planning Inspectorate’s operating model. We remain flexible and will confirm the format of any hearings to be held during the Examination Stage when we provide formal notification of each hearing at least 21 days in advance of it taking place.

We are providing formal notification that the **Preliminary Meeting will be a blended event and that the OFH and ISH 1 and ISH 2 referred to in Annex E to this letter will also be blended events.**

After the Preliminary Meeting

After the Preliminary Meeting we will issue 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](#).

Notification of initial hearings

We have made a Procedural Decision to hold the following initial hearings:

- Open Floor Hearing (OFH1) on 4 June 2024 (Blended event)
- Issue Specific Hearing (ISH1) on 5 June 2024 (Blended event)



- Issue Specific Hearing (ISH2) on 6 June 2024 (Blended event)

Important information about these hearings is contained in **Annex E** to this letter, including what details need to be provided with a request to be heard at a hearing and the procedure that will be followed.

Other Procedural Decisions made by the Examining Authority

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

- Statements of Common Ground.
- Request for suggested locations for an Accompanied Site Inspection.
- Acceptance of Additional Submissions into the Examination.
- Request for other documents.
- Request for Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement with National Highways.
- Written Representations.
- Visuals for the Hearings.

Changes to land interests

When the Applicant becomes aware that there has been a change in ownership, or a new interest, in relevant land the Applicant is requested to make the relevant person aware that they can make a request to the ExA to become an Interested Party under section 102A of the PA2008 by completing the [form available on the project webpage](#). The Examination Timetable includes various Deadlines for the submission of an updated Book of Reference and schedule of changes to the Book of Reference, which should include confirmation that relevant persons have been informed of their rights under section 102A.

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 email as electronic communication is more environmentally friendly and cost effective for the taxpayer.

If you have received a letter but are able to receive communications by email, 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](#).

A '[Have Your Say](#)' tab is available on the website which provides a portal through which parties should make written submissions at relevant deadlines during the



Examination. Further information about the [‘Have Your Say’](#) page is provided at **Annex H** to this letter.

There is also 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.

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 ‘M510’, ‘M510-0’, ‘M510-AFP’, ‘M510-S57’ ‘M510-APP’ you are in Group A. If your reference number begins with ‘M510-SP’ you are in Group B. If your reference number begins with ‘M510-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

All parties will normally be expected to meet their own costs. Costs can be awarded against a party who has acted unreasonably and has caused the party applying for the award of costs to incur unnecessary or wasted expense during the Examination. 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](#).

Examination Documents can also be viewed electronically at the locations listed in **Annex G** 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

Edwin Maund

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** Notification of initial hearings
- F** Other Procedural Decisions made by the Examining Authority
- G** Availability of Examination Documents
- H** Information about the 'Have your Say' page

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

Agenda for the Preliminary Meeting

You must register by completing the Pre-Examination Deadline of Tuesday 28th May 2024 if you intend to participate in the Preliminary Meeting and provide all the information requested (see below).

If you simply wish to observe the Preliminary Meeting then you do not need to register as you will be able to either:

1. Attend the physical event to observe the proceedings;
2. watch a livestream of the event - a link to the livestream will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin; and/or
3. watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished.

You do not need to register if you wish to observe remotely via the above means.

Date: Tuesday 4 June 2024

**Registration Process/
Arrangements Conference: 9:30am**

Meeting start time: 10.00am

Venue: Leonardo Hotel Cheltenham, Gloucester Road, Cheltenham, GL51 0TS and by virtual means using **Microsoft Teams**
Full instructions on how to join online or by phone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered

Attendees: The Applicant and Invited parties who have pre-registered

Agenda for the Preliminary Meeting	
9:30am	Registration and seating available at venue for in-person attendees
9:30am	Virtual Registration Process

	<p>Please arrive at 9:30am to enter the virtual lobby. From here you will be admitted to the virtual meeting by the Case Team, greeted and given further instructions.</p> <p>The Registration Process will commence at 09:30. This will be hosted by the Case Team and cover the housekeeping arrangements for the Preliminary Meeting and allow for any questions to be asked about how to take part.</p>
10.00am	Preliminary Meeting
Item 1	The Preliminary Meeting will formally open at 10.00am . The Examining Authority will join, welcome participants and lead introductions.
Item 2	The Examining Authority’s remarks about the Examination process – Annex B to the Rule 6 letter
Item 3	Initial Assessment of Principal Issues – Annex C to Rule 6 letter
Item 4	Draft Examination Timetable – Annex D to Rule 6 letter
Item 5	Procedural Decisions - Annex F to Rule 6 letter
Item 6	Any other matters
Close of the Preliminary Meeting	

If you are participating using Microsoft Teams please join the virtual lobby promptly using the instructions that will be sent to you. The event will start at **10.00am** irrespective of any late arrivals, for whom access may not be possible.

It may take some time to admit participants from the virtual lobby, your patience whilst you are waiting is appreciated.

The agenda for the Preliminary Meeting is subject to change at the discretion of the Examining Authority (ExA), although in making changes the ExA will be mindful of the need to provide opportunities for fair involvement to all Invited Parties.

Any request to participate in the Preliminary Meeting **must include** the following information and be made on the [Event Participation Form](#) by **Tuesday 28 May 2024**:

- Name and unique reference number (found at the top your letter or email from the Planning Inspectorate);
- email address (if available) and contact telephone number;
- name and unique reference number of any person/organisation that you are representing (if applicable);

- for blended events, confirmation of whether you will participate virtually or in-person; and
- the agenda item on which you wish to speak and a list of the points you wish to make.

Introduction to the Preliminary Meeting

Background

The Preliminary Meeting (PM) will be a blended event with some participants attending in person and some taking part virtually using Microsoft Teams

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. Please read this carefully. The ExA will only present a summary of the key points set out here in order to ensure that the time available for participants to speak is maximised.

The Examining Authority and the Case Team

The ExA will introduce themselves at the start of the PM.

The ExA will be supported by the Planning Inspectorate Case Team. During the Registration Process a member of the Case Team will welcome and admit participants from the virtual lobby, and will be available to answer questions by email before and after the PM. The contact email address is:

M5Junction10@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 M5 Junction 10 Improvements Scheme, 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 Gloucestershire County Council, who 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 [project webpage](#) of the National Infrastructure Planning website. The project webpage has links to the Examination Timetable, Relevant Representations and Examination documents and Examination procedure.

You are encouraged to look at the [project webpage](#) 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.

The main purpose of the PM is to discuss the arrangements for the Examination of the application. It focuses on the process only, and it will not be looking at the substance of the proposals: 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 the ExA intends to follow. 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. 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 and 22: it includes the construction and alteration of a highway. The designated National Policy Statement for National Networks applies to this Examination and to decision-making relating to this application.

The ExA will consider the Proposed Development in accordance with the National Policy Statement for National Networks 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 a 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. 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.

Everyone who has made a valid Relevant Representation has been registered as an Interested Party (IP) and has been invited to the PM. All IPs are entitled to involvement in the 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) and has been invited to the PM. 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. All APs are IPs, whether or not they have made a valid Relevant Representation.

Certain bodies are Statutory Parties and they have been invited to the PM. Statutory Parties can elect to become IPs without having made a valid Relevant Representation by notifying the ExA in writing.

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 an IP 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

The ExA estimate that the PM will take two hours to complete.

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.

A digital recording of the PM will be made available on the project webpage as soon as practicable following the close of the PM. The 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. The making and publication of these recordings are a means by which the ExA meets the legal requirement to hold the PM (and any other hearings) 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 close of the PM.

As the 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 providing any information which should otherwise 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 place personal and private information into the public domain.

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 agrees, 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. 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 dates reserved for ISHs and IPs may make suggestions for topics to be discussed at an ISH 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 by the Applicant with the application, 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 (28 May 2024) for participants to notify the ExA that they wish to speak at an OFH or a CAH.

Site inspections

The ExA has undertaken two Unaccompanied Site Inspections (USI) on 31 January / 1 February 2024 and 2 May 2024. The notes of the visit can be found in the Examination Library references [EV1-001] and [EV1-002].

As part of the Examination process the ExA may undertake further site inspections. These can be either unaccompanied or accompanied.

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 (USIs) are published on the [project webpage](#).

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 ExA may decide to hold USIs to relevant nominated locations, supported by the submission of additional written, photographic, video or even drone material if this would be preferable to not visiting sites or holding ASIs in circumstances which could make them difficult and unduly time-consuming to conduct (for example if public health restrictions are in place). The ExA may also consider if it would be appropriate to make arrangements for access only to be provided to specific sites such that they could be inspected as part of a USI on an access required basis (ARSI)

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/ARSIs as well as possible ASIs.

Approach to Written Questions

The established practice for national infrastructure examinations is to ask written questions at the outset of an examination. For this case, we aim to substitute the early written questions with two Issue Specific Hearings, which will be held immediately following the Preliminary Meeting. The ExA will, however, retain the option to ask questions arising from the hearings, if required, at the same time as issuing the Rule 8 letter. This is set out in the draft examination timetable (**Annex D** to this letter).

The ExA believes the Hearings will refine and support the primacy of the written process on which a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project is based and avoid the need for a large number of written questions.

The ExA intends to ask its main written questions following the submission of documents at Deadline 2. This approach is intended to focus the Examination on the outstanding matters by allowing issues within the written submissions and responses to develop and provide the Applicant the opportunity to respond and address concerns directly.

Initial Assessment of Principal Issues

This is the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues prepared as required under section 88(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.

This initial assessment has guided the Examining Authority in forming a provisional view as to how the application is to be examined. It is not a comprehensive or exclusive list of 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 in relation to human rights and equalities duties are not listed as main issues, the ExA will conduct all aspects of the Examination with these in mind.

1. Air Quality

To consider (amongst other things):

- the effect of the Proposed Development on air quality, including as a result of dust emissions, during the construction, and subsequent operation;
- the potential effect on any Air Quality Management Areas during construction and subsequent operation; and
- Mitigation of impacts including the adequacy and security of identified management measures in the Air Quality Management Plan.

2. Climate change adaption and Carbon emissions

To consider (amongst other things) the effect of the proposed development on carbon targets and the overall approach to sustainability during construction and subsequent operation.

3. Biodiversity, Ecology and the Natural Environment

To consider (amongst other things):

- the effect of the construction and operation of the Proposed Development on designated sites, including European sites, nationally designated sites, regionally and locally designated sites and habitats of nature conservation importance;
- permanent and temporary effects on protected species and habitats including the potential for river bank erosion and any need for bank protection;
- protected species licensing, including in relation to bats, dormice and badger;
- effects on hedgerows, ancient woodland and veteran trees;
- the adequacy and security of the proposed mitigation and monitoring measures,
- Habitats Regulations Assessment; and
- Biodiversity Net Gain

4. Draft Development Consent Order (dDCO)

To consider (amongst other things):

- relevant definitions;
- the appropriateness of the articles, Requirements and Schedules of the draft DCO;
- application and modification of legislative provisions; and
- Protective Provisions.

5. Flood Risk, Water Quality and Resources

To consider (amongst other things):

- compliance with the Water Framework Directive;
- the effect of the Proposed Development on water resources including its quality;
- the effect on main rivers, ordinary watercourses and drainage systems;
- effects on flood risk, flood storage capacity and the flood plain during the construction and operational phase; and
- the resilience of the development to flood risk

6. Good Design

To consider (amongst other things) how the Proposed Development would meet the tests in the National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPSNN) and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for good design.

7. Green Belt

To consider the effect of the Proposed Development on the Green Belt and the relevant policy tests.

8. Heritage

To consider the effect of the Proposed Development on the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets, including:

- the special architectural or historic interest of Listed Buildings and their setting;
- the desirability of preserving scheduled monuments and sites of archaeological interest;
- the desirability of preserving the character and appearance of conservation areas; and
- adequacy and security of any mitigation proposed.

9. Land Rights, Compulsory Acquisition and Temporary Possession

To consider (amongst other things):

- whether the full extent of the land, rights and powers that are sought are required;
- whether a compelling case in the public interest has been established;
- whether adequate funding for compensation (including blight) is likely to be available to carry out the compulsory acquisition within the statutory period;
- whether all reasonable alternatives to compulsory acquisition and temporary possession have been explored;
- accuracy of the Book of Reference;
- whether the purposes stated for the acquisition are legitimate and sufficient to justify the inevitable interference with the human rights of those affected;
- the acquisition of any statutory undertakers' land or rights over such land and the detriment that may be caused to the carrying on of the undertaking in question; whether the tests of s127(2),(3),(5) and (6) and s138(4) of the PA2008 are satisfied;

- the acquisition of any Crown Land or rights over such land and whether the tests of s135(1), and (2) of the PA2008 are satisfied;
- the adequacy of Protective Provisions in the dDCO; and
- whether the proposals meet the requirements of PA2008 in all other respects.

10. Landscape and Visual

To consider (amongst other things):

- the effect of the Proposed Development (including artificial lighting) on existing landscape character and views.

11. Noise and Vibration

To consider (amongst other things):

- the effects of noise and vibration from the construction and operation of the Proposed Development; and
- mitigation of temporary and permanent impacts.

12. Policy including the assessment of need and alternatives

To consider (amongst other things):

- The need for the Proposed Development in terms of national considerations, and the local economy.
- The conformity of the scheme with the National Policy Statement for National Networks.
- The approach to alternatives including consideration of various routes, locations, strategies and design development options for the project and the relevant environmental effects which informed the Applicant's choice.
- Whether the Proposed Development would comply with all specific legal requirements in relation to the consideration of alternatives including the Habitats Regulations and the Water Framework Directive (WFD).
- Whether the Proposed Development would comply with all policy requirements in any relevant National Policy Statements in relation to the consideration of alternatives including the flood risk sequential test and the assessment of alternatives for development in the Green Belt.

13. Geology and soils

To consider (amongst other things):

- loss of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land

14. Traffic and Transport

To consider (amongst other things):

- Whether sufficient information has been provided within the TA to fully understand the implications of the proposed development relative to both the Strategic and Local Road Networks.
- Scheme context – strategic vision, objectives and alternative design solutions.
- The case for and benefits of the scheme.
- The effect of the proposed development on:
 - highway capacity and the operation of the strategic and local road networks;
 - local access arrangements;
 - road safety; and
 - non-motorised users.

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
	<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 blended methods • Requests to be heard orally at the Preliminary Meeting • Requests to participate in Open Floor Hearing 1 on 4 June 2024 (see Annex E of this letter) • Requests to participate in Issue Specific Hearing 1 on 5 June 2024 (see Annex E of this letter) • Requests to participate in Issue Specific Hearing 2 on 6 June 2024 • Suggested locations for site inspections (Accompanied or Unaccompanied), including justification, for consideration by the ExA 	Tuesday 28 May 2024
	Preliminary Meeting	Tuesday 4 June 2024 10.00am
	Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1)	Tuesday 4 June 2024 2.00pm
	Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) on Policy, Need and Alternatives	Wednesday 5 June 2024 10.00am
	Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) on the dDCO	Thursday 6 June 2024 10.00am

	<p>Issue by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination Timetable 	<p>As soon as possible after the close of the Preliminary Meeting</p>
	<p>Deadline 1</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Impact Reports from any Local Authorities • Draft Statements of Common Grounds and Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statements • Draft Schedule of Negotiation of CA • Draft NPS tracker • Draft status of negotiations with Statutory Undertakers • Comments on Relevant Representations (RR) • Summaries of all RR exceeding 1500 words • Written Representations and summaries for any that exceed 1500 words • Applicant's draft itinerary for ASI • Requests to be heard at an OFH Requests by Interested Parties to be heard at an Open Floor Hearing (OFH) • Requests to be heard at a CAH Requests by Affected Persons (defined in section 59(4) of the Planning Act 2008) to be heard at a Compulsory Acquisition Hearing (CAH) • Written submissions of oral submissions made at Hearings held during w/c 3 June 2024 • Any further information requested by ExA Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	<p>Tuesday 18 June 2024</p>
	<p>Deadline 2</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on submissions for Deadline 1 • Comments on Local Impact Reports • Comments on the Applicant's draft itinerary for the ASI 	<p>Tuesday 9 July 2024</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any further information requested by ExA Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Rules Comments on any further information requested by the ExA and received by Deadline 1 	
	<p>Publication of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ExA's First Written Questions (ExQ1) 	Tuesday 16 July 2024
	<p>Deadline 3</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses to ExQ1 Comments on submissions for Deadline 2 Updated Schedule of Negotiation of CA Updated status of negotiations with Statutory Undertakers 	Tuesday 30 July 2024
	<p>ASI and Hearings</p> <p>Dates reserved for ASIs and hearings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further ISHs (if required). CAH (if required). Further OFHs (if required). ASIs (if required). 	w/c 12 August 2024
	<p>Deadline 4</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written summaries of oral submissions made at Hearings held during the w/c 12 August 2024 	Tuesday 3 September 2024
	<p>Publication of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ExA's Second Written Questions (ExQ2) (if required) 	Tuesday 10 September 2024
	<p>Deadline 5</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses to ExQ2 Updated Schedule of Negotiation of CA Updated status of negotiations with Statutory Undertakers 	Tuesday 24 September 2024

	<p>ASI and Hearings</p> <p>Dates reserved for ASIs and hearings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further ISHs (if required). • CAH (if required). • Further OFHs (if required). • ASIs (if required). 	w/c 14 October 2024
	<p>Publication by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES) and any associated questions (if required) • ExA's commentary on, or schedule of changes to, the dDCO 	Tuesday 22 October 2024
	<p>Deadline 6</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written summaries of oral submissions made at Hearings held during the w/c 14 October 2024 	Wednesday 30 October 2024
	<p>Deadline 7</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final DCO to be submitted by the Applicant in the SI template with the SI template validation report • Final BoR and schedule of changes to BoR • Final SoCGs • Final Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement • Final Statement of Commonality of SoCG • List of matters not agreed where SoCG could not be finalised • Final Navigation Document/Guide to the application • Final Status of Negotiations CA Schedule • Final Status of Negotiations with Statutory Undertakers • Final NPS tracker • Final signed and dated section 106 • Comments on the RIES and responses to any associated questions (if issued) • Comments on any additional information/submissions received by Deadline 5 • Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	Tuesday 12 November 2024

	<p>Deadline 8</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing Submissions • Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	<p>Tuesday 19 November 2024</p>
	<p>Close of Examination by the Examining Authority</p> <p>The ExA is under a duty to complete the Examination of the application by the end of the period of six months</p>	<p>Wednesday 4 December 2024</p>

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](#) as soon as practicable after the Deadlines for submissions.

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 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 agendas 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 ExA may also raise questions in the RIES to confirm or clarify matters that remain outstanding.

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.

Notification of initial hearings

The Examining Authority (ExA) provides notice of the following initial hearings:

Date	Hearing	Start time	Venue and Joining details
Tuesday 4 June 2024	Open Floor Hearing 1	Registration and seating available at venue from: 2:30pm Virtual Registration Process from: 2:30pm Hearing starts: 3:00pm	Leonardo Hotel Cheltenham, Gloucester Road, Cheltenham GL51 0TS and By virtual means using Microsoft Teams Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre- registered
Wednesday 5 June 2024	Issue Specific Hearing 1	Registration and seating available at venue from: 9:00am Virtual Registration Process from: 9:15am Hearing starts: 10:00am	Leonardo Hotel Cheltenham, Gloucester Road, Cheltenham GL51 0TS and By virtual means using Microsoft Teams Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre- registered

Date	Hearing	Start time	Venue and Joining details
Thursday 6 June 2024	Issue Specific Hearing 2	<p>Registration and seating available at venue from: 9:00am</p> <p>Virtual Registration Process from: 9:15am</p> <p>Hearing starts: 10:00am</p>	<p>Leonardo Hotel Cheltenham, Gloucester Road, Cheltenham GL51 0TS</p> <p>and</p> <p>By virtual means using Microsoft Teams</p> <p>Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered</p>
<p>NOTE: If any of the above hearings are no longer required then notification that a particular date is no longer required will be published as soon as practicable on the project webpage, providing reasonable notice to Interested Parties of the decision to cancel them.</p>			

You must register by completing the [Event Participation Form](#) by 28 May 2024 if you intend to participate in any of the hearings and provide all the information requested (see below).

If you simply wish to observe any of the hearings then you do not need to register as you will be able to either:

1. watch a livestream of the event - a link to the livestream will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin; and/or
2. watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished.

Alternatively, you can attend the physical hearing at the venue to observe the proceedings; however, to ensure there is adequate seating capacity at the venue we request that you register your attendance to **observe only** by **28 May 2024** using the [Event Participation Form](#). Please note that it may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **28 May 2024**.

Any request to participate in a hearing **must include** the following information:

- Name and unique reference number (found at the top of any letter or email from the Planning Inspectorate);

- email address (if available) and contact telephone number;
- name and unique reference number of any person/organisation that you are representing (if applicable);
- for blended events, confirmation of whether you will participate virtually or in-person;
- confirmation of the hearing(s) you wish to participate in, the agenda item(s) on which you wish to speak and/or brief details of the topic(s) that you would like to raise;
- for Compulsory Acquisition Hearings, the plot number(s) of the relevant land provided in the [Book of Reference](#) and the [Land Plans](#); and
- the [Examination Library](#) reference number (with paragraph/page number where appropriate) of any documents you wish to refer to.

Requests to participate should be made using the [Event Participation Form](#) on or before **Procedural Deadline A**.

Please contact the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter if you require any support or assistance to attend any of the hearings, either virtually or in person.

Hearing agendas

High-level agendas for these hearings have been published alongside this notification on the [project webpage](#) to help inform your decision about whether to register to participate.

For Issue Specific Hearings and Compulsory Acquisition Hearings the ExA will publish a detailed draft 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. For Open Floor Hearings an agenda may be published.

Procedure at hearings

The Examination will principally be a written process (see the Planning Inspectorate's [Advice Note 8.4: The Examination](#)), supplemented where necessary by various types of hearings. Please refer to the [Advice Note 8.5: Hearings and site inspections](#) and [Advice Note 8.6: Virtual Examination events](#) as these provide important information about hearing procedures.

The procedure to be followed at hearings is set out in Rule 14 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010. The ExA is responsible for the oral questioning of a person giving evidence and the process affords very limited scope to allow cross-questioning between parties.

Hearing livestream and recording

A link to a livestream for each hearing will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before any hearing is due to open. The livestream is available to anybody who wishes to observe a hearing in real time.

All hearings are recorded, and the recordings will be made available on the [project webpage](#) as soon as practicable after the close of the hearing. The recordings allow any member of the public who is interested in the application and the Examination to find out what has been discussed.

Other Procedural Decisions made by the Examining Authority

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

1. Statements of Common Ground (SoCG)

The Applicant has submitted draft SoCGs with the following IPs:

- The Joint Councils [APP-146];
- National Highways [APP-147];
- The Environment Agency [APP-148];
- Natural England [APP-149];
- Historic England [APP-150];
- Bloor Homes and Persimmon Homes (North West Cheltenham (Elms Park)) [APP-151];
- Bloor Homes (Safeguarded Land) [APP-152] and
- Cheltenham Borough Council and Midland Land Portfolio (West Cheltenham (Golden Valley)) [APP-153]

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**. The draft Examination Timetable at **Annex D** to this letter therefore establishes the deadlines in which drafts and final submissions are expected.

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.

Where a particular SoCG cannot be agreed between the parties by **Deadline 6**, 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 7**. The position of the relevant Interested Parties should then be confirmed in the course of the Examination. The draft Examination Timetable makes provision for updated SoCGs to be submitted at various Deadlines with final versions by **Deadline 6**.

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. Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statements (PADSS)

The ExA has noted the draft Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs) submitted with the Application. Whilst these documents are useful and have a place in the Examination, SoCGs can often overlap and duplicate respective Written Representations (WRs) and/or Local Impact Reports (LIRs) particularly on areas of agreement or no concerns. Conversely, matters of disagreement are generally not reported in any great detail at the Pre-examination stage, if they are at all.

The ExA considers that the Examination would benefit, at an early stage in the process, the identification of the principal areas of disagreement. With this in mind, for both the Examination stages, the ExA has made a Procedural Decision to request National Highways to prepare and submit a Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement. The ExA requires this to be in a table format (similar to a Scott Schedule1), addressing the following matters:

- The principal issue in question;
- the brief concern held by the party which they will report on in full in WRs;
- what, in their view, needs to change/be amended/included so as to overcome the disagreement; and
- in the opinion of that party, the likelihood of the concern being addressed during the Examination stage.

The ExA would like this to be a live document and regularly be updated throughout the Examination stage.

3. Accompanied Site Inspection – suggested locations

The draft Examination Timetable at **Annex D** to this letter includes a date reserved for an Accompanied Site Inspection (ASI) on **w/c 16 September**.

The ExA requests that Interested Parties submit suggested locations for the ExA to visit as part of an ASI by **Procedural Deadline A** (28 May 2024). The request must include:

- Sufficient information to identify the location;
- the issues to be observed at the location;
- information on whether the site can be accessed via public land; and
- the reason why the location has been suggested.

Interested Parties should be aware that ASIs are not an opportunity to make any oral representations to the ExA about the Proposed Development. However, participants may be invited by the ExA to indicate specific features or sites of interest.

The Applicant is requested to prepare a draft itinerary for the ASI to be submitted by **Deadline 1**. This should include:

- Relevant locations referred to in the Relevant Representations received;

- any other locations at which the Applicant has predicted likely significant environmental effects; and
- the locations suggested by Interested Parties submitted by **Procedural Deadline A**.

Comments by Interested Parties on the Applicant's draft itinerary must be submitted by **Deadline 2**.

The ExA will consider each suggested site location, including those provided in the Applicant's draft itinerary, to determine if it could be viewed from public land on an unaccompanied basis or if it is necessary to view it on an accompanied basis. The ExA will also consider if it would be appropriate to make arrangements for access only to be provided to specific sites such that they could be inspected as part of an Unaccompanied Site Inspection on an access required basis.

The ExA will publish its final itinerary at least five working days before the date of the ASI.

4. Additional Submissions

In addition to the documentation submitted by **Procedural Deadline A** the ExA has exercised its discretion and made a Procedural Decision to accept the following Additional Submissions:

- by the Applicant in response to Section 51 advice
- Late Relevant Representation from Mr Steven Wakefield

5. Visuals for the Hearings

For ISH1, and ISH2, and other subsequent Hearings should the ExA determine their necessity, the ExA may wish to refer to plans and drawings to assist in the discussion points. The Applicant is therefore requested to make provision for the electronic display of such plans and drawings. The ExA will issue supplementary agendas no less than five days before those events setting out which plans and drawings will be required.

For IPs joining virtually, the ExA considers the most appropriate way of participation would be for persons to have available and to hand the Examination Library (EL). As each plan is uploaded, the ExA will notify those persons online of the EL reference number (e.g. APP-003) and IPs can then load the document themselves. This is considered preferable to the alternative of low resolution drawings being prepared and screened on Microsoft Teams by the Applicant which, despite best intentions, are often difficult to see and navigate for online users.

6. Written Representations (WR)

The ExA has made the Procedural Decision that WRs will be required at Deadline 1 in order to front-load the Examination and maximise the available time. Any WRs exceeding 1500 words should also be accompanied by a

separate summary, the length of which should not exceed 10% of the original text. For the purposes of Rule 10(2) of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010, the 'period of 21 days' which the ExA must provide as notice for the submission of WRs commences on Tuesday 7 May 2024. This is a date before the start of the Examination. However, as the deadline for submission of WRs (Deadline 1) from the publication of this letter is more than the required 21 days' notice, the ExA is satisfied that IPs have been permitted sufficient time in which to draft and submit WRs. By providing early notice, the ExA is ensuring that all Interested Parties (IP) will have a reasonable time period in which to draft their WRs, before the deadline for submission.

Availability of Examination Documents

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

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

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. **Please quote the unique reference number from 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. Please note that you will need to bring a form of identification and register as a member/library member in order to use a computer at these locations.

The opening hours and availability of information technology set out in the table below may be subject to changes. Please check the current circumstances with the relevant locations before you attend.

Venue/address	Opening hours	Printing costs
Prestbury Library, The Burgage, GL52 3DN	Monday: Closed Tuesday: 10:00-13:00, 14:00-19:00 Wednesday: Closed Thursday: 10:00-14:00 Friday: 14:00-17:00 Saturday: 09:30-13:00 Sunday: Closed	A4 20p per side for black and white A4 90p per side for colour A3 40p per page for black and white A3 £1.10 per side for colour

Venue/address	Opening hours	Printing Costs
Cheltenham Library, Clarence Street, GL50 3JT	Monday: 09:00 – 19:00 Tuesday: 09:00 – 17:30 Wednesday: 09:00 – 19:00 Thursday: 09:00 – 17:30 Friday: 09:00 – 19:00 Saturday: 09:00 – 16:00 Sunday: Closed	A4 15p per side for black and white A4 90p per side for colour A3 40p per side for black and white A3 £1.10 per side for colour

Information about the 'Have Your Say' page

The '[Have Your Say](#)' page is available on the [project webpage of the National Infrastructure Planning website \(project webpage\)](#).

You will need to enter your unique reference number ('Your ref' found at the top your postcard or email from the Planning Inspectorate) beginning either 2002 or 'TR010063'. If you are making a submission on behalf of another person or organisation, and do not have your own unique reference number, then you should enter the unique reference number of the person or organisation you are representing. If you are not a registered Interested Party then it is at the discretion of the Examining Authority whether or not your submission is accepted.

Submissions will be published on the [project webpage](#) as soon as practicable following the close of the relevant Deadline. For further information about publishing submissions please view our [Privacy Notice](#).

You will be able to submit a document (upload file), 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.

Submissions **must not include hyperlinks** to documents/evidence hosted on a third party website eg technical reports, media articles etc. See the Planning Inspectorate's [Advice Note 8.4: The Examination](#) for further information about making written submissions. 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.

You should select the relevant Deadline for your submission and then, on the next webpage, select the appropriate Submission item as described in the Examination Timetable at **Annex D** to this letter. Please ensure you make a separate submission for each Submission item and **do not duplicate your submission**. If you consider that your submission does not fit the description of any of the Submission items then please select the Submission item 'Other' and ensure that it is titled appropriately.

If you experience any issues when using the '[Have Your Say](#)' page please contact the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter and they will assist.