

Gatwick Northern Runway Project (Project Reference: TR020005)

Response to the Rule 6 Letter (5 January 2024)

West Sussex County Council (IP Reference 20044715)



Introduction

1. This document sets out the response of West Sussex County Council (WSCC) to the Rule 6 Letter published by the Examining Authority (ExA) on the 5 January 2024 (PD-009). It is acknowledged that the deadline for commentary upon this letter is the Pre-Examination Procedural Deadline of 6 February 2024.
2. This response provides commentary on the following matters raised in the letter:
 - Draft Examination Timetable;
 - Attendance at Preliminary Meeting/Hearings; and
 - Suggested locations for Site Inspections.

Draft Examination Timetable

3. The draft timetable is set out in Annex D of the Rule 6 letter. Although WSCC is committed to being engaged in the process and providing resources to cover the commitments of the Examination deadlines, officer resources will be constrained. In addition to undertaking the day-to-day business of an upper-tier local authority, WSCC is also an Interested Party for the Examination of the Rampion 2 Offshore Wind Farm (EN010117), which is running in parallel to the Examination of this DCO.
4. In light of the above, WSCC wishes to raise a concern with regard to the requirement for delivery of responses to the ExA's first set of written questions (ExQ1) by Deadline 3 (19 April 2024). Responding to the first set of written questions will take significant resource (for all parties) and the period clashes with the Easter holidays. Limited time for proper attention by technical experts is likely to result in rushed or superficial answers to questions, which are unlikely to assist the ExA. It also should be noted that WSCC is due to receive the ExQ1 for the Rampion 2 DCO on the same day (28 March 2024), which has a deadline of 18 April 2024; this requires consideration and involvement by the same officers working on the Gatwick DCO. WSCC requests that the ExA takes the above into consideration when finalising the Examination timetable.
5. As an Affected Party, WSCC requests that a Compulsory Acquisition Hearing (CAH) is held, as allowed for within the draft examination timetable. WSCC would want to raise the issue relating to the acquisition of highway plots.

Attendance and speaking at PM/Hearings

6. Attendance by WSCC officers at the Preliminary Meeting and Issue Specific Hearings (ISHs) has been confirmed via the online event participation forms on

the PINs website. Although WSCC officers will attend the Preliminary Meeting, they do not wish to speak under any agenda items.

7. WSCC welcomes the early publication of the agendas for ISHs 1-5. It would be useful for officers if further detail on areas for discussion were to be made available closer to the hearings, especially with regard to ISH 4 (Surface Transport).

Suggested Locations for Site Inspections

8. WSCC acknowledges the Unaccompanied Site Inspection (USI1) undertaken on 10-12 October 2023 by the ExA, which is outlined in EV1-001. As requested by the ExA, WSCC wants to make the following suggestions on other locations the panel should consider visiting through the Examination. These locations have been suggested to provide the ExA with a clearer understanding of the issues of concern raised by WSCC through the Relevant Representation, and to better gauge baseline conditions. WSCC is happy to provide further details on locations if required.

Table 1 WSCC Suggested Locations for Site Inspections			
Suggested locations for site inspections	Reason for nomination	Issues to be observed there	Access
Contingency construction access routes, largely consist of A2011 from junction 10 of M23, Gatwick Road north of A2011 and London Road north of A2011.	To be fully aware of proposed construction traffic routes proposed by the Applicant.	The appropriateness of the routes to be used as construction traffic routes, consideration given to nearby land uses along the routes and any mitigation required to ensure the safe movement of construction vehicles along these routes.	Highway
M23 spur road and London Road, to its junction with Longbridge Roundabout.	Recognition of the significant quantity of impacted hedgerows and tree lines either side of the highway.	Surface Access Works will require the removal of numerous trees and hedgerows along this corridor for both temporary construction access and permanent carriageway amendments.	Highway (carriageway and footway)
River Mole diversion area, adjacent Airfield Satellite Contractor Compound and southern edge of Brockley Wood	An ecologically sensitive area requiring considerable mitigation measures to minimise adverse impacts during	Proximity of Airfield Satellite Contractor Compound and laydown area to Brockley Wood, an ecologically sensitive ancient woodland. Proximity of Airfield Satellite Contractor	No public access

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	construction activities.	Compound to proposed River Mole re-alignment. The success of the River Mole re-alignment, and associated habitat creation, are crucial to mitigating adverse ecological impacts elsewhere.	
Museum Field and Brook Farm environmental mitigation area	Proposed flood compensation area and habitat creation including wet woodland, species-rich grassland, scrub and tree planting	As the largest of the environmental mitigation areas proposed, the success of habitat creation here is crucial to mitigating adverse ecological impacts elsewhere.	No public access
New proposal (Project Change 3) for a constructed wetland (reedbed) and associated additional 0.5ha temporary construction compound on land to the south of Crawley Sewage Treatment Works	These proposals lie within the Land East of the Railway Line (LERL) Biodiversity Area	Proposed location of the filtration systems and construction compounds within Land East of the Railway Line (LERL) Biodiversity Area, an area managed by the Applicant for its high biodiversity interest.	Public Footpath/access track to Crawley Sewage Treatment Works
Horleyland Wood (Ancient Woodland) and surrounding woodland/broadleaved trees.	Proposed foul pipeline impacts to woodland and surrounding trees.	The construction methodology of the pipeline to be installed to east and south of site has not been clarified; nor has the adequate preservation of woodland and surrounding trees been demonstrated.	Footpath present, though accompanied access through private tracks recommended

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