

EN020026 is acknowledged by the Applicant as a complex Nationally Strategic Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and by the Examining Authority (ExA) as one where there is 'considerable interest' by many like myself who have a real, shared willingness to work in partnership, and to ensure the merits and disadvantages of the proposed development are able to be tested, and examined, to the appropriate extent. As such, two hours may not be sufficient to cover matters requiring discussion at the Preliminary Meeting (PM) and although general practice at other NSIPs which have followed the same timeframe, it seems ambitious to start the Hearings in earnest, that afternoon.

My direct experience of two PMs (SPR EA1N & EA2 and SZC) is that they were rushed, and did not enable the best start to matters. The pace of the PM especially (and indeed some of the ISHs) gave participants an unwelcome and untrue sense that the whole process was a 'fait accompli' and that the ExA would not hear or consider even exemplar evidence. Indeed setting only two hours aside for the PM before receiving feedback at deadline A of what might need to be discussed, could be perceived as further proof of this - although I appreciate the ExA is experienced, has read all the submitted relevant representations (RRs) to gauge the matters that may need to be probed, and had to draft a timetable.