



Norfolk County Council

Response to Rule 6 letter

Norwich to Tilbury

(EN020027)

Procedural Deadline A – 27 January 2026

1. This submission provides Norfolk County Council's ("NCC") response to the rule 6 letter issued by the Examining Authority ("ExA") on 13 January 2026.

Requests to be heard at hearings

2. NCC has submitted its requests to participate at the preliminary meeting ("PM"), open floor hearing 3 ("OFH3"), and issue specific hearing 1 ("ISH1") using the online event participation forms provided. NCC will have no representations to make at compulsory acquisition hearings ("CAH"), but officers will follow along using the live stream in case

Examination procedure

3. NCC officers have participated in many NSIP examinations and the procedure proposed in the rule 6 letter is familiar and NCC does not see any problems.
4. The concurrent approach to OFH2 and OFH3 seems apt for open floor hearings, but NCC would not wish to see such an approach adopted for any future issue-specific hearings because NCC does not have capacity to split its own team to attend multiple hearings simultaneously.
5. NCC's only other comment on the examination procedure is that on page B1 of Annex B, the introduction to the preliminary meeting mentions that the ExA will be supported by a number of other planning inspectors who are either assisting the ExA or in a quality assurance role. It is not clear to NCC whether this is a new or longstanding practice, but NCC officers have not come across this in other NSIP examinations which they have been involved in. NCC would find it helpful if the ExA could elaborate on the role of the other planning inspectors.

Draft examination timetable

6. NCC has begun work on the local impact report ("LIR") on the basis that Deadline 1 will be on Thursday 26 February (that is, as set out in the draft timetable). Production of the LIR involves synthesising input from a number of internal stakeholders within the organisation and involves a number of internal checks and review processes. For this reason, NCC would request that Deadline 1 will stay as it is in the draft timetable (or at least not brought forward if it is to change).

7. Deadline 2 provides only 10 working days for the applicant to respond to the LIRs prepared by all the host authorities. NCC's LIR will be a detailed document and we expect that those produced by other authorities will be similar. This is a short period even if NCC provide the applicant with a copy of the LIR at the point of submission. Although the workload on the applicant is for the applicant themselves to raise, NCC would wish the applicant's comments on our LIR to be based on a thorough reading and consideration of the document. NCC would welcome any proposal for the applicant to be given more time to consider the LIR so long as it does not bring forward deadline 1.
8. Deadline 3 provides only 10 working days for parties to respond to Examining Authority's questions 1 with the Easter bank holidays falling immediately before. NCC would be grateful for the deadline to be pushed back until Friday 10 April to allow work to resume meaningfully after the bank holiday. NCC does not see that extending this deadline necessarily requires any knock-on effects to later deadlines as there is sufficient time between 10 April and both the week reserved for hearings and Deadline 4.
9. There are similarly only 10 working days between the publication by the ExA of ExQ2 and deadline 5 by which time parties must respond. NCC would be grateful for the deadline to be moved to Friday 12 June. Again, there need not be any knock-on effect on later deadlines or hearings as there is a sufficient gap.

Procedural decisions

10. NCC notes procedural decision 3 regarding statements of common ground ("SoCGs"). NCC notes that Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service ("NFRS") are listed as a separate consultee in Table 1.3 of [\[APP-088\]](#). NFRS is part of NCC and we would expect the applicant to engage with NFRS through NCC's NSIP team. NCC notes the request that the SoCGs should include the wording of any revisions required to articles and requirements of the draft DCO. NCC will endeavour to ensure that any necessary revisions are included in the SoCG, but in NCC's experience, the necessity of changes to the draft DCO can emerge at later stages of the examination, so NCC may find it necessary to include requests for draft DCO revisions in other submissions as the examination progresses.
11. NCC notes but has no comments to make on the other procedural decision.