



Hearing Transcript

Project:	Norwich to Tilbury
Hearing:	Preliminary Meeting (PM) – Part 2
Date:	10 February 2026

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The video recording published on the Planning Inspectorate project page is the primary record of the hearing.

00:00:04:20 - 00:00:35:27

Okay. Thank you very much. It's now 1201 and the meeting is resumed. We'll move on now to item five on the agenda, which relates to procedural decisions. Um, so if you have the rule six letter available, if you could turn to annex F, um, where you'll note that the examiner authority has made several procedural decisions on the following matters. The use of artificial intelligence in submissions into relationship with other projects.

00:00:36:12 - 00:01:13:26

Statements of common ground. Compulsory acquisition and land rights accompanied. Site inspection. Comments on relevant representations. Deadlines for the submission of written representations and local impact reports. Notification by statutory parties or certain local authorities of their wish to be considered as an interested party. Request for an open floor hearing. Requests for a compulsory acquisition. hearing. Request for regular updated documents throughout the examination. Draft development consent order, policy compliance document tracker approach to errata and additional submissions from the applicant and interested parties.

00:01:14:24 - 00:01:49:19

Annex F, as I mentioned, provides further details regarding all of our requests, which we suggest you read through. Um, you might be relieved to know that I don't intend to read through them all now, but I'd like to draw attention to a few of them at today's meeting. Um, so firstly, the use of artificial intelligence, or AI in submissions, uh, we understand the benefits that AI can bring when it is used ethically and transparently to aid such usage. All participants in the examination are directed to binned guidance for submitting information that has been generated or altered by AI.

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This guidance is linked to in our rule six letter. If any party uses AI to create its submission, it's important to let us know. This doesn't include basic spell checks or grammar tools. In this context, all parties should specify which AI systems or tools have been used. The source of the information that the AI system has based its common content on, and what parts of the submitted information or representation AI has been used to create or alter where you have used AI. To summarize, substantially rewrite or add commentary to information which goes beyond a simple factual description.

00:02:26:22 - 00:03:03:05

This can affect the accuracy and interpretation of the underlying data. In addition to telling us that you have used AI, as with all other information submitted to us, it's your responsibility to ensure that it is fit for purpose, accurate, complete and not misleading. By following this guidance, you will help us to understand the origin and accuracy of the information submitted, thereby supporting our fair and impartial examination of the application. If you do not declare the use of AI and any if evidence where it has been used, or remove evidence of AI authorship, the essay reserves the right to reject the submission.

00:03:04:05 - 00:03:30:05

In relation to this, we note the comments from the applicant at procedural deadline A and we also welcome the comments from Pylons East Anglia. As a general comment, I think we would note that it's the quality of responses that matters rather than the quantity and in responses from the public. We

are most interested in any effects that the proposed development may have on them, on yourselves and your local surrounding, as opposed to more potentially generic statements AI may create.

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Okay, if we move on to the procedural Decision two interrelationship report, the x ray excuse me, is aware that there are a number of other nationally significant infrastructure projects and other major schemes in the region which are either consented, awaiting decision by the Secretary of State in examination or pending consideration of planning application or at pre-application stage. The environmental statement. Chapter 17, which is up to 81, details the Cumulative effects assessment and includes a range of NSF's Nationally Significant Infrastructure projects.

00:04:11:01 - 00:04:47:08

There are also a number of major planning applications included in the assessment. We, as the AA, are aware that a number of these projects have progressed since the S was produced, including a decision by the Secretary of State and the Five Estuaries Wind Farm. The Touch on Interconnector project is an emerging scheme, now listed on the Planning Inspectorate's National Infrastructure Project website, and a number of consented projects have progressed towards or through their construction phase. We also note the comments from National Highways on interactions with the Lower Thames crossing on their PDA response, which I'll return to briefly later.

00:04:48:08 - 00:05:28:23

The examining authority therefore, requests within the rule six letter that the applicant submits a standalone report on the internal relationship with other infrastructure projects, where the progress of the projects and how they interrelate with the proposed development is set out in a simplified summary form, with cross-references to the more detailed information in the environmental statement. The initial version of the report shall be submitted at deadline one. So that's 26th of February and shall be updated at regular intervals as set out in the draft timetable. Annex F of the rule six letter details what the report should include, including details such as plans, project summaries, coordination proposals, mitigation measures and interactions.

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Details of how good design is being considered, and consideration of other projects which are reliant on the construction of a proposed development for grid connection.

00:05:42:17 - 00:06:18:12

The next procedural decision that I wish to draw to everyone's attention is the compulsory acquisition of Land Rights Tracker. Um, The essay notes the applicant submission of a land rights tracker to capture all land rights in a simple table. Annex F again of the rule six. Outline some additional columns to be added to this tracker to make it more useful. The purpose of this is to enable the essay and the Secretary of State to easily interrogate the information and isolate those persons who objected to the compulsory acquisition or temporary possession of their rights and interests, and who maintain that objection.

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This should be submitted as a readable Excel spreadsheet for use by the examining authority, and a separate PDF for publication to the website. Each time it is submitted, the Land Rights tracker should

be updated at each deadline or, if no change has been made, confirmation provided that no changes have been made with a final version of the Land Rights tracker provided at the final deadline.

00:06:44:21 - 00:06:50:03

Just move on now to the Policy Compliance Document tracker.

00:06:51:24 - 00:07:29:16

The submitted application documentation app 086 includes a policy compliance document, which refers to the existing National Policy Statements and the National Planning Policy Framework, NPF and a range of Local Development Plan policies. The November 2023 versions of the NPS are those which are designated for this application. As Mr. Butler stated earlier, the energy suite of MPs were recently updated and published in January this year, and that these updated NPS are capable of being important and relevant considerations in the decision making process and can be referred to during the examination where relevant.

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In light of this, the examining authority requests the applicant to provide an NPS tracker, which sets out the changes and modifications to any relevant updated NPS,

00:07:42:12 - 00:08:03:11

a tracker related to any of our government policy intentions for energy and critical energy infrastructure that are not addressed within the MPs and updates in regard to the draft National Planning Policy Framework, which is published in December 2025, as it considers them to be relevant to the proposed project as it progresses through consultation towards formal publication.

00:08:07:15 - 00:08:17:21

The tracker should also include any national development management policies and any development plan documents published for consultation or adopted as the applicant considers them to be relevant to the proposed development.

00:08:19:20 - 00:08:45:07

A tracker should be provided at deadlines one, four and seven, unless there is nothing of relevance to be provided in relation to such documents or updates on those documents, or provided sooner. If a policy of particularly relevance has been issued by the government where there is nothing of relevance. The examining authority requests the applicant to confirm that no update is being provided in a covering letter, stating why it does not consider it to be necessary to submit such documents.

00:08:48:25 - 00:09:02:00

Just move on. Now to the approach to errata. We note the applicant's response on this matter in the letter of, uh, 27th of January. Um, thank you for that. That's understood. And we'll consider this and respond in our rule eight letter.

00:09:04:03 - 00:09:18:28

We also note Norfolk County Council submission concerning statements of common grounds. And we note within that we note your comment regarding late alterations to the Draft development consent order and direct the applicant to your comment regarding the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service.

00:09:21:25 - 00:10:00:15

On other procedural matters, and Mr. Sims will be commenting on a potential accompanied to site inspection in the next item. And then finally under this agenda item, uh, additional submissions. Since the issue of the rule six letter, we have made procedural decisions to accept additional submissions from the following interested parties, from Richard Allen, from Cotton Parish Council, from the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust and Simon Bell on behalf of Ardee Parish Council and Little Bromley Parish Council. We have also made a procedural decision to accept a number of additional submissions from the applicant relating to further archaeology surveys and results.

00:10:00:29 - 00:10:33:02

These have been accepted to allow relevant interested parties to make comments on them, should you wish to do so at deadline one. Finally, we also accepted yesterday so you may not have seen this yet, although it is on the website. Some further information from the applicant concerning the potential interactions between the proposed development and Lower Thames Crossing, which are lower Thames Crossing in fact referred to earlier as well, with confirmation that a statement of common ground between the parties and further information will be submitted for deadline one.

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All these additional submissions have been published, are included in the examination library now, and will be formally accepted in our rule eight letter with any responses, as I mentioned before, can be made to those documents at deadline one. Does anyone wish to make any comments or do they have any questions on the various procedural decisions I've just raised?

00:10:57:02 - 00:11:04:21

Seeing no hands up online. Oh, there's a hand, uh, online from initial MH.

00:11:11:07 - 00:11:18:07

Yes. Hello. Parish council. Mike Hamilton, you mentioned archaeology. Could you give me that information again, please?

00:11:19:03 - 00:11:32:21

Yes. Um, we made a procedural, procedural decision to accept a number of additional submissions for the applicant relating to their further archaeological surveys and results that they've carried out. Um, so they are now published on our project website.

00:11:33:08 - 00:11:34:08

Okay. Thank you.

00:11:34:13 - 00:11:37:24

No problem. Any comments on those? Welcome by deadline. One.

00:11:39:09 - 00:11:43:17

Are there any other further comments This item on the agenda?

00:11:46:10 - 00:11:56:23

Nope. Okay, we shall now move on then to item six of the agenda and I'll pass to Mr. Sims. Thank you. Thank you very much. So, uh.

00:11:56:25 - 00:12:32:19

We as, uh, as heralded before the break, we're going to be talking about hearings in this item agenda. So annex B of our rule six letter provides an explanation of the different types of hearings that we will hold. And annex E provides notification of the first hearings, which will take place this week, together with some guidance and some details of the format. In addition to that, appendix F, paragraph five sets out our procedural decision regarding site inspections, which has just been mentioned by Mr. Hockley. Mr. Stone has already covered the overall examination timetable, and we've detailed that a number of hearings are being held during this week.

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We will commence open floor hearings this afternoon here in Suffolk and conclude this tomorrow morning. We will then continue with open floor hearings in Norfolk and Suffolk, Essex, on Thursday. In addition to the open floor hearings, we will be holding a compulsory acquisition hearing tomorrow afternoon here and then this week of hearings will conclude on Friday with the issue specific hearing one, to make the most efficient use of this week of hearings, you would have noticed that we are holding two concurrent open floor hearings on Thursday for this. Two of the examining authority will be at the hearing in Norfolk, and three of us will be in Essex.

00:13:08:20 - 00:13:42:25

We just want to make it really clear that we will each watch the other recordings, which we have not attended, ensuring that we do all hear all representations. We do want to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to attend the open floor hearings this week, and as we have said, we are holding a separate hearing in each of the counties through which the proposed development passes. We've also made attendance available virtually via Microsoft teams for all hearings. And for the record, I'd just like to confirm that we have been able to accommodate everyone who has requested to speak at an open floor hearing.

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Moving on to tomorrow afternoon's compulsory acquisition hearing, we've detailed in both the rule six letter of the 13th of January and the published agenda for the hearing that this first compulsory acquisition hearing will be limited to strategic matters relevant to the compulsory acquisition and temporary possession, and that the structure and style of it will be more like that of an issue specific hearing. Individuals are welcome, of course, to attend and participate, but please bear in mind that at this hearing, we will not be looking into matters relating to individual rights and issues.

00:14:14:28 - 00:14:47:07

We will be holding further compulsory acquisition hearings in due course, and at that point we will be exploring outstanding individual matters. These future compulsory acquisition hearings will include parts that are closer in style to that of an open floor hearing, where individual speaking appointments will be provided for individual affected persons to raise their specific issues. So finally, for this week of hearings on Friday, we'll be holding an issue specific hearing on the scope of the development and alternatives.

00:14:47:09 - 00:15:19:08

We've already covered this and this morning, and all I want to add is that we appreciate that the procedural deadline A was before the publication of the agenda for Friday. So hopefully that agenda may have answered some of the issues that were raised both at the procedural deadline and in comments this morning. And I don't think that we need to rehearse those comments that were made before the break. We have noted all the comments that were made for the break, and we've noted the comments that on the issue specific hearing from the procedural deadline submissions,

00:15:20:24 - 00:16:01:17

Mr. Stone has detailed that the future provisional hearing dates for the timetable and further information about these will be published when appropriate for future hearings. We are unlikely to be able to replicate holding hearings in multiple locations. That's due to the time and travel constraints for all parties. However, all hearings are expected to be blended events, meaning people will always be able to join via Microsoft teams in addition to the option of attendance in person. We are already in discussions with the applicant about suitable location for future hearings and just as a heads up, I will ask you to just give us an update on future hearing locations at any moment now.

00:16:03:12 - 00:16:34:06

I'll go to this point. This is all likely to cover some comments received at procedural deadline aid regarding hearings. Um, the submission from Ardley and Little Bromley parish councils request and issue specific hearing about the cumulative effects on these parishes, referenced as the hour. Um, we have acknowledged the request, and as yet we have not decided on what future issues specific hearings we will hold, as we kind of mentioned beforehand. But we have noted your comments. Thank you very much. We also note that there have been a number of comments about the choice of Orsett Hall for hearings on Friday.

00:16:34:08 - 00:17:06:21

I'll ask the applicant again. I've given them a heads up to explain this choice of venue in a moment, but I will reiterate our earlier comments that we have endeavored to make hearings, in particular the open floor hearings as requested, as accessible as we can. However, with a project covering over 180km, it will not always be possible to be close to all the people who wish to speak in person, which is why we do always have options for virtual attendance, and always these are going to be always offered going forward and we will endeavour to have hearings in a central location.

00:17:08:12 - 00:17:18:03

If the applicant could give us some comments on those two things, I gave you a heads up on being the choice of Orsett Hall and the current options for future hearings. That would be very helpful.

00:17:18:05 - 00:17:21:16

Please, on those. Mr. Ian Fletcher will speak. Thank you.

00:17:21:18 - 00:17:23:06

Thank you very much, Mr. Fletcher.

00:17:23:21 - 00:17:55:07

Mr. Ian Fletcher for the applicant. It's quite difficult for booking venues for hearings because we're competing with people who have booked a much longer in advance. The lead in time is quite short. We do identify as our preferred venue for the hearings. It was actually Colchester Football Stadium. We did reserve it for a date in January, hoping that perhaps the preliminary meeting would be in January, but we, um,

00:17:56:25 - 00:18:28:14

found that that was too premature. So, um, we when we knew that the preliminary meeting was going to be this week, we did approach Colchester Football Stadium, but they were already booked and we checked that last Friday. And now they are still booked for this week. We have got a hold. So that's a non contractual hold on Colchester Football Stadium for the first three days of the April hearings.

00:18:28:29 - 00:18:39:06

There is another event at Colchester football stadium. On the Thursday of that week. So we don't yet have a venue for the rest of that week.

00:18:41:13 - 00:19:25:01

We will look in the area, and also we do not yet have certainty that there will be hearings towards the end of that week because we know that week is also reserved for accompanied site inspections. And we felt that perhaps it might be a three day, two day split. We don't know. Um, moving to Orsett Hall, we have in the team, we work with people who also worked on Lower Thames Crossing, and they booked Orsett Hall for the Lower Thames Crossing examinations, and that proceeded without an issue, as far as we were aware.

00:19:25:03 - 00:19:33:17

So that was one of the things that drove us to us at all. That, combined with the shop lead in times and it was available. Thank you.

00:19:34:16 - 00:19:49:09

Thank you, Mr. Fletcher. I don't intend to have a big discussion about all City Hall, but if anyone does have any comments about the future hearings that they haven't already put into their PDA submissions because we have read those. Um, now is the opportunity to raise that matter?

00:19:51:28 - 00:19:52:17

Yes.

00:19:52:24 - 00:19:53:09

Thank you.

00:19:53:11 - 00:20:24:20

Cyber Bell for Ardley and Bromley parish councils. Um, it's just to raise that can obviously be preferable for us if it was Colchester Football Club. But just to raise that, there is the option of Ardley Village Hall still. I don't quite understand why that maybe hasn't been looked into by the applicant, but it is a large and fairly modern, um, village hall. Having had the benefit of going there myself, there's no reason why it couldn't be kind of equipped properly to conduct hearings more locally.

00:20:24:27 - 00:20:25:15

Um,

00:20:27:03 - 00:20:32:06

uh, so, um, I just wanted to raise that again as something that should be looked into.

00:20:34:02 - 00:20:41:21

Uh, yes, we did note that from your submissions and, uh, thank you for that. And that would have been noted by the applicant as well. Thank you very much.

00:20:42:05 - 00:20:46:23

Just an observation, Mr. Banner. Um, from personal experience, the Colchester Football Club would be a.

00:20:46:25 - 00:20:47:10

Very.

00:20:47:12 - 00:20:56:11

Suitable venue. Um, there was a substantial IIP for, um, local plan. A few years ago there, which it was very well suited for.

00:20:56:15 - 00:21:30:10

Thank you very much. I think as the applicant has said, the the choice is one thing and the actual ability to book is when others. So, um, we are we are very aware of the submissions and we do acknowledge what people have said about those. So thank you. Thank you very much. Um, I think, um, for want of repetition, just lastly, we'd just like to reiterate, in respect of all hearings, there is no need to repeat the matters and comments contained in written submissions. And we encourage people with similar views to make representations together where possible. And we reiterate once again that equal weight is given to oral and written submissions into the examination.

00:21:30:28 - 00:21:38:16

Um, I'm going to move on to site inspections. I just want to make sure there's no other comments about future hearings that we haven't covered. Yes.

00:21:39:16 - 00:22:19:18

Michael Bedford, Suffolk County Council so I think this is probably the best point to to raise the issue. And it's more an issue of a request to the examining authority. It does relate to hearings. Um, and it's simply this aspect of your agendas in advance of the hearings, uh, both when they emerge and also how detailed they are. Um, clearly, um, in terms of, um, our understanding of your role, we appreciate there is an enormous amount of information for you to absorb before you can settle certain matters in terms of what you might want to explore or what you might not want to explore.

00:22:20:06 - 00:22:55:05

However, as it were, from our perspective, Marshalling a team of people who can help you at hearings with whatever information you do want to explore has its own challenges. And so in a sense, there is a, um, a tension between two desirable things. One is the earlier the notice that you're able to give us

of the topics that will be dealt with at hearings. If you decide that there are to be such hearings, the better, because we can then arrange the personnel.

00:22:55:07 - 00:23:32:21

But secondly, in a sense, we do find that very high level agendas don't then assist us greatly in preparing for the hearings, whereas more detailed agendas make it a lot easier for us to ensure that we then focus on the particular subtopics, as it were, within the overarching topic that you want to deal with. And what we've seen elsewhere in some examinations is the issue of an early agenda, which gives us the heads up as to what topics in broad terms are going to be discussed, discussed, and therefore to get our personnel sorted.

00:23:33:00 - 00:24:02:01

But that is then followed by either a detailed or a supplementary agenda, nearer to the time when you are able to drill down a bit more and tell us a little bit more clearly what it is that you want to explore under that topic. So all I would say is a request is can we urge you to think about that, appreciating the dynamic. And I say we as a county council want to help you, but it helps us to prepare the more we know. And I'm sure that's equally true for all the other parties.

00:24:02:13 - 00:24:33:03

Thank you, Mr. Bedford. I think there's some really useful suggestions and comments in there. And as you say, it's all part of the orchestrated dance that we were talking about beforehand. So we will take note of those comments. Thank you very much. Um, I don't believe we've got any hands up online. And so I'll just move on to the site inspections. Um, we've done our rule six letter in annex F, paragraph five, our approach to site inspections, bearing in mind the extensive length and scale of the project's order limits and the time scale of the examination.

00:24:33:08 - 00:25:12:07

Um, we have already undertaken two comprehensive site inspections, um, which we viewed which can be viewed on the project web page. We will consider all proposed locations for a company to site inspections, but wish to reiterate that we will consider as a priority those which we have not already visited and which will, and we will carefully decide whether it would assist the examination of the application to visit a particular location. We almost we also consider if it is possible to view the suggested location on a further unaccompanied site inspection, which we are very likely to be undertaking.

00:25:12:20 - 00:25:56:21

There's also an option for us to carry out access required site inspections where we are given access to private land but are still unaccompanied. Finally, we would like to note that it may not be possible to visit all suggested locations in the time available again, given the extensive scale and scope of the project. Um, again, we received comments from R.D. Little Bromley and support from Tendring Council's regarding a company's site inspections, which we will consider. Um, and in respect of the deadline for a company site inspections, please refer to rule six, the letter we have asked for suggested locations by deadline one on the 26th of February, with the applicant preparing a draft itinerary by deadline, to which we will ask for comments on the draft by deadline three.

00:25:57:04 - 00:26:15:21

We will publish our final itinerary at least five working days before the date, but I'm assuming that the comments on that we just heard about hearings will apply equally to in site inspections. So having covered all these aspects, are there any comments on potential future accompanied site inspections?

00:26:18:21 - 00:26:26:22

Nothing in the room. Nothing online. Um, in which case, I'll bring that agenda item to a close and pass to Mr. Butler for.

00:26:28:10 - 00:26:31:28

Oh, sorry. We have got an online hand that's just gone up.

00:26:34:07 - 00:26:35:13

So we have someone.

00:26:36:04 - 00:26:41:26

Yeah. Mike Hamilton, Macy, Fordham parish counseling. How do we apply to get a company site visit?

00:26:42:04 - 00:26:57:12

Um, all the details are in the rule six letter, with the deadlines and explanation all in there. So, um, rather than trying to explain it now, please just read the rule as it's laid down and if you have any issues, please contact the case team on the email that you've been provided.

00:26:57:19 - 00:26:58:08

Thank you.

00:26:58:10 - 00:26:59:02

Thank you.

00:27:00:18 - 00:27:05:08

Okay, so I'll now hand over to Mr. Butler for the next item.

00:27:05:10 - 00:27:09:02

Okay. So, uh, agenda item seven, is any.

00:27:09:04 - 00:27:09:22

Remaining.

00:27:09:24 - 00:27:11:13

Matters related to.

00:27:11:15 - 00:27:12:06

The procedural.

00:27:12:08 - 00:27:49:01

Decisions and precision? Sorry. Procedural decisions, uh, not already dealt with and submitted at procedural deadline. Eh, um, so, um, just checking with the applicant first. Uh, if we have anybody speaking on this item, I'm going to assume that you want to speak at the end as opposed to after each individual speaker. Is that correct? Thank you. Um, I note National Highways, um, and the Lower Thames Crossing project wanted to speak on this item. Uh, we've also partially covered it in agenda item three, but I would invite lower National Highways and Lower Thames Crossing to speak now, if they wish to.

00:27:49:03 - 00:27:49:23

Please.

00:27:57:20 - 00:28:02:11

Getting no indication from them. Thank you. Thank you sir. Okay, so I.

00:28:02:25 - 00:28:13:08

I think that, um, sorry, it's Monica TLT for the Lower Thames crossing project. Um, I'm not sure that we do have any submissions under this item.

00:28:13:10 - 00:28:19:25

Okay. No. That's fine. It's just that you listed both three and seven, and I'm just double checking that you you're happy with where you are.

00:28:19:27 - 00:28:39:00

So I think where the confusion may have arisen is that we did want to mention about we weren't sure whether the applicant was going to provide the examination with their proposal to pursue option B rather than option A, and therefore we wanted to raise it at this point, but that has now been dealt with.

00:28:39:02 - 00:28:50:27

Okay. Perfect. Thank you very much for your time. Um, in terms of oddly, we and together with Little Bromley Parish Council, Mr. Bell, we've got a general indication of a wish to speak on this item.

00:28:51:25 - 00:28:59:17

Uh, Simon Bell for Ardley and Little Bromley. Um, I think I think most of the points have been covered in the discussion that went on, so I don't have anything to add.

00:28:59:19 - 00:29:19:08

Fine. Thank you very much. Uh, and lastly, Lawford Parish Council. Um, I don't believe they're here. Are they? So, no, they're not. In that case, I had nobody else listed. Is there anybody else That wanted to speak under this agenda item, either in the room or online, please.

00:29:22:07 - 00:29:26:22

But no indication in the room. I've got no indication online. Um.

00:29:31:25 - 00:29:33:00

Moving forward.

00:29:47:07 - 00:29:58:28

I was going to say I'd like to thank you for your comments, but soon we've had none, I won't bother. Um. And nothing from the applicant. Okay. In that case, we're going to move on to agenda item eight eight, which is any other business. And Mr. Stone, please.

00:30:00:19 - 00:30:10:25

Thank you very much. Oh, there's a there's a hand has come up. I'm not sure if that's for the last item or not, but initial d k.

00:30:20:02 - 00:30:49:15

On any other matters I notice in the future, uh, session on um, alternatives, there is still no discussion of the alternative of offshore cable, and what has been presented so far is extremely summary and dismissal. Um, is the inspectorate ever going to go into, uh, this matter in any detail?

00:30:51:19 - 00:31:26:17

Thank you. I would just say that, uh, we have an issue specific hearing to deal with alternatives, including the high level alternatives, which we will be dealing with on Friday. We've also suggested that if anybody wishes to make any comment on alternatives, they should do so during the open floor hearings and earlier on today, this morning, we did suggest that any written representations could cover those matters. And of course, there are the other hearings that we were talking about that are programmed in the draft timetable, where we are still to consider what matters will be discussed at those hearings.

00:31:29:24 - 00:31:31:17

It's just not on the agenda.

00:31:33:23 - 00:31:46:11

No, but this agenda is a procedural agenda to talk about what we're going to deal with and how the examination will be conducted, rather than any specific matters.

00:31:48:24 - 00:31:56:16

I'm talking about the agenda for the, um, alternative. Um, it's not that.

00:31:56:19 - 00:32:02:01

I would direct you towards the ish on Friday and the agenda on that.

00:32:03:07 - 00:32:03:28

Weekend.

00:32:05:23 - 00:32:06:13

Thank you.

00:32:06:21 - 00:32:07:13

Thank you.

00:32:10:05 - 00:32:50:11

Okay, so if I can introduce this, uh, this section on any other matters, uh, the agenda item allows anyone to raise any other matters relating to the procedure for the examination that have not already been discussed under the previous agenda items. Uh, I've got a couple of matters that we just wanted to pick up on before we open the floor to anybody else. Um, firstly, GIS mapping. Uh, in a follow up to the applicant, uh, procedural deadline a submissions, they have made a request to be able to use its bespoke GIS platform, uh, Smart Atlas, to assist the smooth running of hearings.

00:32:50:14 - 00:33:04:26

They've suggested it would be chiefly used to assist with orientation of locations under discussion. Um, can I just ask the applicant to elaborate and explain what it is and how they would suggest it could be used?

00:33:04:28 - 00:33:36:18

Yes. Thank you for the opportunity. A number of the agendas have asked that the applicant explained the project both to ourselves, but also to the members of the public through the use of plans. So we need to consider what would be the best, most helpful, most readable and speedy use of plans during various processes. Most often we can and will use application drawings in a very analogue sort of way.

00:33:37:04 - 00:34:13:17

Um, but there are occasions where there would be a need, if at all possible, to strip away layers of information to make the images clearer, both for yourselves and for members of the public. There is already an interactive map which is available to the public on the public National Grid website. It allows those layers who can remove or add listed buildings, for example. Or you can see where previous versions of the line, uh, were were put and how they'd been moved.

00:34:13:24 - 00:34:49:11

Um, for the inquiry, we are able to use exactly the same information which is already contained in the ES on plans and on the interactive maps. But because we've got the powerful devices here that we have, we can do it through this particular model that you've just mentioned. It's called Smart Atlas, it's clearer, it's on an OS base, and more importantly, it's quicker than having to flick between images which show the changes.

00:34:49:13 - 00:35:32:16

All the changes can be seen at once. We don't ask you for, uh, and neither can we expect you to make the decision now. But we we we are happy to provide further information, and we're happy to leave it to you. I have asked those sitting behind me to put up. Side by side with your leave. It's gone up anyway. I'm sorry, but there we are. Perfect anticipation and shows the speed at which we can operate. The differences between the OS map on my left or right, and the interactive map you already know and will appreciate how the application maps are read, and the fact that you might have to have 2 or 3 open in once at once.

00:35:32:27 - 00:36:05:21

So again, I'm not asking for a question or a ruling. Now I leave it to to your decision in the rule eight, but we think it would very, um, importantly, speed matters which are not in dispute and are already in evidence and can be shown quickly and easily in one place, so that if it's a request from us. But really

we're offering you the opportunity of it. That's the end of that one. Thank you. And I'm Russell Harris KC for the applicant.

00:36:05:24 - 00:36:07:03

Didn't say that at the beginning.

00:36:07:12 - 00:36:17:09

Does anybody have any comments on what they've just heard in relation to that. Um, and I'll go to the first. Mr. Bonner, I saw that you made an indication.

00:36:19:14 - 00:36:20:18

We think it would be very helpful.

00:36:20:20 - 00:36:30:06

Thank. Thank you. Um, there have been. I think some members of the public have found the maps today problematic to use. What's proposed would be, um, a helpful provision of clarity.

00:36:30:15 - 00:36:31:09

Thank you.

00:36:32:28 - 00:36:36:15

I have a hand up online with the initials MW.

00:36:40:13 - 00:36:50:21

Thank you. Sir. Monica glass. Um, on behalf of the Lower Thames Crossing project. Uh, just to reiterate what Mr. Banners just said, we would also welcome that. We think that would be very helpful.

00:36:51:28 - 00:36:53:00

Thank you very much.

00:36:54:25 - 00:36:55:10

Yes.

00:36:55:12 - 00:37:03:20

Mr. Simon Bell for Ardley and Little Bromley parish councils. I just want to go on record to say we would find that approach very helpful, that National would have outlined.

00:37:05:00 - 00:37:06:20

Okay. Thank you very much.

00:37:09:17 - 00:37:13:06

I have another hand up online with the initials.

00:37:15:12 - 00:37:21:19

Yes. Thank you, sir. Richie Barry for Norfolk County Council. Also, to just state for the record that we would also find that very helpful. Thank you.

00:37:23:08 - 00:37:24:12

Thank you very much.

00:37:27:07 - 00:38:00:10

Okay. Um, I think I would just make an initial comment to say that as an examining authority, we're content for the applicant to use the platform, provided that it is understood, it is used as a presentational visualization or orientation tool, and it's for information purposes only and is not evidence before the examination. Its purpose is purely to assist in the understanding and orientation of the application and site during hearings, and the applicant should make this clear when they use it.

00:38:01:03 - 00:38:21:11

Um, we would also like you to confirm that the information and data that is used in the platform is 100% accurate in relation to the other documents that are there. And while this may be used in the hearings this week, we will confirm in a procedural decision in the relate letter.

00:38:25:01 - 00:38:30:23

Okay. We've got another hand up um MW online.

00:38:32:05 - 00:38:56:18

And there's uh Monica laws for acting furlough terms crossing project. Sorry, just to add to that, um, we'd just like to confirm that we would be happy. I know that National Grid have already got some data from the Lower Thames Crossing project, but it would be helpful in the right circumstance if if that data could be used to show the overlap between the projects as well.

00:38:58:27 - 00:39:21:01

That is entirely possible, and we would need to make it clear where that differs from the application plans as they sit. But with that caveat, we are very happy to do that. But that would sit in a slightly different category to to the use of the model that I've outlined so far. But I think it's a subject to you agreeing to it. I think it's a very useful additional tool.

00:39:21:25 - 00:39:22:28

Thank you very much.

00:39:23:25 - 00:39:30:07

I saw a hand up in the audience. Could we have the roving microphone to that, please?

00:39:37:22 - 00:40:06:13

Thank you. Councillor Zoe Fairlie, Audley and Little Bromley. Just in relation to the maps, it is really important for us to be able to see how National Grid project overlaps with five estuaries and North Wales, which North Wales wasn't mentioned earlier on. And so I'd just like to make that point. And is it possible for Audley and Little Bromley to have maps that include those crossover areas? Thank you.

00:40:11:01 - 00:40:31:19

I think that that's been heard, but I would also expect that that would be covered in the interrelations document as well, where we're talking about the interrelationships between this and set and other concepts and other major applications. And there would be an expectation that there are plans and documents within those.

00:40:31:29 - 00:40:38:13

Indeed, indeed, a requirement in appendix F. Exactly. So there will be and that is a deadline. One material.

00:40:38:15 - 00:40:39:05

Indeed.

00:40:42:20 - 00:41:18:09

Okay. Thank you very much. Uh, if I can move on to my next point. Um, in terms of any other matters. Norfolk County Council, in its procedural deadline, has noted that the SEC had made reference to being supported by a number of other planning inspectors who are either assisting the assay or acting in a quality assurance capacity, and the council has asked whether we can elaborate on the role of those other inspectors for large projects such as Norwich to Tilbury. The Planning Inspectorate seeks to ensure resilient and maintained business continuity throughout the examination.

00:41:18:11 - 00:41:54:28

For example, where a member of the panel is to be replaced for any reason, sickness or anything of that nature. Section 73 of the Planning Act places a duty on the lead member to ensure that the newly constituted panel has the necessary knowledge of all proceedings that have taken place up to the point of that change. The reference to other inspectors assisting the WSA relates to this need for resilience. Such assistance can include shadowing the examination to ensure continuity if a replacement becomes necessary with regard to inspectors undertaking a quality assurance rule.

00:41:55:00 - 00:42:07:18

This is standard practice across all landscape applications. These inspectors provide independent internal oversight to ensure consistency, robustness and adherence to statutory requirements.

00:42:09:22 - 00:42:21:23

That gives you some clarity on the reason for those. Those were the only points that we wished to make. Under any other business. Does anybody else wish to raise any other matters under AOB?

00:42:26:16 - 00:42:29:11

I have one hand on line.

00:42:31:22 - 00:42:35:17

For Norfolk County Council. So just to say thank you for that clarification.

00:42:37:24 - 00:42:38:29

Thank you very much.

00:42:45:28 - 00:42:54:27

I have no other hands in the room and no other hands available. So I shall hand it back to Mrs. Hunt to close the preliminary meeting.

00:42:57:00 - 00:43:34:03

Thank you. And thank you all for attending and contributing to the meeting today. And we will now move forward to commencing the examination of this application. And just to remind you that there will be notes and a digital recording of the proceedings today, and it will be made available as soon as as soon as practicable. On the Norwich to Tilbury page of the National Infrastructure Planning website. And we do aim to issue our rule eight letter and that that will confirm the examination timetable and that will be as soon as possible after this week's hearings have been completed.

00:43:34:09 - 00:43:37:18

So it will be next week. We can't say exactly when yet.

00:43:40:06 - 00:44:07:03

And may also take this opportunity to remind everybody that the first open floor hearing is scheduled for 4 p.m. today, and that will be here in Ipswich and online. And for those of you who have registered to attend virtually, the joining conference for that is from 3 p.m.. The event will be available like this one to to to watch on a live stream and the link can be found on our website.

00:44:09:01 - 00:44:23:29

So if anyone's proposing to attend this afternoon's open floor hearing and has got any questions or queries regarding it, you can direct those towards the case team. The details are on the rule six letter.

00:44:32:06 - 00:44:32:24

And that's.

00:44:32:26 - 00:44:33:12

It.

00:44:33:16 - 00:44:43:17

So the time is now 1245. And the preliminary meeting for the Norwich to Tilbury project is now closed. Thank you.