



Planning Inspectorate

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All interested parties, statutory parties and any other person invited to the preliminary meeting

Your Ref:

Our Ref: EN020027

Date: 17 February 2026

Dear Sir/ Madam

Planning Act 2008 – Section 89 and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – rule 8 and 9

Application by National Grid Electricity Transmission for an order granting development consent for the Norwich to Tilbury project

Examination timetable and procedure

This letter (the Rule 8 letter) provides important information about the examination of this application. The letter includes:

- The examination timetable
- An invitation to submit written representations
- A request for local impact reports from local authorities
- Other procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority (ExA)
- Information about the availability of examination documents
- Guidance on the use of the 'Have your say' tab on the project webpage

All documentation associated with this examination, including a note of the preliminary meeting and the recording of that meeting, can be viewed under the [documents tab](#) on the project webpage of the Find a National Infrastructure Project website ([project webpage](#)).

The examination timetable

We have made a procedural decision about the way the application will be examined. The final examination timetable is attached at **annex A** to this letter.

The examination timetable replaces the draft timetable that was included in our [Rule 6 Letter](#). In finalising the examination timetable, we have sought to accommodate requests and suggestions made orally or in writing to the preliminary meeting. A list of the main changes we made to the draft examination timetable is set out at **annex B** to this letter.

Please note that the examination timetable contains a number of deadlines for receipt of information by the Planning Inspectorate. All deadlines are at 23:59 on the date specified. Please ensure submissions arrive by the deadline. If you do not make your submissions by the dates specified in the timetable, we may disregard them.

We request that all interested parties make their submissions using the [‘Have your say’ page](#) on the project webpage on or before the applicable deadline. **Annex D** to this letter provides further information about using the ‘Have your say’ page.

If we consider it necessary to vary the examination timetable during the examination, notification will be sent to interested parties, statutory parties and other persons invited to the preliminary meeting. The changes will be published on the [project webpage](#).

Written representations

All interested parties are now invited to submit written representations and any comments on the relevant representations already submitted. These should be submitted by **deadline 1 (26 February 2026)** in the examination timetable.

Written representations can cover any relevant matter and are not restricted to the matters set out in our initial assessment of principal issues.

Any person, other than the applicant, who submits a written representation must identify those parts of the application with which they agree and those parts with which they do not agree, explaining the reasons why. Interested parties should also provide with their written representations any data, methodology and assumptions used to support their submissions to avoid delays in the examination (see paragraph 009 of the [government’s guidance on the examination stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects](#) for further information about written representations).

We have requested further types of written submissions at various points in the examination (see **annex A**).

Any written representations and any further written submissions requested during the examination, that exceed 1500 words, should also be accompanied by a summary which should not exceed 10% of the original text. The summary should set out the key facts of the written submission and must be representative of the submission made.

Representations **must not include hyperlinks** to documents/ evidence hosted on third party websites. See the Planning Inspectorate's [Advice for members of the public: Advice for submitting representations or comments](#) for important information about making written submissions.

Other procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority

Annex B to this letter contains important details and clarifications about other procedural decisions we made at, or following, the preliminary meeting. These include:

- Examination timetable
- Arrangements for future hearings and site inspections
- Local impact reports
- Changes to land interests
- Request for regular updated documents throughout the examination
- Additional submissions
- Approach to errata
- GIS mapping

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 from the Planning Inspectorate 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’ page](#) 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 D** to this letter.

You can also use the ‘Get updates’ button on the project webpage 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 are a person or organisation who is involved in the NSIP process. See the Planning Inspectorate's [Advice for members of the public: National Infrastructure Projects and the people and organisations involved in the process](#) for further details.

If, having read the advice, you are still unsure about how you are involved in the process 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](#).

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

Susan Hunt

Lead Member of the Examining Authority

Annexes

- A** Examination timetable
- B** Other procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority
- C** Examination documents
- D** Information about the 'Have your say' tab

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

Examination Timetable

The Examining Authority (ExA) is under a duty to **complete** the examination of the application within a period of no longer than **6 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
1.	<p>Procedural deadline A Deadline for receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responses to the Rule 6 letter including any written submissions on the examination procedure and about this draft examination timetable • the applicant is to set out its approach to errata including its approach to updating the ES and other application documents as may be necessary • requests to be heard orally at the preliminary meeting on Tuesday 10 February 2026, including the agenda items you wish to speak on and the matters you will address (and why these points need to be made orally rather in writing) • requests to participate in any of the open floor hearings from Tuesday 10 February to Thursday 12 February 2026 (annex E of this letter) • requests to participate in the compulsory acquisition hearing on Wednesday 11 February (annex E) • requests to participate in issue specific hearing 1 on Friday 13 February (annex E) 	<p>Tuesday 27 January 2026</p>
2.	<p>Preliminary meeting (Suffolk) Venue: Ipswich Town Football Club</p>	<p>Tuesday 10 February 2026 at 10:00</p>
3.	<p>Open Floor Hearing 1 (Suffolk) Venue: Ipswich Town Football Club</p>	<p>Tuesday 10 February 2026 at 16:00</p>
4.	<p>Continuation of Open Floor Hearing 1 (Suffolk) Venue: Ipswich Town Football Club</p>	<p>Wednesday 11 February 2026 at 10:00</p>
5.	<p>Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (Suffolk) Venue: Ipswich Town Football Club</p>	<p>Wednesday 11 February 2026 at 14:00</p>
6.	<p>Open Floor Hearing 2 (Essex) Venue: Orsett Hall</p>	<p>Thursday 12 February 2026 at 10:00</p>

7.	Open Floor Hearing 3 (Norfolk) Venue: The Space, Norwich	Thursday 12 February 2026 at 11:00
8.	Issue Specific Hearing 1 (Essex) Relating to the scope of development and alternatives Venue: Orsett Hall	Friday 13 February 2026 at 10:00
9.	Issue by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the examination timetable 	As soon as practicable after the close of the Preliminary Meeting
10.	Deadline 1 For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notification by statutory parties of their wish to be considered as an interested party by the ExA • comments on relevant representations • written representations (with summaries for any that exceed 1500 words) • local impact reports from any local authorities • written post-hearing submissions; summaries of and responses to oral submissions made at hearings held during week commencing 9 February 2026 • responses to action points from compulsory acquisition hearing 1 and issue specific hearing 1 • initial and updated statements of common ground and overview document • initial report on interrelationship with other infrastructure projects (see annex F2 of the Rule 6 letter) • suggested locations for site inspections (accompanied or unaccompanied or access required), including justification for consideration by the ExA and specifying whether the locations require access to private land • requests by IPs to be heard at any further open floor hearings • requests by IPs to be heard at any further compulsory acquisition hearing • comments on any further information/ additional submissions accepted by the ExA • submission of policy compliance tracker document, if required, in regard to any relevant published and emerging policies (see annex F of the Rule 6 letter) 	Thursday 26 February 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	
11.	<p>Deadline 2 For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comments on written representations comments on the local impact reports the applicant's draft itinerary for an accompanied site inspection (ASI) the applicant's updated documents and application guide comments on any further information or submissions received by deadline 1 any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	Thursday 12 March 2026
12.	<p>Publication by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ExA's first written questions (ExQ1) 	Friday 20 March 2026
13.	<p>Deadline 3 For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> responses to ExQ1 comments on the applicant's draft itinerary for the ASI notification of a wish to attend hearings on the week commencing 27 April 2026 notification of a wish to attend an accompanied site inspection (if required) the applicant's updated documents and application guide comments on any further information or submissions received by deadline 2 any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	Friday 10 April 2026
14.	<p>Dates reserved for hearings and accompanied site inspection (if required)</p>	Week commencing 27 April 2026
15.	<p>Deadline 4 For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> written post-hearing submissions; summaries of and responses to oral submissions made at hearings held during week commencing 27 April 2026 applicant's mid-examination update to statements of common ground mid-examination update to report on interrelationship with other infrastructure projects (see annex F2 of the Rule 6 letter) 	Tuesday 12 May 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the applicant's updated documents and application guide submission of policy compliance tracker document, if required, in regard to any relevant published and emerging policies (see annex F13 of the Rule 6 letter) comments on any further information or submissions received by deadline 3 any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	
16.	Publication by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ExA's second written questions (ExQ2) 	Friday 22 May 2026
17.	Dates reserved for site inspections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> if required, the ExA will carry out site inspections which could be accompanied, unaccompanied, and/ or on an access required basis 	Week commencing 25 May
18.	Deadline 5 For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> responses to ExQ2 notification of a wish to attend hearings on the week commencing 22 June 2026 the applicant's updated documents and application guide comments on any further information or submissions received by deadline 4 any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	Wednesday 10 June 2026
18.	Dates reserved for hearings (if required)	Week commencing 22 June 2026
19.	Deadline 6 For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> written post-hearing submissions; summaries of and responses to oral submissions made at hearings held during week commencing 22 June 2026 the applicant's updated documents and application guide comments on any further information or submissions received by deadline 5 any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	Tuesday 7 July 2026
20.	Publication by the ExA of:	Tuesday 7 July 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the report on the implications for European sites (RIES) and any associated questions (if required) ExA's commentary on, or schedule of changes to, the draft development consent order (if required) 	
21.	<p>Deadline 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comments on the RIES and responses to any associated questions (if provided) comments on the ExA's commentary on, or schedule of changes to, the draft development consent order (if provided) comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 6 any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 <p>Final updated documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> signed and dated statements of common ground report on interrelationship with other infrastructure projects draft development consent order to be submitted by the applicant in the statutory instrument (SI) template with the SI template validation report book of reference land rights tracker signed and dated other agreements Environmental Statement and other documents including management plans/control documents Habitats Regulations Assessment, and appropriate assessment/ derogation case (if required) policy compliance tracker document, if required, in regard to any relevant published and emerging policies (annex F13 of the Rule 6 letter) 	Tuesday 21 July 2026
22.	<p>Deadline 8</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comments on any further information received by deadline 7 applicant's closing statement with a summary of areas of disagreement final application guide to include hyperlinks to all relevant and the most up-to-date examination library references 	Tuesday 4 August 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • closing statements from interested parties with a summary of matters that they have previously raised during the examination which have not been resolved to their satisfaction (if desired) • any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 	
23.	<p>Close of examination The ExA intends to close the examination on this date. See 'Note about the close of examination date'.</p>	Monday 10 August 2026

Note about the close of examination date

The ExA is under a duty to complete the examination of the application by the end of the period of 6 months beginning after the close of the preliminary meeting. The ExA may however decide to close the examination earlier if it considers that the application and relevant matters have been examined adequately.

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

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 decisions about whether to register to participate and instruct the relevant experts. A detailed agenda will be published at least five working days in advance of the hearing date, which may be subject to change at the discretion of the ExA.

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.

Other procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority (ExA)

The ExA has made a number of procedural decisions following the preliminary meeting as set out below.

1. Examination timetable

Deadline 3: Following representations by Norfolk County Council, Suffolk County Council, Essex County Council, Chelmsford City Council, Babergh District Council, and Mid Suffolk District Council the ExA has carefully considered these requests and taking account of the Easter public holidays, the ExA has moved deadline 3 from Tuesday 7 April to **Friday 10 April**.

Deadline 5: Following representations by Norfolk County Council, Suffolk County Council, Essex County Council, Chelmsford City Council, Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council the ExA has carefully considered these requests and taking account of the May bank holiday, the ExA has moved deadline 5 from Tuesday 9 June to **Wednesday 10 June**. The ExA is unable to move it to the end of the week as requested as this would allow insufficient time for the ExA to consider the submissions and to produce agendas for the hearings in week commencing 22 June.

Deadline 7: The ExA has considered the applicant's request to bring this deadline forwards, and is able to move it from Tuesday 28 July to **Tuesday 21 July**.

Deadline 8: The ExA has considered the applicant's request to bring this deadline forwards, and is able to move it from Thursday 6 August to **Tuesday 4 August**.

The ExA does not currently consider it necessary to insert an additional deadline 9 in the final week of the examination, but this will be kept under review.

Accompanied site inspection (ASI): An additional date has been inserted for an ASI (if required) (see item 2 below).

2. Arrangements for future hearings and site inspections

The examination timetable includes weeks commencing 27 April and 22 June for further hearings, which could include issue specific hearings, compulsory acquisition hearings and open floor hearings (if required). High level agendas will be issued with notification of the hearings, with more detailed agendas published five or more working days before the event.

The hearings will take a blended format (both in person and online on Microsoft Teams), being held in a suitable and accessible venue, organised by the applicant in accordance with the Planning Inspectorate's guidance. The ExA expects hearings would be most suitably located in a location which is central to the order limits; the Chelmsford – Colchester – Ipswich area. The ExA recommends that venues are reserved for the full week.

The ExA does not expect future hearings to be in multiple locations in the same week, so that hearing time can be maximised. Those who are unable to travel will have the option of participating online.

Whilst the ExA has included provision for an ASI in week commencing 27 April, given the scale of the order limits it is unlikely to be able to cover a wide area in the same week as hearings. Therefore, the ExA has included a further date for an ASI (if required) as set out in the examination timetable.

3. Local Impact Reports (LIR)

A LIR is a report in writing giving details of the likely impact of a proposed development on a local authority's area (or any part of that area). Local authorities are directed to the Planning Inspectorate's [Advice for local authorities](#) for more information about the importance and content of LIRs.

All local authorities, defined in [section 56A](#) of the Planning Act 2008, are invited to submit LIRs by **deadline 1**.

4. 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. The applicant should inform them that information about how to do this can be found in the Planning Inspectorate's advice for members of the public: [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and the people and organisations involved in the process](#).

When an update to the book of reference (and schedule of changes to the book of reference) is submitted to the examination at any relevant deadline, these documents should include confirmation that relevant persons have been informed of their rights under section 102A.

5. Request for regular updated documents throughout the examination

The ExA requests that at each deadline, updated documents are submitted by the applicant as necessary and as noted in the examination timetable together with an updated application guide, with the final version being submitted at deadline 8 including the most up-to-date examination library references and noting the superseded versions.

Further, at each deadline, the ExA requests that the applicant shall detail in its cover letter if any documents submitted at that deadline wholly supersede a previously submitted document. In doing this, the applicant should state the name and examination library reference of the document which is being superseded by which new document. The examination library will then be updated to show superseded documents within the title of that document.

The ExA has not specified deadlines for submission of any updates to the draft development consent order and associated documents. It expects the updated draft development consent order to be submitted at each deadline following any meaningful change to its content, for example the insertion of additional protective provisions.

6. Additional submissions

In addition to the documentation submitted by procedural deadline A, the ExA has exercised its discretion to accept additional submissions from the following:

- Cotton Parish Council [[AS-061](#)]
- Richard Allen [[AS-062](#)]
- East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust [[AS-063](#)]
- Simon Bell on behalf of Ardeleigh Parish Council and Little Bromley Parish Council [[AS-064](#)] and [[AS-065](#)]
- The applicant:
 - Additional submissions relating to archaeology surveys and results [[AS-068](#)] to [[AS-083](#)]
 - Information regarding potential interactions between the proposed development and Lower Thames Crossing [[AS-084](#)]
 - Preliminary meeting action relating to suggestion made by Suffolk County Council [[AS-085](#)].
- Fieldfisher LLP on behalf of British Pipeline Agency Limited:
 - Preliminary meeting speaking notes [[AS-086](#)]
 - Withdrawal of request to participate in issue specific hearing 1 [[AS-087](#)]

7. Approach to errata

In its procedural deadline A response [[PDA-001](#)], the applicant stated that it would maintain a version-controlled errata schedule identifying the affected document, section, nature of the correction, and the corrected text, and that this schedule would be updated throughout the examination. Updates to the environmental statement will be managed through tracking of agreed amendments via the errata throughout the examination, and any required updates to the environmental statement or supplementary documents will be made at the end of the examination.

The ExA agree with this approach and requests that the applicant implements this in forthcoming submissions to the examination where and when relevant.

8. GIS Mapping

The applicant made a request to be able to use its bespoke GIS Platform “Smart Atlas” to assist the smooth running of hearings, suggesting that it would be chiefly used to assist with orientation of locations under discussion. This was discussed during the preliminary meeting and interested parties were given the opportunity to comment.

The ExA is content for the applicant to use the platform, provided that it is understood it is to be used as a presentational/ visualisation/ orientation tool, is for information purposes only, and that it is not evidence before the examination. Its purpose is purely to assist in the understanding and orientation of the proposed development during hearings.

Examination documents

The application documents and relevant representations can be inspected on the [project webpage](#).

How to stay up to date

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

You can also sign up to get [email updates](#).

If you have any questions about the process, examination events or how to access the documents, you can email [project mailbox email address](#) or contact us on 0303 444 5000.

The Examination Library

For ease of navigation, please refer to the [Examination Library](#) which is accessible by clicking the blue button under the documents tab. The examination library is updated regularly throughout the examination.

Please note that the relevant representations are accessed from a separate examination library document [here](#).

The examination library records and provides a hyperlink to:

- each application document
- each representation and submission made to the examination
- each procedural decision made by the ExA

Each document is given a unique reference number which will be fixed for the duration of the examination. **Please quote the unique reference number from the examination library when referring to any examination documents in any future submissions that you make.**

Information about the 'Have your say' page

The '[Have your say](#)' page is available on the [project webpage](#).

You will need to enter your unique reference number ('Your ref' found at the top your letter or email from the Planning Inspectorate). 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 ExA 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, for example technical reports, media articles and so on. See the Planning Inspectorate's [Advice for members of the public: Advice for submitting representations or comments](#) for important 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 A** 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.