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

Our Ref: WA010002

Date: 6 October 2026

Dear Sir/ Madam

**Planning Act 2008 – section 88 and 89 and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – rules 4, 6, 9 and 13**

**Application by Southern Water Services Limited for an order granting development consent for the Hampshire Water Transfer and Water Recycling Project**

**Appointment of the Examining Authority, and invitation to the preliminary meeting and notification of hearings**

Following my appointment by the Secretary of State as the lead member of the Examining Authority (ExA) to carry out an examination of the above application I am writing to introduce myself and the other members of the ExA. My name is Wendy McKay and the other members of the ExA are Maria Rokicka and Sharon Bennett-Matthews. A copy of the appointment notice can be viewed on the [documents](#) page on the project webpage of the Find a National Infrastructure Project website ([project webpage](#)).

We would like to thank those of you who submitted relevant representations. These representations have assisted us when considering how we will examine this application.

**Invitation to the preliminary meeting**

As a recipient of this letter you are invited to the preliminary meeting to discuss **the procedure** for the examination of the above application.

| Date                                                                                                    | Start time                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Venue and joining details                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11 November 2026                                                                                        | <p><b>Registration and seating available at venue from:</b><br/><b>9.30am</b></p> <p><b>Virtual registration process from:</b><br/><b>9.30am</b></p> <p><b>Preliminary meeting starts:</b><br/><b>10.00am</b></p> | <p><b>Fareham Innovation Centre, Merlin House, 4 Meteor Way, Fareham, Lee-on-the-Solent, PO13 9FU</b></p> <p>and</p> <p>By virtual means using Microsoft Teams</p> <p>Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered</p> |
| <p><b>IMPORTANT:</b> The preliminary meeting should be completed before 1.00pm on 11 November 2026.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

**You must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by 2 November 2026 if you intend to participate in the preliminary meeting and provide all the information requested (see below).**

If you simply wish to observe the preliminary meeting, then you do not need to register as you will be able to either:

1. watch a livestream of the event - a link to the livestream will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin
2. watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished

Alternatively, you can attend the physical event at the venue to observe the proceedings; however, to ensure there is adequate seating capacity at the venue we request that you register your attendance to **observe only** by **2 November 2026** using the [event participation form](#). Please note that it may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **2 November 2026**.

## Purpose of the preliminary meeting

The purpose of the preliminary meeting is to enable views to be put to us about how the application should be examined. The ExA will therefore limit the scope of the preliminary meeting to consideration of **how the application will be examined**. See **annex B** to this letter and the Planning Inspectorate's [Advice for members of the public: The stages of the NSIP process and how you can have your say](#) for more information.

The preliminary meeting is **not** an opportunity for you to give your views about what you like or don't like about the application. The merits or disadvantages of the application will only be considered once the examination starts, which is after the preliminary meeting has closed. All relevant and important matters will be taken into account when we make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, who will take the final decision in this case.

The agenda for the meeting is at **annex A** to this letter. This has been set following our initial assessment of principal issues arising from our reading of the application documents and the relevant representations received. The initial assessment of principal issues is set out in **annex C** to this letter.

## Written submissions about how the application should be examined

The Planning Act 2008 establishes a principally written process for the examination of applications for development consent orders and **representations made in writing carry equal weight to oral representations at all stages of the process**.

We are now requesting written submissions from recipients of this letter about how the application should be examined. We particularly wish to hear from you if either:

1. consider changes need to be made to the draft examination timetable set out at **annex D** to this letter
2. wish to comment about the arrangements for future examination hearings, including the use of virtual methods

You are invited to make a written submission about how the application is to be examined by **procedural deadline A (2 November 2026)** (see **annex D** to this letter).

We request that all submissions are made using the '[Have your say](#)' page on the project webpage on or before **procedural deadline A**. **Annex H** to this letter provides further information about using the '[Have your say](#)' page.

## Requests to participate at the preliminary meeting

Please note that **you are not required to attend, or make written submissions to, the preliminary meeting in order to participate in the examination.** If you are an interested party, you can make a written representation and comment on the written representations made by other interested parties during the examination. You will also be able to participate in any hearings that are arranged.

If you wish to participate at the preliminary meeting, you are required to notify the ExA in writing on or before **2 November 2026** (see **procedural deadline A**).

Any request to participate in the preliminary meeting **must include** the following information:

- Name and unique Interested Party reference (found at the top of your letter or email from the Planning Inspectorate)
- Email address (if available) and contact telephone number
- Name and unique Interested Party reference of any person/ organisation that you are representing (if applicable)
- For blended events, confirmation of whether you will participate virtually or in-person
- The agenda item on which you wish to speak and a list of the points you wish to make

Requests to participate should be made using the [event participation form](#) by **procedural deadline A**, Monday 2 November 2026.

**Please contact the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter if you require any support or assistance to attend the preliminary meeting, either virtually or in person.**

## Format of examination events – preliminary meeting and hearings

The examination of the application will principally be a written process supplemented where necessary by various types of hearings. See the Planning Inspectorate's [Advice for members of the public: The stages of the NSIP process and how you can have your say](#) for more information.

Both blended (part in-person and part virtual) and fully virtual events form part of the Planning Inspectorate's operating model. We remain flexible and will confirm the format of any hearings to be held during the examination stage when we provide formal notification of each hearing in advance of it taking place.

We are providing formal notification that the **preliminary meeting will be a blended event and that the OFH and ISH referred to in annex E to this letter will also be blended events.**

## After the preliminary meeting

After the preliminary meeting we will issue a letter (known as the Rule 8 Letter) setting out the finalised examination timetable. A note of the meeting will also be published on the [project webpage](#).

## Notification of initial hearings

We have made a procedural decision to hold the following initial hearings:

- Open floor hearing 1 (OFH1) on 11 November 2026 (Blended event)
- Issue specific hearing 1 (ISH1) on 12 November 2026 (Blended event)

Important information about these hearings is contained in **annex E** to this letter, including what details need to be provided with a request to be heard at a hearing and the procedure that will be followed.

## Other procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority

We have made some further procedural decisions which are set out in detail at **annex F** to this letter. They are summarised as follows:

- Use of artificial intelligence in submissions
- Statements of common ground
- Request for suggested locations for an accompanied site inspection
- Status of the applicant's examination documents
- Acceptance of additional submissions into the examination
- Request for a National Policy Statement Accordance Table

## 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. They 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](#). The examination timetable includes various deadlines for the submission of an updated book of reference and schedule of changes to the book of reference, which should include confirmation that relevant persons have been informed of their rights under section 102A.

## 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 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 H** 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 ExA) 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

*Wendy McKay*

**Lead Member of the Examining Authority**

**Annexes**

- A** Agenda for the preliminary meeting
- B** Introduction to the preliminary meeting
- C** Initial assessment of principal issues
- D** Draft examination timetable
- E** Notification of initial hearings
- F** Other procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority
- G** Examination documents
- H** Information about the 'Have your say' page

This communication does not constitute legal advice.

Please view our [Privacy Notice](#) before sending information to the Planning Inspectorate.

## Agenda for the preliminary meeting

**You must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by 2 November 2026 if you intend to participate in the preliminary meeting and provide all the information requested (see below).**

If you simply wish to observe the preliminary meeting then you do not need to register as you will be able to either:

- 1.** watch a livestream of the event - a link to the livestream will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin
- 2.** watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished.

Alternatively, you can attend the physical event at the venue to observe the proceedings; however, to ensure there is adequate seating capacity at the venue we request that you register your attendance to **observe only** by **2 November 2026** using the [event participation form](#). Please note that it may not be possible to participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **2 November 2026**.

Please note that by attending the event either in person or online you are agreeing to be filmed for the purposes of the online livestream of the event and the recording of the event which will be published on the [project page](#). A limited number of seats will be available for observers who wish not to be filmed at the venue. Please contact the Case Team to notify them if you prefer not to be filmed at the event. A transcript of the event will also be published on the project page of our website after the event.

**Date:** **11 November 2026**

**Registration process:** **9.30am**

**Meeting start time:** **10.00am**

**Venue:** **Blended event at the Fareham Innovation Centre, Merlin House, 4 Meteor Way, Fareham, Lee-on-the-Solent, PO13 9FU and by virtual means using Microsoft Teams**  
Full instructions on how to join online or by phone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered

**Attendees:** **Invited parties who have pre-registered**

| Agenda for the preliminary meeting      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>9.30am</b>                           | Registration and seating available at venue for in-person attendees                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>9.30am</b>                           | <p><b>Virtual registration process</b></p> <p>Please arrive at 9.30am to enter the virtual lobby. From here you will be admitted to the virtual meeting by the Case Team, greeted and given further instructions.</p> <p>The registration process will commence at 9.30am. This will be hosted by the Case Team and cover the housekeeping arrangements for the preliminary meeting and allow for any questions to be asked about how to take part.</p> |
| <b>10.00am</b><br><b>Item 1</b>         | <p><b>Preliminary meeting</b></p> <p>The preliminary meeting will formally open at <b>10.00am</b>. The Examining Authority will join, welcome participants and lead introductions.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Item 2</b>                           | The Examining Authority's (ExA) remarks about the examination process                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Item 3</b>                           | Initial assessment of principal issues (IAP) – <b>annex C</b> to Rule 6 Letter                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Item 4</b>                           | Draft examination timetable – <b>annex D</b> to Rule 6 Letter                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Item 5</b>                           | Procedural decisions – <b>annex E</b> to Rule 6 Letter                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Item 6</b>                           | Any other matters                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Close of the preliminary meeting</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

If you are participating using Microsoft Teams, please join the virtual lobby promptly using the instructions that will be sent to you. The event will start at **10.00am** irrespective of any late arrivals, for whom access may not be possible.

It may take some time to admit participants from the virtual lobby, your patience whilst you are waiting is appreciated.

The agenda for the preliminary meeting is subject to change at the discretion of the ExA, although in making changes the ExA will be mindful of the need to provide opportunities for fair involvement to all invited parties.

Any request to participate in the preliminary meeting **must include** the following information and be made on the [event participation form](#):

- Name and unique reference number (found at the top your letter or email from the Planning Inspectorate)
- Email address (if available) and contact telephone number
- Name and unique reference number of any person/ organisation that you are representing (if applicable)
- For blended events, confirmation of whether you will participate virtually or in-person
- The agenda item on which you wish to speak and a list of the points you wish to make

## **Introduction to the preliminary meeting**

### **Background**

The preliminary meeting (PM) will be a blended event with some participants attending in person and some taking part virtually using Microsoft Teams.

The Examining Authority (ExA) is conscious of videoconferencing fatigue and will aim to keep the proceedings focussed and as efficient as possible. This annex provides advance access to information that would usually be included in the ExA's introductory remarks. Please read this carefully. The ExA will only present a summary of the key points set out here in order to ensure that the time available for participants to speak is maximised.

### **The Examining Authority and the Case Team**

The ExA will introduce themselves at the start of the PM.

The ExA will be supported by the Planning Inspectorate Case Team. During the registration process a member of the Case Team will welcome and admit participants from the virtual lobby, and will be available to answer questions by email before and after the PM. The contact email address is: [hampshirewaterproject@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:hampshirewaterproject@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

### **The purpose of the preliminary meeting**

The PM is being held to discuss the arrangements for the examination of the application for a development consent order (DCO) for the Hampshire Water Transfer and Water Recycling Project, which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), and which will generally be referred to in the PM and examination as 'the proposed development'. The application has been made by Southern Water Services Limited, which will be referred to as 'the applicant'.

You will find information about the application and, in due course, documents produced for the examination on the project webpage of the Find National Infrastructure Project website ([project webpage](#)). The project webpage has links to the examination timetable, relevant representations and examination documents and examination procedure.

You are encouraged to look at the [project webpage](#) if you haven't already done so, because it will be used to communicate with you and to provide access to documents throughout the examination.

The main purpose of the PM is to discuss the arrangements for the examination of the application. It focuses on the process only, and it will not be looking at the substance of the proposals: Questions, discussions and representations about the merits or disadvantages of the proposed development are for the examination itself which will begin after the close of the PM.

The PM will be your opportunity to influence the process that the ExA intends to follow. The agenda for the PM is attached to this Rule 6 Letter at **annex A**. It is important to have the letter and the agenda in front of you and to refer to them during the course of the PM. You may wish to print these in advance of the PM for reference.

### **Government guidance and policy**

The proposed development does not fall within the categories set out in sections 14 to 30 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) and is therefore not an NSIP under the PA2008 as a consequence of those qualifying sections. However, it is to be treated as development for which a development consent order is required under the PA2008, following a direction issued by the Secretary of State under section 35(1) dated 31 May 2022 (as varied on 19 November 2024). The designated National Policy Statement for water resources infrastructure (NPSWRI) applies to this examination and to decision-making relating to this application.

The ExA will consider the proposed development in accordance with the NPSWRI and any other applicable policy or considerations the ExA deem to be important and relevant. The PA2008 makes it clear that, in making a decision, the relevant Secretary of State (SoS) “must decide the application in accordance with any relevant national policy statement” (NPS) (s104(3)), subject to certain provisos. Essentially, the provisos are that the application must not breach legal or treaty obligations, and that any adverse impact of the proposed development would not outweigh its benefits.

The SoS is entitled to disregard any representations that relate to the merits of the designated NPS. In practice, this means that the ExA will not spend time examining representations that challenge policy set out in NPSs, or the validity of NPSs themselves. The focus will be on the merits or disadvantages of the proposed development, tested to the appropriate extent using the tests set out in relevant designated NPSs that are in force.

Other important and relevant planning policies that the ExA may consider include policies in the relevant local authorities’ development plans. However, if these conflict with policy in a NPS, then the NPS will take precedence.

In summary, the PM will establish the procedures and timetable for the examination of the Proposed Development. It will set a framework for the ExA to enable the SoS to consider and decide the application. In doing so, the ExA will have regard to:

- the positions and representations of all interested parties (IP)
- any local impact reports (LIR) prepared and provided by relevant local authorities
- other prescribed matters
- any other matters that appear to be both relevant and important to the relevant SoS’s decision

## Preliminary meeting invitees

The applicant is invited to the PM and is generally given the opportunity to reply to any representations made.

Everyone who has made a valid relevant representation has been registered as an IP and has been invited to the PM. All IPs are entitled to involvement in the examination.

Each person or organisation with an interest in land or rights that are affected by a compulsory acquisition request in this application is an affected person (AP) and has been invited to the PM. In addition to a general entitlement to involvement in the examination, APs have a right to be heard in relation to any objection about the effects of compulsory acquisition on their interests in land, and a right to be notified of any compulsory acquisition hearing. All APs are IPs, whether or not they have made a valid relevant representation.

Certain bodies are statutory parties and they have been invited to the PM. Statutory parties can elect to become IPs without having made a valid relevant representation by notifying the ExA in writing.

The ExA has the power to involve people who are not IPs in the examination as though they are IPs, including by inviting them to the PM. However, this is only done in exceptional circumstances, for example if it was clear that the application would materially affect a person, they are not automatically an IP or eligible to elect to become an IP and they had been unable to take the necessary action to register as an IP.

The ExA has decided to invite the following other persons to the PM:

- The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)
- Regulators' Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development (RAPID)

## Conduct of the preliminary meeting

The ExA estimate that the PM will take half a day to complete.

During the PM participants may have to make allowances and be patient if there are delays associated with the technology used. In recognition of the fatigue associated with on-screen communication, the ExA will provide breaks during the PM as appropriate.

A digital recording of the PM will be made available on the project webpage as soon as practicable following the close of the PM. The recording allows any member of the public who is interested in the application and the examination to find out what has been discussed at the PM. The making and publication of these recordings are a means by which the ExA meets the legal requirement to hold the PM (and any other hearings) in public. In this regard, **anyone speaking at the PM will need to introduce themselves each time they speak**, to ensure that someone listening to

the recording after the event is clear who was speaking. A written note of the PM will be produced and published as soon as practicable following the close of the PM.

As the recordings are retained and published, they form a public record that can contain personal information to which The UK General Data Protection Regulation applies. Participants must do their best to avoid providing any information which should otherwise be kept private and confidential. If there is a need to refer to such information, it should be in written form. Although this will also be published, personal and private content can be redacted or removed before it is made publicly available. Any person who is unclear on this point should ask the Case Team for guidance before they place personal and private information into the public domain.

The Planning Inspectorate's practice is to publish the recordings and retain them for a period of at least 6 weeks from the SoS's decision on the DCO. If you actively participate in the PM, it is important that you understand that you will be recorded and that the recording will be made available in the public domain. Please see our [Privacy Notice](#) for more information about how we handle your data.

Following the ExA's introductions, each participant who has been registered to speak will be asked to introduce themselves, including any organisations or groups that they represent. The ExA will then conduct the meeting in accordance with the agenda. If you prefer not to have your image recorded, you can switch off your camera at any point.

### **The examination process**

The examination of NSIPs follows different processes to those, for example, of a public inquiry into a planning appeal following the refusal of planning permission. The main differences are that the examination of NSIPs are primarily a written process and hearings take on an inquisitorial approach as opposed to an adversarial one.

This means that the ExA will probe, test and assess the evidence primarily using written questions. While some hearings are held to provide supplementary evidence, questions to the applicant or to witnesses will come from the ExA. Questioning or cross-examination of witnesses by other parties will not generally be allowed.

In terms of opportunities to provide evidence in writing, the draft examination timetable makes provision for the following written processes:

- Local authorities are strongly encouraged to submit a LIR. Whilst these are voluntary, the PA2008 provides that if they are provided, they must be considered by the SoS in reaching a decision. Consequently, LIRs are a very important method for local authorities to communicate issues of concern to the ExA, the SoS and their residents
- IPs can make written representations (WR) and comment on WRs made by other parties
- IPs can respond to the ExA's written questions (ExQs) and comment on responses to these written questions provided by others

- IPs may be asked to contribute to the making of statements of common ground (SoCG) if it appears that there are matters on which they and the applicant agrees, and if it would be useful for this to be clarified. SoCGs most usefully extend to catalogue matters that are not agreed or are outstanding

The draft examination timetable includes a series of numbered deadlines for receipt of written submissions. Timely submissions received by the relevant deadline and that address its purpose will be accepted. **Documents received after the relevant deadline are only accepted at the discretion of the ExA and may not be accepted to ensure fairness to all parties.** Circumstances where documents are submitted late without good reason, causing inconvenience or delay to other parties can amount to unreasonable behaviour.

These written processes will be the principal means used by the ExA to gather information, evidence and views about the application. However, the examination will only be effective if all parties resolve to give timely, full, frank, clear and evidenced answers to every question that is relevant to their interests and to engage fully with any other related processes such as the completion of WRs and SoCGs.

There is no merit in withholding or delaying information, or in failing to co-operate, and should it occur, any unreasonable behaviour that caused another party to incur wasted expenditure could lead to an award of costs against the offending party.

The ExA has discretion to make amendments to the examination timetable for the wider benefit of the examination. If possible, events will be arranged for times when all relevant parties are available, but the ExA is under a duty to complete the examination by the end of the six-month period beginning with the day after the close of the PM. This requirement is set by legislation, and while the ExA will try to rearrange event dates to accommodate all relevant parties, in practice there will be limited scope to alter dates set out in the draft examination timetable.

The statutory time limit for the examination means that where there are matters that still need to be discussed and agreed between the applicant and IPs, it will be very helpful to the ExA if these could be progressed as early as possible.

## Hearings

The draft examination timetable includes provision for hearings, at which the ExA takes oral evidence from the various parties.

Any registered IP may request an **open floor hearing** (OFH) to make oral representations about the application if they believe this to be preferable to relying on their written representation, though both carry equal weight. Oral submissions should be based on representations previously made in writing, but they should not simply repeat matters previously covered in the written submission. Rather, they should focus on specific detail and explanation to help inform the ExA. There should be no new or unexpected material in oral representations. A written summary note with any supporting evidence or references will be requested of each speaker following the hearing.

As with all examination events, OFHs are subject to the powers of control of the ExA, as set out in the PA2008 and supporting legislation. Participants must register in advance by the deadline shown in the examination timetable and in accordance with the instructions. It is common practice for the ExA to set a time limit for each speaker and speakers with common points are asked to come together to nominate a spokesperson or representative speakers to cover specific topics, so as to avoid repetition. Speakers representing public authorities, community and membership organisations or multiple IPs are normally provided with an additional time allowance, recognising their representative role.

The applicant's draft DCO provides for the compulsory acquisition of land and rights, and the temporary possession of land. APs (meaning those whose land or rights over land are affected) have a right to request and be heard at a **compulsory acquisition hearing** (CAH). If one or more APs request to be heard, then a CAH must be held. Provisional dates for CAHs are included in the draft examination timetable along with deadlines by which requests to be heard must be submitted.

The ExA has the discretion to hold **issue specific hearings** (ISH) if it would aid in the examination and there is a specific reason this would be more helpful than reliance on written evidence only. The lack of an ISH on one or more topics does not suggest that that topic is less important than others which are subject to a hearing. Rather, it is an indication that the ExA is satisfied that the issues can be fully considered through written submissions and responses to its written questions and that each party has had a fair opportunity to put its case.

The draft examination timetable includes a number of dates reserved for ISHs and IPs may make suggestions for topics to be discussed at an ISH in their written or oral representations to the PM.

It may be necessary for the ExA to hold more than one ISH on the draft DCO. This is normal practice, and they are held on a without prejudice basis. Parties can suggest modifications and amendments to the draft DCO provided by the applicant with the application, without prejudicing their overall position on the application.

Holding such hearings does not imply that the ExA has reached any judgements on the merits of the application. Whatever the ultimate recommendation is, the ExA must make sure that the draft DCO is fit for purpose if the SoS decides to grant consent, as any consent will be subject to requirements (similar to planning conditions) set out in the draft DCO.

At hearings it will not normally be necessary for parties to make long and detailed submissions that require, for example, PowerPoint presentations. Any supporting detail/ information can be provided in writing following the event by the relevant deadline.

The draft examination timetable includes a deadline (**2 November 2026**) for participants to notify the ExA that they wish to speak at OFH1. It also includes a deadline (**23 November 2026**) for participants to notify the ExA that they wish to speak at any subsequent OFH to be held after OFH1 or a CAH.

## **Site inspections**

As part of the examination process the ExA may undertake site inspections. These can be either unaccompanied or accompanied.

The purpose of these is for the ExA to see features of the proposals within the context of the evidence put forward. Notes of unaccompanied site inspections (USI) are published on the [project webpage](#).

Accompanied site inspections (ASI) will only be necessary to view land to which there is no public right of access, or with no clear view from nearby locations with open public access. The purpose of ASIs is familiarisation only and no discussion of the merits of the proposed development will be entertained during an ASI.

The ExA may decide to hold USIs to relevant nominated locations, supported by the submission of additional written, photographic, video or even drone material if this would be preferable to not visiting sites or holding ASIs in circumstances which could make them difficult and unduly time-consuming to conduct (for example if public health restrictions are in place). The ExA may also consider if it would be appropriate to make arrangements for access only to be provided to specific sites such that they could be inspected as part of a USI on an access required basis (ARSI).

The draft examination timetable includes a deadline for IPs to make submissions suggesting sites and locations that the ExA should visit. These will be used to inform further USIs/ ARSIs as well as possible ASIs.

## **Initial assessment of principal issues**

This is the initial assessment of principal issues (IAP) prepared as required under section 88(1) of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). It has been prepared by the Examining Authority (ExA) following its reading of:

- the application documents
- the relevant representations received in respect of the application
- its consideration of any other important and relevant matters

This initial assessment has guided the ExA in forming a provisional view as to how the application is to be examined. It is not a comprehensive or exclusive list of the issues that will be subject to examination and inevitably some issues will overlap or interrelate. The ExA will have regard to all important and relevant matters during the examination and when it writes its recommendation to The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs after the examination has concluded.

The policy and consenting requirements and documents associated with the PA2008 are an integral part of the examination and are therefore not listed as principal issues. It should also be noted that whilst the effects of the proposal in relation to human rights and equalities duties are not listed as principal issues, the ExA will conduct all aspects of the examination with these in mind.

Regarding national policy, the following National Policy Statement (NPS) has effect, and the issues contained within will be an integral part of the examination:

- National Policy Statement for Water Resources Infrastructure

Whilst matters relating to compulsory acquisition and the draft Development Consent Order are not listed as principal issues, they will form an integral part of the examination.

Consideration will be given to all relevant matters during the construction, operation and decommissioning activities associated with the proposed development, and cumulatively with other plans and projects, as necessary.

The order of the issues listed does not imply any order of prioritisation or importance. The bulleted items under each issue are indicative and do not preclude other sub-items being considered.

## Initial Assessment of Principal Issues

| Principal issue                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Source material and cross-references (including application documents, relevant representations, policy and dDCO references)                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| <b>Alternatives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whether the Environmental Statement (ES) has given appropriate consideration to reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Development having regard to the main reasons for the options chosen and taking into account the significant effects on the environment.</li> <li>Whether the Proposed Development would comply with all specific legal obligations in relation to the consideration of alternatives including the Habitats Regulations and the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 (WFD).</li> <li>Whether the Proposed Development would comply with all policy requirements in the National Policy Statement for Water Resources Infrastructure (NPSWRI) requiring the consideration of alternatives.</li> </ul> | <p>ES Chapter 4 Consideration of alternatives [APP-083]</p> <p>RR: Havant Borough Council [RR-127], Hampshire County Council [RR-121], East Hampshire District Council [RR-089]</p> <p>Policy / DCO references: NPSWRI 3.5</p>                                                                                        |
| <b>Cumulative and in-combination effects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The significant cumulative effects of the Proposed Development including the interrelationship between effects and the interaction with the effects of other developments during construction and operation with particular regard to water quality.</li> <li>Whether any additional mitigation or enhancement measures would be required to avoid, reduce or compensate for any cumulative adverse impacts identified including to avoid, reduce or compensate for adverse health impacts.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>ES Chapter 20 Cumulative and in-combination effects [APP-099]</p> <p>RR: Havant Borough Council [RR-127], Winchester City Council [RR-361], Hampshire County Council [RR-121], East Hampshire District Council [RR-089]</p> <p>Policy / DCO references: NPSWRI 3.1, 3.2, 3.8, 3.12, 4.8, 4.9, 4.13, 4.14, 4.15</p> |
| <b>Good design</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whether the applicant has demonstrated that the Proposed Development represents good design, having regard to relevant national policy and good design principles.</li> <li>The clarity, appropriateness and consistency of design aims and principles.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>Design Principles Document [APP-076]; Design Approach Documents [APP-076], [APP-077], [APP-079]</p> <p>RR: Fareham Borough Council [RR-104], Portsmouth City Council [RR-252], South Downs National Park</p>                                                                                                       |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether the design approach, including Above Ground Installations, is acceptable having regard to design certainty, flexibility sought and the extent to which environmental effects have been avoided or reduced through design evolution.</li> <li>• Whether the design measures in the Design Principles Document are adequate and can be effectively secured, implemented and enforced through the draft DCO and associated controls.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                            | [RR-307], South Downs National Park Authority [RR-308]<br>Policy / DCO references: NPSWRI 3.6, 4.3, 4.7, 4.9, 4.11; dDCO Art 7, Schedule 1, Works 1, 5A-5E and 7; Schedule 2, Requirements 3, 4, 6 and 18; Schedule 11                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Health, recreation and well-being</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether concerns regarding water recycling, drinking water quality, public confidence in the proposed treatment process and associated monitoring arrangements have been adequately addressed.</li> <li>• Whether the effects of the Proposed Development on recreation, amenity and recreational users have been adequately assessed and mitigated.</li> <li>• Whether the proposed mitigation, monitoring and management measures are adequate and effective.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                             | ES Chapter 17 Socio-Economics Tourism and Health [APP-096]<br>RR: South Downs National Park [RR307], South Downs National Park Authority [RR-308], Hampshire County Council [RR-121], Portsmouth City Council [RR-252], Havant Borough Council [RR-127], Hampshire and Isle of Wight Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust [RR-119]<br>Policy / DCO references: NPSWRI 3.5; dDCO Arts 16 and 17; Schedule 2, Requirements 6, 9, and 16; Schedule 3 Parts 3-6; Schedule 11 |
| <b>Habitats Regulations Assessment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether sufficient information has been provided in the submitted documentation on measures to mitigate direct and indirect impacts on land functionally linked to the Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area and Ramsar site.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Habitats Regulations Assessment [APP-053]<br>RR: Natural England [RR-222]<br>Policy / DCO references: NPSWRI 1.6, 1.7, 3.3, 4.3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Land quality and ground conditions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether scope, baseline and the methodology of the land quality and ground conditions assessment is sufficient and complete for all areas, including the number of investigation locations and conclusions related to mineral assessment.</li> <li>• Whether sufficient information has been provided in the submitted documentation regarding construction, investigation, remediation, restoration, and verification processes in relation to contaminated land including parts of the proposed development that are on or adjacent to the former Brockhampton West/Harts Farm landfill.</li> </ul> | ES Chapter 11 Land quality and ground conditions [APP-090]<br>RR: Portsmouth City Council [RR-252], Havant Borough Council [RR-127], Hampshire County Council [RR-121], Natural England [RR-222], Environment Agency [RR-102]<br>Policy / DCO references: NPSWRI 3.1, 3.2, 3.6, 3.10, 3.12, 4.10, 4.12, 4.15; dDCO Schedule 2, Part 1, Requirement 7                                                                                                                |

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| <p><b>Landscape and visual effects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether the effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character, visual amenity, tranquillity and designated landscapes, including the South Downs National Park, its setting and special qualities, have been adequately assessed and mitigated, having particular regard to the effects of BPT-K, IPS-G and views from Pilgrim's Way.</li> <li>• The effects on visual receptors, including residents, users of Public Rights of Way, recreational users and users of the South Downs National Park.</li> <li>• The landscape and visual effects of Above Ground Installations, the Water Recycling Plant, temporary and permanent construction infrastructure including effects on Portsdown Hill and the setting of the South Downs National Park.</li> <li>• The adequacy, effectiveness and long-term management of landscape mitigation, landscaping and boundary treatment associated with the Above Ground Installations.</li> <li>• Whether landscape and visual mitigation measures would be appropriately secured, implemented and maintained through the draft DCO.</li> </ul> | <p>ES Chapter 13 Landscape and visual [APP-092]</p> <p>RR: South Downs National Park [RR307], South Downs National Park Authority [RR-308], Portsmouth City Council [RR-252], Fareham Borough Council [AS-025], Winchester City Council [RR-361]</p> <p>Policy / DCO references: NPSWRI 4.9; dDCO Art 7 and 25; Schedule 1; Schedule 2, Requirements 3, 4, 6 and 18; Schedule 4; Schedule 11</p>                                          |
| <p><b>Need</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether the applicant has demonstrated the need for the Proposed Development having regard to the assessment principles set out in the NPS WRI.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>Policy / DCO references: NPSWRI 1.4.5-1.4.7, 2.1-2.6, 3.1</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p><b>Terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether sufficient mitigation, control and compensatory measures have been proposed and secured in the submitted documentation relating to impacts on various species and habitats.</li> <li>• Whether arboricultural impacts have been sufficiently assessed.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>ES Chapter 8 Terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity [APP-087]</p> <p>RR: Portsmouth City Council [RR-252], Winchester City Council [RR-361], Eastleigh Borough Council [RR-090], Hampshire County Council [RR-121], Fareham Borough Council [RR-104], East Hampshire District Council [RR-089], Natural England [RR-222], Environment Agency [RR-102]</p> <p>Policy / DCO references: NPSWRI 1.6, 1.7, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.8, 4, 4.3</p> |
| <p><b>Traffic and transport</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>ES Chapter 18 Traffic and Transport [APP-097]</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether the effects of construction traffic on the strategic and local highway networks including the A3(M)/A27 Broadmarsh Junction and A27 Havant Bypass, have been adequately assessed and would be acceptable.</li> <li>• Whether the proposed highway crossings, access arrangements and traffic management measures are suitable and safe.</li> <li>• Whether the proposed mitigation, monitoring and management measures are adequate and effective.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>RR: National Highways [RR-220], South Downs National Park Authority [RR-308], Hampshire County Council [RR-121], Portsmouth City Council [RR-252], Fareham Borough Council [RR-104]</p> <p>Policy / DCO references: NPSWRI 4.14; dDCO Art 11-20; Sch 1, Works including Work Nos 1, 6, 8, 9A, 9B; Sch 2, Requirements 8 and 9; Schedule 3, Parts 1-8; Schedule 11</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>Water environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether impacts on water quality and potential for harm from introducing recycled water to Havant Thicket Reservoir have been sufficiently assessed.</li> <li>• Whether clear and sufficient arrangements are proposed for allocating responsibilities between Southern Water and Portsmouth Water for the use, operation and management of the interfaces between the proposed development, Havant Thicket Reservoir, Bedhampton Springs, the Farlington to Nelson pipeline and Portsmouth Water's other relevant assets.</li> <li>• Whether sufficient arrangements are proposed for monitoring, adapting to changing standards, implementing contingency measures, managing communications and ensuring regulatory compliance.</li> <li>• Whether sufficient information has been provided in the submitted documentation on operational impacts and procedures in the event of system failure, including potential flood risk and specific effects on local watercourses, the Solent and Havant Thicket Reservoir.</li> </ul> | <p>ES Chapter 19 Water environment [APP-098]</p> <p>RR: Portsmouth City Council [RR-252], Chichester District Council [RR-052], Winchester City Council [RR-361], Havant Borough Council [RR-217], Eastleigh Borough Council [RR-090], Hampshire County Council [RR-121], Gosport Borough Council [RR-114], Fareham Borough Council [RR-104], Portsmouth Water Limited [RR-253], East Hampshire District Council [RR-089], Environment Agency [RR-102]</p> <p>Policy / DCO references: NPSWRI 1.6, 1.7, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.8, 4, 4.3; dDCO [APP-023] Arts 5, 9, 46, 50, Schedule 8, Schedule 10, Schedule 2 (new requirement or Schedule 10, Part 3 Protective Provisions, as appropriate), Requirement 15</p> |

Note: The references provided comprise a non-exhaustive selection of material relevant to the matters under consideration.

### Draft examination timetable

The Examining Authority (ExA) is under a duty to **complete** the examination of the application by the end of the period of 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                                       |
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| 1.   | <b>Procedural deadline A</b><br>Deadline for receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>written submissions on the examination procedure, including any submissions about the use of virtual methods</li> <li>register to attend the preliminary meeting and open-floor hearing (OFH1) in w/c 9 November 2026</li> <li>requests to be heard at the preliminary meeting</li> <li>requests to be heard at OFH1</li> <li>suggested locations for site inspections (accompanied or unaccompanied), including justification, for consideration by the ExA</li> </ul> | <b>2 November 2026</b>                     |
| 2.   | <b>Preliminary Meeting (PM)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>11 November 2026 at 10am</b>            |
| 3.   | <b>Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>11 November 2026 2.30pm</b>             |
| 4.   | <b>Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1), on water environment</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>12 November 2026 at 10am</b>            |
| 5.   | <b>Issue by the ExA of:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the examination timetable</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>As soon as practicable after the PM</b> |
| 6.   | <b>Deadline 1</b><br>For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>comments on relevant representations (RR)</li> <li>summaries of all RR exceeding 1500 words</li> <li>written summaries of oral submissions made at the PM or hearings</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>23 November 2026</b>                    |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• written representations (WR), including summaries of any WR exceeding 1500 words</li> <li>• requests to be heard at any subsequent OFH to be held after OFH1</li> <li>• requests by affected persons (defined in section 59(4) of the Planning Act 2008) to be heard at a CAH</li> <li>• notification by any statutory parties who have not submitted an RR of their wish to be considered as an interested party</li> <li>• any further information requested by ExA<br/>Any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010</li> <li>• comments on any further information/ submissions accepted by the ExA</li> </ul> <p><b>From Local Authorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Impact Report (LIR)</li> </ul> <p><b>From the applicant</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the applicant's draft itinerary for an accompanied site inspection (ASI)</li> <li>• National Policy Statement (NPS) Accordance Table</li> <li>• draft s106 agreement (if any)</li> <li>• draft Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs) requested by the ExA</li> </ul> <p><b>If changes have been made:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• updated SoCGs previously submitted</li> <li>• updated Land Rights and Negotiations Tracker</li> <li>• updated Guide to the application</li> <li>• updated Book of Reference (BoR)</li> <li>• updated Schedule of Changes to the BoR</li> <li>• updated draft Development Consent Order (dDCO)</li> <li>• updated Schedule of Changes to the dDCO</li> <li>• updated Explanatory Memorandum (EM)</li> <li>• updated Planning Policy Statement</li> <li>• updated Case for the Project</li> <li>• updated Consents and Licences Position Statement</li> </ul> |  |
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| <b>7.</b>  | <b>Publication of</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the ExA's first written questions (ExQ1)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>2 December 2026</b>                 |
| <b>8.</b>  | <b>Deadline 2</b><br>For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>responses to ExQ1</li> <li>comments on the applicant's draft itinerary for the ASI</li> <li>comments on WR</li> <li>comments on draft SoCGs</li> <li>comments on LIR</li> <li>any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010</li> <li>comments on any further information requested by the ExA and received by <b>deadline 1</b></li> </ul> | <b>16 December 2026</b>                |
| <b>9.</b>  | <b>Deadline 3</b><br>For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>responses to comments on WR</li> <li>responses to comments on RR</li> <li>comments on responses to ExQ1</li> <li>comments on any submissions received at the previous deadline</li> <li>responses to any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010</li> </ul>                                                                              | <b>5 January 2027</b>                  |
| <b>10.</b> | <b>Publication by the ExA of:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the ExA's final itinerary for the ASI (if required)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>5 January 2027</b>                  |
| <b>11.</b> | <b>Dates reserved (if required) for:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>any ASI</li> <li>any ISH</li> <li>any OFH</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Week commencing 11 January 2027</b> |
| <b>12.</b> | <b>Deadline 4</b><br>For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>responses to comments on ExQ1</li> <li>post hearing submissions including written summaries of oral submissions made at the hearings</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>2 February 2027</b>                 |

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|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comments on any submissions received at the previous deadline</li> <li>• responses to any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010</li> </ul> <p><b>From the applicant if changes have been made:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• updated Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs)</li> <li>• updated Land Rights and Negotiations Tracker</li> <li>• updated Guide to the application</li> <li>• updated Book of Reference (BoR)</li> <li>• updated Schedule of Changes to the BoR</li> <li>• updated draft Development Consent Order (dDCO)</li> <li>• updated Schedule of Changes to the dDCO</li> <li>• updated Explanatory Memorandum (EM)</li> <li>• updated Planning Policy Statement</li> <li>• updated Case for the Project</li> <li>• updated Consents and Licences Position Statement</li> <li>• updated NPS Accordance Table</li> </ul> |                                      |
| <b>13.</b> | <p><b>Publication by the ExA of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ExA's second written questions (ExQ2) (if required)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>16 February 2027</b>              |
| <b>14.</b> | <p><b>Deadline 5</b></p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• responses to ExQ2 (if required)</li> <li>• comments on any submissions received at the previous deadline</li> <li>• responses to any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>2 March 2027</b>                  |
| <b>15.</b> | <p><b>Week reserved (if required) for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• any ISH</li> <li>• any Compulsory Acquisition Hearing (CAH)</li> <li>• any OFH</li> <li>• any ASI</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Week commencing 15 March 2027</b> |
| <b>16.</b> | <p><b>Deadline 6</b></p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>30 March 2027</b>                 |

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|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• post hearing submissions including written summaries of oral submissions made at the hearings</li> <li>• comments on any submissions received at the previous deadline</li> <li>• responses to any further information requested by ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010</li> </ul> <p><b>From the applicant if changes have been made:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• updated SoCGs</li> <li>• updated Land Rights and Negotiations Tracker</li> <li>• updated Guide to the application</li> <li>• updated Book of Reference (BoR) and</li> <li>• updated Schedule of Changes to the BoR</li> <li>• updated draft Development Consent Order (dDCO)</li> <li>• updated Schedule of Changes to the dDCO</li> <li>• updated Explanatory Memorandum (EM)</li> <li>• updated Planning Policy Statement</li> <li>• Updated Case for the Project</li> <li>• updated Consents and Licences Position Statement</li> <li>• updated NPS Accordance Table</li> </ul> |                      |
| <b>17.</b> | <p><b>Publication by the ExA of</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ExA's third written questions (ExQ3) (if required)</li> <li>• the ExA's commentary on, or schedule of changes to, the draft DCO</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>7 April 2027</b>  |
| <b>18.</b> | <p><b>Deadline 7</b></p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• responses to ExQ3 (if required)</li> <li>• comments on the ExA's schedule of changes to the dDCO, if issued</li> <li>• comments on any submissions received at the previous deadline</li> <li>• responses to any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>21 April 2027</b> |
| <b>19.</b> | <p><b>Deadline 8</b></p> <p>For receipt by the ExA, from the applicant, of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>the final draft DCO</b></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>4 May 2027</b>    |

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|            | <p>Final draft DCO to be submitted by the applicant in the SI template</p> <p>Applicant to provide the email notification from <a href="https://publishing.legislation.gov.uk/validation">https://publishing.legislation.gov.uk/validation</a> confirming the document has successfully passed validation, and the PDF version of the SI validation report obtained from the link in the notification email.</p> <p>The applicant should also provide a clean (all tracking removed) standalone MS Word version of the draft DCO, with no header or cover page</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• final SoCGs</li> <li>• final Statement of Commonality of SoCG</li> <li>• list of matters not agreed where SoCG could not be finalised</li> <li>• final Guide to the Application in clean and tracked versions</li> <li>• final BoR and schedule of changes to BoR</li> <li>• final Land Rights and Negotiations Tracker</li> <li>• final EM</li> <li>• final Planning Policy Statement</li> <li>• final Case for the Project</li> <li>• final NPS Accordance Table</li> <li>• final signed and dated section 106 (if any)</li> </ul> <p><b>For receipt by the ExA, from any IP, of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• any interested party's closing statement (if desired) of final position regarding matters that they have previously raised during the examination including outstanding matters not resolved to their satisfaction</li> <li>• comments on any additional information/submissions received by deadline 7</li> <li>• responses to any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010</li> </ul> |                    |
| <b>20.</b> | <p><b>Deadline 9</b></p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• responses to any further information requested by the ExA under rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>10 May 2027</b> |
| <b>21.</b> | <b>Close of examination</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>11 May 2027</b> |

|  |                                                                                                           |  |
|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  | The ExA intends to close the examination on this date.<br>See 'Note about the close of examination date'. |  |
|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

### **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 with the day 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**

Please note that for ISHs and CAHs the ExA will publish a high-level agenda alongside the notification of the hearing to help inform your decision about whether to register to participate. A detailed draft agenda will be made available on the project webpage at least 5 working days in advance of the hearing date. However, the actual agenda on the day of each hearing may be subject to change at the discretion of the ExA. For OFHs agendas may not be published.

## Notification of initial hearings

The Examining Authority (ExA) provides notice of the following initial hearings:

| Date                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Hearing                                                                   | Start time                                                                                                                                                       | Joining details                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Wednesday<br/>11 November<br/>2026</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Open Floor<br/>Hearing 1<br/>(OFH1)</b>                                | <b>Seating available at<br/>venue from: 2.00pm</b><br><b>Virtual Registration<br/>Process from:</b><br><b>2.00pm</b><br><b>Hearing starts:</b><br><b>2.30pm</b>  | <b>Fareham Innovation<br/>Centre, Merlin House,<br/>4 Meteor Way,<br/>Fareham, Lee-on-the-<br/>Solent, PO13 9FU</b><br><br>and<br><br>By virtual means using<br>Microsoft Teams Full<br>instructions on how to<br>join online or by<br>telephone will be<br>provided in advance to<br>those who have pre-<br>registered |
| <b>Thursday 12<br/>November<br/>2026</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Issue Specific<br/>Hearing 1<br/>(ISH1), on water<br/>environment.</b> | <b>Seating available at<br/>venue from: 9.30am</b><br><b>Virtual Registration<br/>Process from:</b><br><b>9.30am</b><br><b>Hearing starts:</b><br><b>10.00am</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p><b>NOTE:</b> If any of the above hearings are no longer required then notification that a particular date is no longer required will be published as soon as practicable on the <a href="#">project webpage</a>, providing reasonable notice to interested parties of the decision to cancel them.</p> |                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

**You must register by completing the [event participation form](#) by 2 November 2026 if you intend to participate in any of the hearings and provide all the information requested (see below).**

If you simply wish to observe any of the hearings then you do not need to register as you will be able to either:

- 1.** watch a livestream of the event - a link to the livestream will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before the event is scheduled to begin
- 2.** watch the recording of the event which will be published on the project webpage shortly after the event has finished.

Alternatively, you can attend the physical hearing at the venue to observe the proceedings; however, to ensure there is adequate seating capacity at the venue we request that you register your attendance to **observe only** by **2 November 2026** using the [event participation form](#). Please note that it may not be possible to

participate on the day if you have not registered your wish to speak by **2 November 2026**.

Any request to participate in a hearing **must include** the following information:

- Name and unique Interested Party reference (found at the top of any letter or email from the Planning Inspectorate)
- Email address (if available) and contact telephone number
- Name and unique Interested Party reference of any person/ organisation that you are representing (if applicable)
- For blended events, confirmation of whether you will participate virtually or in-person
- Confirmation of the hearing(s) you wish to participate in, the agenda item(s) on which you wish to speak and/ or brief details of the topic(s) that you would like to raise
- The [Examination Library](#) reference number (with paragraph/ page number where appropriate) of any documents you wish to refer to

Requests to participate should be made using the [event participation form](#) on or before **procedural deadline A**.

**Please contact the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter if you require any support or assistance to attend any of the hearings, either virtually or in person.**

### Hearing agendas

For issue specific hearings and compulsory acquisition hearings the ExA will publish a detailed draft agenda on the project webpage at least 5 working days in advance of the hearing date. However, the actual agenda on the day of each hearing may be subject to change at the discretion of the ExA. For open floor hearings an agenda may not be published.

The initial agenda for ISH1 is set out below. It will also be published on the project webpage at least five working days in advance of the hearing date and may be updated as necessary. The actual agenda on the day of each hearing may also be subject to change at the discretion of the ExA.

| Agenda for issue specific hearing 1 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Item 1</b>                       | Welcome, introductions and arrangements for the hearing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Item 2</b>                       | Purpose of the hearing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Item 3</b>                       | Water environment matters identified in the initial assessment of principal issues (IAP), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• impacts on water quality</li> <li>• interfaces between Southern Water and Portsmouth Water</li> <li>• monitoring, adaptive management and regulatory compliance</li> </ul> |
| <b>Item 4</b>                       | Any other business                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Item 5</b>                       | Close of hearing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

### Procedure at hearings

The examination of the application will principally be a written process supplemented where necessary by various types of hearings. See the Planning Inspectorate's [Advice for members of the public: The stages of the NSIP process and how you can have your say](#) for more information.

The Planning Inspectorate's Advice for members of the public provides important information about hearing procedures:

- [What to expect at a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project event](#)
- [Registering to speak at, or attend, a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project event](#)

The procedure to be followed at hearings is set out in rule 14 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010. The ExA is responsible for the oral questioning of a person giving evidence and the process affords very limited scope to allow cross-questioning between parties.

### Hearing livestream and recording

A link to a livestream for each hearing will be made available on the [project webpage](#) shortly before any hearing is due to open. The livestream is available to anybody who wishes to observe a hearing in real time.

All hearings are recorded, and the recordings will be made available on the [project webpage](#) as soon as practicable after the close of the hearing. The recordings allow any member of the public who is interested in the application and the examination to find out what has been discussed.

## Other procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority

The Examining Authority (ExA) has made the following procedural decisions:

### 1. Use of artificial intelligence in submissions

The Planning Inspectorate understands the benefits that artificial intelligence (AI) can bring to the planning system when it is used ethically and transparently. To aid the beneficial use of AI in casework evidence, all participants in the examination are directed to [guidance](#) for submitting information that has been generated or altered by AI.

**If any party uses AI to create its submission, it is important to let us know if you have used AI in any way.** This does not include basic spell checks or grammar tools.

All parties should specify which AI systems or tools have been used, the source of the information that the AI system has based its content on, and what parts of the submitted information or representation AI has been used to create or alter.

Where you have used AI systems to summarise, substantially rewrite or add commentary to information which goes beyond a simple factual description, 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 is your responsibility to ensure that it is fit for purpose, accurate, complete and not misleading.

By following this guidance, you will help the ExA 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 in any evidence submission where it has been used or remove evidence such as watermarks the ExA reserves the right to reject the submission.

### 2. Statements of common ground (SoCG)

In relation to some of the principal issues identified in **annex C** to this letter, the ExA would be assisted by the preparation of SoCGs between the applicant and certain interested parties. The draft examination timetable at **annex D** to this letter therefore establishes **deadline 1** for submission of draft SoCGs.

The aim of a SoCG is to agree factual information and to inform the ExA and all other parties by identifying where there is agreement and where the differences lie at an early stage in the examination process. It should provide a focus and save time by identifying matters which are not in dispute or need not be the subject of further evidence. It can also usefully state where and why there may be disagreement about the interpretation and relevance of the information. The ExA therefore requests that SoCGs clearly identify and summarise within them principal areas of disagreement, as well as matters which have been agreed. Unless otherwise stated or agreed, the SoCG should be agreed between the applicant and the other relevant interested party or parties and submitted **by the applicant**.

Draft SoCG which have been provided to the ExA at acceptance between the applicant and the following parties:

- a) Eastleigh Borough Council [[APP-059](#)]
- b) East Hampshire District Council [[APP-060](#)]
- c) Fareham Borough Council [[APP-061](#)]
- d) Hampshire County Council [[APP-062](#)]
- e) Havant Borough Council [[APP-063](#)]
- f) Portsmouth City Council [[APP-064](#)]
- g) South Downs National Park Authority [[APP-065](#)]
- h) Winchester City Council [[APP-066](#)]
- i) Environment Agency [[APP-067](#)], since updated as [[AS-019](#)] and [[AS-020](#)]
- j) Marine Management Organisation [[APP-068](#)]
- k) Natural England [[APP-069](#)]
- l) Historic England [[APP-070](#)]
- m) Ministry of Defence [[APP-071](#)]

SoCGs are requested to be prepared between the applicant and the following parties:

- a) National Highways
- b) Portsmouth Water Limited
- c) Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- d) Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
- e) Gosport Borough Council

**All of the SoCGs listed above should cover the articles and requirements in the draft Development Consent Order.** Any interested party seeking that an article or requirement is reworded should provide the form of words which are being sought.

Where a particular SoCG cannot be agreed between the parties by **deadline 1**, or if any local authority position needs to be signed off at a higher level, draft versions of that SoCG are requested to be submitted **by the applicant to deadline 2**. The position of the relevant interested parties should then be confirmed in the course of the examination. The draft examination timetable makes provision for updated SoCGs to be submitted at various deadlines with final versions by **deadline 8**.

The content of SoCGs will help to inform the ExA about the need to hold any issue specific hearings during the examination, and to enable the ExA and the applicant to give notice of such hearings in advance of them taking place.

### **3. Accompanied site inspection – suggested locations**

The draft examination timetable at **annex D** to this letter includes a time reserved for an accompanied site inspection (ASI), if required, during week commencing 11 January 2027.

The ExA requests that interested parties submit suggested locations for the ExA to visit as part of an ASI by **procedural deadline A** (2 November 2026). The request must include:

- sufficient information to identify the location
- the issues to be observed at the location
- information on whether the site can be accessed via public land
- the reason why the location has been suggested.

**Interested parties should be aware that ASIs are not an opportunity to make any oral representations to the ExA about the proposed development.**

However, participants may be invited by the ExA to indicate specific features or sites of interest.

The applicant is requested to prepare a draft itinerary for the ASI to be submitted by **deadline 1**. This should include:

- relevant locations referred to in the relevant representations received
- any other locations at which the applicant has predicted likely significant environmental effects
- the locations suggested by interested parties submitted by **procedural deadline A**

Comments by interested parties on the applicant's draft itinerary must be submitted by **deadline 2**.

The ExA will consider each suggested site location, including those provided in the applicant's draft itinerary, to determine if it could be viewed from public land on an unaccompanied basis or if it is necessary to view it on an accompanied basis. The ExA will also consider if it would be appropriate to make arrangements for access only to be provided to specific sites such that they could be inspected as part of an unaccompanied site inspection on an access required basis.

The ExA will publish its final itinerary at least 5 working days before the date of the ASI.

#### **4. Status of the applicant's examination documents**

The ExA requests that the applicant provides, at the various deadlines requested in the timetable, an updated 'Guide to the Application' document which provides a list of the most up-to-date status of the documents submitted, including which copies have been superseded in whole or in part. A final version must be submitted, before the close of the examination, at **deadline 8**. All examination documents submitted should include a version number and date.

## 5. Additional submissions

The applicant has submitted two responses (each with accompanying documents) in response to advice issued by the Planning Inspectorate dated 25 June 2026 [\[PD-003\]](#) following acceptance of the application. These are:

- Applicant's response to Section 51 advice [\[AS-001\]](#) and accompanying documents [AS-002 to AS-022] dated 17 July 2026.

In addition to the documentation submitted by **procedural deadline A** the ExA has exercised its discretion and made a procedural decision to accept the following additional submissions:

- Submission made by National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc [\[AS-023\]](#)
- Submission made by Historic England [\[AS-024\]](#)
- Submission made by Fareham Borough Council [\[AS-025\]](#)
- Submissions made by Fisher German LLP on behalf of Exolum Pipeline System Ltd [\[AS-026\]](#) and [\[AS-031\]](#)
- Submission made by TB Fowler MRICS on behalf of Mr and Mrs Cross [\[AS-027\]](#)
- Submission made by Marine Management Organisation [\[AS-028\]](#)
- Submission made by Portsmouth City Council [\[AS-029\]](#)
- Submission made by Save Our Island [\[AS-030\]](#)
- Submission made by TB Fowler MRICS on behalf of Mr B and Mrs J Cross [\[AS-032\]](#)
- Submission made by Andrew Newbery [\[AS-033\]](#)
- Submission made by Hampshire Ornithological Society (HOS) [\[AS-034\]](#)

## 6. Request for a National Policy Statement (NPS) Accordance Table

The ExA acknowledges that the Planning Policy Statement [\[APP-056\]](#) section 4 provides an analysis of the Proposed Development against the 'assessment principles' and 'generic impacts' policies set out at sections 3 and 4 of the NPSWRI respectively. In addition, the Environmental Statement (ES) Chapter 2 Planning Legislation and Policy Section 2.3 [\[APP-081\]](#) includes reference to NPSWRI policies, as do other topic chapters of the ES. However, to facilitate the interested parties ease of navigation of NPS policy compliance during the Examination, the ExA considers that this information should be collated into a single document.

The ExA therefore requests the Applicant to provide a separate NPS Accordance Table in a similar format as that included, for example, in the NPSWRI section of Table 10.2 ES Chapter 10 [\[APP-089\]](#) to incorporate policy compliance with all relevant NPSWRI policies including those set out in the Planning Policy Statement and the individual ES Chapters. The NPS Accordance Table should provide details of the relevant NPSWRI paragraph reference, a summary of policy requirements and where that is addressed in the evidence. We request that the applicant provides the

first version of an NPS Accordance Table collated in a single document by the first deadline of the Examination period that will be specified in the Examination Timetable. The Examination Timetable will also include provision for subsequent versions to be updated at various deadlines to be specified in that timetable. The document should provide an assessment of the Proposed Development's conformity with all the NPSWRI policies which have effect during the Examination.

## **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 on the [documents](#) page 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 [hampshirewaterproject@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:hampshirewaterproject@planninginspectorate.gov.uk) or contact us on 0303 444 5000.

## **The Examination Library**

For ease of navigation, please refer to the [Examination Library](#) (EL) which is accessible by clicking the blue link at the top of the [documents](#) page. The EL is updated regularly throughout the examination.

The EL records and provides a hyperlink to:

- each application document
- each representation made to the examination
- each procedural decision made by the Examining Authority

Each document is given a unique reference which will be fixed for the duration of the examination. **Please quote the unique reference from the EL 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 ('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, then you should enter the unique reference of the person or organisation you are representing. If you are not a registered interested party then it is at the discretion of the Examining Authority 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 Find a National Infrastructure Project 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 D** 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.