Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Hearing Transcript

Project:	Hampshire Water Transfer and Water Recycling Project
Hearing:	Recording of Preliminary Meeting - Part 2
Date:	11 November 2026

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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:05:04 - 00:00:10:03
If you would take your seats, everyone, the meeting will shortly be resumed.

00:00:14:11 - 00:00:15:07
Thank you.

00:00:16:25 - 00:00:17:10
The

00:00:17:12 - 00:00:19:02
meeting is resumed.

00:00:21:07 - 00:00:35:14
Now the last substantive item on the agenda is item five, which relates to other procedural decisions that we have made. I will ask my colleague, Mrs. Bennett Matthews, to lead on this topic.

00:00:37:00 - 00:00:43:29
Thank you. Can the applicant please share annex f of the agenda on the screen, please?

00:00:49:22 - 00:01:05:00
Before moving on, I should clarify typographical a error which occurred in the agenda. Under item five, the procedural decisions are referred to as being annexed... At Annex e of the rule six letter that should read Annex f.

00:01:07:22 - 00:01:49:25
Annex F to the Rule six letter sets out a number of procedural decisions we have already made about the management of the examination. I'm going to take each of those decisions in turn and deal with any related matters that have arisen. Some can be dealt with quite briefly, while others may require a little more discussion. These decisions will not necessarily apply to every interested party, but I would

encourage everyone to familiarize themselves with Annex F so that you are aware of any requests that may apply to you and any information that may be relevant or helpful during the examination.

00:01:51:14 - 00:02:07:29
I will deal with each procedural decision, summarize briefly if we haven't already covered it. I will then ask for comments on the item. I would like to remind all parties who wish to to comment to introduce themselves, if applicable, stating who you are or who you're representing.

00:02:11:10 - 00:02:43:10
Procedural decision one, use of artificial intelligence. The planning inspectorate recognizes the benefits that artificial intelligence, or AI, can bring to the planning system when it is used ethically and transparently. If you have used AI to create or materially alter a submission, then in accordance with the planning inspectorate's guidance on the use of artificial intelligence, you should declare that use. This does not include using AI simply for the...

00:02:43:12 - 00:03:16:02
For basic spelling or grammatical checks. And Annex F to the Rule six letter provides further information on our required approach to the use of AI and includes a link to the planning inspectorate's guidance for submitting information that has been altered generated or altered by AI. Please make sure that you follow the guidance when making submissions to the examination. If you are unsure whether you need to make a declaration, please speak to the case team.

00:03:19:12 - 00:03:26:21
The EXA reserves the right not to accept a submission that does not comply with the relevant requirements.

00:03:28:09 - 00:03:33:15
Moving on. Procedural decision item two, statements of common ground.

00:03:36:26 - 00:04:09:02
We've already covered some of the submissions with regards to the statements of common grounds. I would just like to say a few words about the panel's expectations for Statements of Common Grounds. The purposes of Statements of Common Grounds is to help identify what is agreed, what remains in dispute, and whether any matters no longer require further evidence. Where a matter remains in dispute, the statements of common ground should briefly and clearly explain each party's position.

00:04:11:14 - 00:04:20:23
I should emphasize that agreement between the parties does not prevent the EXA from examining a matter further where we consider it necessary.

00:04:22:11 - 00:04:47:16
A statement of common grounds can also be used to answer the EXA's written questions. Where a question is fully answered in a statement of common ground, there is no need to repeat the same information in a separate response. Similarly, any principal areas of disagreement summary should be incorporated into the relevant statements of common grounds so that the parties' positions can be found in one place.

00:04:50:07 - 00:05:18:23
We would like to ask all parties involved in preparing Statements of Common Grounds to engage positively and constructively and give them time, appropriate attention throughout the examination. The parties should also note that there is a... That that that it is the aim of the relevant cost guidance to ensure that the statements of common grounds are prepared by all involved in a positive and constructive manner.

00:05:20:13 - 00:05:33:26
We will also ask the applicant to maintain an updated statement of commonality throughout the examination, providing an overview of the position and progress of each statement of common ground at the relevant deadlines.

00:05:37:26 - 00:05:52:11
Moving on to procedural deadline A submissions concerning statements of common ground. I turn next to the submission of Mr. Andrew Newbury concerning the statements of common ground between the applicant and Portsmouth Water Limited.

00:05:53:26 - 00:06:25:17
We have already discussed this on the Item four of the draft timetable, so don't I intend to reiterate again those points. You've also raised, mister Newbury, submissions in relation to annex f to the rule six letter, which requires the draft statements of common ground should cover the relevant provisions of the draft DCO. We're gonna propose to cover those again, if you're happy with that. I will now turn to you, mister Newbury.

00:06:25:19 - 00:06:30:10
Is there anything further that you would like to add in relation to your procedural deadline A submission?

00:06:30:12 - 00:07:05:06
Yes. Think there was one other thing I'd noticed in my written representation going way back to my first representations was that the applicant refers to the statements of common ground with Portsmouth Water. And I think in three places from recollection, you can verify that by looking at my written representations. All the other statements of common ground, as far as I'm aware, have been disclosed in draft. We are still waiting to see a first draft of the Portsmouth statements of common ground.

00:07:06:10 - 00:07:41:27
That's still not been made available. I can only imply that, that means that there is not much common ground between the two. And I'd asked to have an earlier release of the draft as it exists at the moment, minding, as I say, that if you look at the applicant's own case, there are a number of areas, including one where it says something is agreed and cross refers to the Portsmouth statement of common ground. So I would still prefer to have an earlier sight of the current version of the statement of common ground.

00:07:45:02 - 00:07:57:23

Thank you, mister Kneebury. I am gonna give the applicant a final right of reply, but I would just like to confirm whether any of the interested parties would like to comment on the statements of common ground. Are there any other comments?

00:08:00:12 - 00:08:04:03
Does anyone else in the room wish to comment on the statements of common grounds?

00:08:07:21 - 00:08:36:17
I'm Harry Woodfield on behalf of Portsmouth Water. Just to say my understanding is that the statement of common ground is a work in progress. We're working towards the current draft timetable deadlines for that. In the interim, our relevant representations give a reasonable understanding of the nature of our position on what we believe are the key issues. But we're certainly not planning to release any draft earlier than the currently set or the currently indicated deadline.

00:08:41:29 - 00:08:48:08
Can I just ask whether there is anybody virtually that has any comments in relation to the statements of common grounds?

00:08:51:05 - 00:08:58:24
I can't see any hands raised. Can I move to the applicant for a final reply, the statement of common grounds?

00:09:00:08 - 00:09:32:05
Thank you, ma'am. Robbie Owen or the applicant, I think I just like to comment on that point about the ports of the border statement of common ground. I endorse what you heard just now from Mr. Philpot that we are working closely and collaboratively with Ports of Water on that. You set out in the rule six letter deadlines for drafts at deadline one and deadline two. We are working towards what you've set out, both in relation to that and the other additional statements of common ground you've requested.

00:09:32:07 - 00:10:02:08
And Mr. Newby refers to earlier sight of the current version. Well, as Mr. Pilbara said, it's a work in progress. It's not in the same condition presentation as the statements of common ground you've already got. And therefore, we are all I can give a commitment to is, which I'm happy to do, is that we are carrying on working with Portsmouth Water to progress it. And that is something we're committed to doing in line with your requirements in the Rule six letter.

00:10:02:18 - 00:10:12:18
Could I just ask just for absolute clarity, which deadline, d one or d two, are we going to have first sight of any such document?

00:10:13:12 - 00:10:17:07
Well, as per Annex F and your procedural decisions,

00:10:19:05 - 00:10:50:12

I think you're asking all parties to or you're asking rather the applicant on behalf of those additional statements of common ground you've requested, therefore, including the ports of Water one to work to deadline one. But if it can't be achieved, then you've asked for a draft to deadline two. And that applies to Portsmouth Water as it applies to the other four steps to common ground you've set out there in Annex F. And time will tell whether we are able to meet deadline one or not in terms of an agreed draft.

00:10:50:14 - 00:10:53:01
So I can't really say anything more than that at this moment.

00:10:53:03 - 00:10:54:10
No, but that's helpful.

00:10:54:12 - 00:11:01:23
Thank you. Thank you. Moving on to the next procedural decision, Item three, Accompanied Site Inspection.

00:11:03:17 - 00:11:36:03
The deadline for suggested locations for the accompanied site inspection has was procedural deadline A, second of November twenty twenty six. That deadline has now passed. Any further suggested locations will therefore be accepted at the EXA's discretion. We have already discussed on the Item four, the draft timetable dates relating to the accompanying site inspection. Thank you to everyone who has made submissions on the accompanying site inspections in response to procedural deadline A.

00:11:36:08 - 00:11:46:03
We will consider all the locations and comments received when deciding whether an accompanying site inspection is necessary, and if so, which locations should be included.

00:11:48:13 - 00:12:03:26
I'd like to draw particular attention to Point three of Mr. Newbury's submission procedural on the procedural decision relating to a company's site inspection and which suggests locations for the company's site inspections proposed.

00:12:07:14 - 00:12:44:07
The EXA has already undertaken a two day unaccompanied site unaccompanied, sorry, site inspection, and a note of that inspection is available on the project page. During that inspection, we viewed a wide range of locations from publicly accessible vantage points across the order land and surrounding area, including a number of public rights of way. We did not walk every footpath or visit every suggested viewpoint, but the inspection was very helpful in developing our understanding of the proposed development, the sites concerned and their surroundings.

00:12:46:02 - 00:13:14:02
We therefore intend to use an accompanying site inspection where we consider accompaniment or access to land that is not publicly accessible to be necessary. For example, this could include access to residential property or other private land. Where appropriate, it might... It may also be possible to

arrange access to a specific location without requiring all participants in an accompanied site inspection to attend.

00:13:18:02 - 00:13:20:28
Mister Newbury, is there anything further that you wish to add?

00:13:24:21 - 00:13:25:06
Sorry?

00:13:25:08 - 00:13:28:16
That is specifically on... I mentioned earlier the

00:13:28:18 - 00:13:46:14
ones that we've suggested is we weren't sure whether or not you'd visited those during your visit. You... Because you expressed things fairly generally in terms of your lane and things. So we gave arrows on a map to indicate, and you will be able to judge whether or not you've already visited those adequately. But we would encourage you to visit them, but they don't need to be accompanied.

00:13:46:16 - 00:13:47:01
Thank you

00:13:47:03 - 00:13:49:06
very much. Thank you for that.

00:13:49:08 - 00:13:55:00
Thank you. As I say, we tried to pull pull our resources together to... In accordance the rule six letter, so I've got nothing to add on that.

00:13:55:03 - 00:13:57:07
Thank you. That's very helpful. Thank you very much.

00:13:59:15 - 00:14:34:01
Just a point on that. I hadn't looked at this before or thought about it, but it occurs to me that given my earlier statement about looking at the benefits of the project, is there any visit proposed to the lower rich in I. E. The reach of the river below Otterborn, where the main abstraction from surface and groundwater occurs, which will be replaced by the project or some of the abstractions from there will be reduced. Therefore, that will benefit that lower reach down to the solvent water.

00:14:34:13 - 00:15:11:00
Whether there's benefit in seeing that area because that is where, as my colleague Paul mentioned, the Atlantic salmon, the endangered Atlantic salmon, that is an area that's the area where they are most at risk from the low flows that would occur if we have a drought and we have to continue abstracting under a drought order from the Itchen. So that, in terms of the benefit of the project and the purpose of the project, to me, seems a reasonably important area to to consider.

00:15:11:02 - 00:15:14:06

Just a a thought that occurs to me now. Thank you.

00:15:14:08 - 00:15:19:10
Okay. Thank you very much for that submission. We can certainly consider that. Thank you. Thank you for that. That's very helpful.

00:15:22:29 - 00:15:34:10
Could I ask if there is anybody else that has any comments in relation to a company's site visits in the room? And can I also ask virtually if anybody has any other comments?

00:15:36:27 - 00:15:41:21
I can't see any hands raised, so I'm next procedural decision.

00:15:42:00 - 00:15:44:12
Sorry. I do see a hand raised.

00:15:46:22 - 00:15:48:27
Mister Chetwynd Stapleton?

00:15:50:08 - 00:15:57:18
Yes, madam. Thank you. Just very briefly. So our PDA document, PDA006

00:15:59:18 - 00:16:23:14
was suggested locations to site visits. I would just clarify that of the three suggested locations in that document, only location one... I mean, they all can be accompanied if you wish them to be, but I would say that locations two and three can be unaccompanied. Location one, however, would need to be accompanied.

00:16:27:07 - 00:16:30:15
Thank you, mister Stapleton. That's very helpful. Thank you.

00:16:32:25 - 00:16:50:22
Can I ask again if there's anybody else virtually that wishes to make any comments or submissions on accompanied site visits or in the room? I can't see any hands, so I'll move on to the next agenda item.

00:16:52:22 - 00:16:58:22
Actually, could I ask the applicant, sorry, if you've got any comments in relation to that procedural decision?

00:17:01:18 - 00:17:05:20
Robby Owen, for the applicant, do have any comments on the company site inspection?

00:17:07:18 - 00:17:24:16
Particularly. I'm just thinking that looking at Annex F, the requirement on us is to prepare the draft itinerary based on the submissions you've now had at procedural deadline A. And clearly,

00:17:26:04 - 00:17:47:00
the process of coming up with a draft itinerary would involve the applicant making a number of judgments, including, in that latter respect, from Mr. Chetwynd Stapleton, whether some locations suggested need to be accompanied or can be visited on unaccompanied basis. So we would have to make some judgments. However,

00:17:48:15 - 00:18:16:04
you provided in deadline two for interested parties to comment on what we've come up with. And then it's down to examining authority to publish, I think, on the fifth of January, your sort of final word on the matter, including if there are any disputes on the judgments we've made. So think what you set out works well, and we will act in accordance with it. So I've got no other comments to make.

00:18:17:03 - 00:18:18:21
K. Thank you very much.

00:18:26:24 - 00:18:33:19
Moving on to the next item on the agenda, status of the applicant's examination documents.

00:18:35:16 - 00:19:09:28
Procedural decision four concerns the status of the applicant's examination documents. We have asked the applicant to provide an updated guide to the application at relevant deadlines, identifying the most up to date version of each document and any documents that have been superseded either in whole or in part. A final version is due at deadline eight. It is important that the guide to the application includes current Examination Library references so that everyone can readily identify the latest version of each document.

00:19:11:07 - 00:19:46:18
The examination library will be... Also be updated throughout the examination to assist with this. We appreciate that there is a significant volume of documentation and that it can be very difficult to navigate. The guide to the application is therefore an important signposting document for everyone participating in the examination. Where the draft development consent order is updated, we have asked the applicant to provide a clean version together with track change version and a schedule of changes.

00:19:47:15 - 00:19:53:00
The explanatory memorandum should also be updated when necessary to explain any amendments.

00:19:54:21 - 00:20:05:16
We also expect updated versions of the land rights and negotiations tracker during the examination with the final version submitted at deadline eight.

00:20:07:04 - 00:20:14:24
Can I ask the interested parties if they have any comments relating to the updating of the examination documents?

00:20:17:14 - 00:20:22:15
Does anybody else in the room have any comments in relation to the updating of the examination documents?

00:20:25:22 - 00:20:45:17
Can I ask those participating virtually if they have any comments in relation to the updating of the examination documents? I can't see any hands raised. I'll give the applicant final right of reply on that. Do you have any comments in relation to the updating of the examination documents?

00:20:46:03 - 00:21:21:04
Robbie Owen, for the applicant, only to say that we have already, as requested in your Annex F procedural decision number four, we have already provided an updated version of the guide to the application. And for those interested, that document is PDA-two, and that's a clean version. And PDA-three is a tracked version, setting out the changes made since the application was submitted and the documents published.

00:21:21:06 - 00:21:28:17
So we've done that already, and we'll undertake the updates that you've requested throughout the examination.

00:21:31:18 - 00:21:33:08
Thank you very much. That's very helpful.

00:21:35:14 - 00:22:11:07
Moving on to the next item, which is the procedural decisions relating to additional submissions. Some documents were submitted in response to advice issued by the planning inspectorate on the twenty fifth of June twenty twenty six following acceptance of the application. In addition, the EXA has exercised its discretion to accept a number of additional submissions during the examination. These are identified in the examination library, which is available on the National Infrastructure Planning website for the project.

00:22:14:04 - 00:22:20:13
I'd like to ask the interested parties whether they have any comments on the additional submissions.

00:22:22:13 - 00:22:34:25
Does anybody else in the room have any comments on additional submissions? I'd like to ask anybody participating virtually whether they have any comments in relation to additional submissions.

00:22:37:14 - 00:22:42:27
And finally, could I turn to the applicant? Do you have any comments in relation to additional submissions?

00:22:43:14 - 00:22:46:08
Robbie Owen, for the applicant, no. No. We don't. Thank you.

00:22:46:10 - 00:22:47:05

Thank you very much.

00:22:49:29 - 00:23:03:07
Turning now to procedural decision item six, which relates to the national policy statement for water resources infrastructure accordance table.

00:23:05:07 - 00:23:24:13
Although compliance with the national policy statement for water resources infrastructure is addressed across several application documents, the XA considers that this... That the relevant information should be brought together in a single signposting document to help interested parties navigate the evidence during the examination.

00:23:26:01 - 00:23:41:07
I will be grateful for the applicant's confirmation that the first version of the national policy statement for water resources infrastructure accordance table will be provided at deadline one and then updated and updated in accordance with the examination timetable.

00:23:45:14 - 00:23:51:26
Robbie Owen for the applicant. Ma'am, I'm very happy to give that confirmation. We're working as it now. It'll be submitted at deadline

00:23:51:28 - 00:23:54:23
one. Thank you very much.

00:23:57:17 - 00:24:28:24
I should summarize the submission from water water matters... The water matters community on this issue. Water matters community welcomes the request for the national policy statement water resources infrastructure accordance table, but makes some additional requests in its procedural deadline a submission. In particular, water matters asked that the table also identify where policy compliance is disputed rather than only where the applicant considers a policy requirement to have been addressed.

00:24:28:29 - 00:24:42:11
It also asked for the table to express the address, the NPS for water resources infrastructure paragraph one point four point seven, section three point five, and paragraph three point eight point three.

00:24:44:27 - 00:24:49:23
Could I invite a representative from Water Matters to Just just community to comment,

00:24:50:03 - 00:24:59:14
confirm that's exactly what we we asked for and to thank you and endorse again just to pull it all together into one place and help us navigate through this very complex area. Thank you very much.

00:25:00:04 - 00:25:26:21
Thank you, mister Nibury. Can I ask, are there any other comments from any other interested parties on that matter? Can I ask if there are any other comments from anybody in the room on that matter? I

can't see any hands at all. I'll I'll come to you, the applicant. Can I ask if there is any comments from anybody participating virtually on that matter?

00:25:28:29 - 00:25:32:15
I can't see any hands. I'll turn to yourself, the applicant.

00:25:33:18 - 00:25:47:03
Thank you, ma'am. Robbie Owen for the applicant. We we did see that request submitted by, I think it was Water Matters community, but irrespective, I hear what Mr. Nubers just said. The

00:25:48:24 - 00:26:04:13
statement of accordance, the accordance table rather, will cover all relevant provisions of the national policy statement all sorts of infrastructure. I haven't seen a draft yet. But if there is a requirement that's relevant in those three

00:26:05:28 - 00:26:08:20
paragraphs that Mr. Nubis referred to, then they will get dealt with.

00:26:11:08 - 00:26:22:17
The other point I wanted just to address is that this request that the table is built to show where compliance is contested, not only where the applicant says a policy is addressed.

00:26:24:03 - 00:26:35:12
Our view on that is that the table is and should be the applicant's assessment of how the application accords with the national policy statement.

00:26:37:13 - 00:27:10:24
That is submitted at deadline one, and then as per the examination timetable, it will be regularly updated throughout the rest of the examination. And therefore, it's up to it's open to any interested party to comment on what we say about compliance with the national policy statement. And therefore, we don't agree that we should, in the table, certainly not initially, include provision for where compliance is contested.

00:27:10:26 - 00:27:26:00
That would that is something that I think is far better for interested parties to make their points on when they see the table. And obviously, as with everything else submitted into the examination, we will consider points made about the table and reflect on them. But

00:27:27:16 - 00:27:37:17
at this point in time, we don't think it's appropriate for there to be a requirement that the table should be constructed in the way Ms. Newby requests.

00:27:39:14 - 00:27:42:13
Thank you. Could I come back on that just very quickly?

00:27:47:20 - 00:28:11:18

What I would say is I'll just pick up on this point in time. If you can make provision for coming back on that later because as, for example, in statements of common ground where you're supposed to help the examining authority look at areas of disagreement, I think it would be helpful to the examining authority to highlight the areas where there is disagreement, perhaps collating everything that is brought in through the statements of common ground, for example.

00:28:13:13 - 00:28:17:16
Thank you, Mr. Newbury. The applicant, have you got any further comments on that?

00:28:19:14 - 00:28:48:04
Probably over to the applicant. We will reflect on that. I I can't immediately see a straightforward way of doing that. But, of course, throughout the whole examination, we're here to assist you in examining the application, and we will do whatever is required to assist you in examining the application. And we'll be happy to debate areas where there is a difference of view as to whether we are in accordance with the NPS or not. So I'm sure one way or another, these issues will get flushed out and documented

00:28:50:00 - 00:28:51:09
in the right way.

00:28:51:16 - 00:29:00:08
Thank you both very much. I'm sure if there's any further submissions on that, we... That can be submitted at the appropriate deadline.

00:29:06:26 - 00:29:14:28
Thank you all very much. I think that's all I have on this agenda item. I will now hand back to the panel lead, Ms. McKay, for the final agenda item.

00:29:16:17 - 00:29:56:15
Thank you. Now we now come to the last item on the agenda, Item six, where we are happy to hear any of the matters that have not been covered to date. We do have the PDA submission by Water Matters community that mention a number of other items that they wish to raise. We have read and had regard to the preliminary matters raised in your relevant representations. We will examine and ask questions on the points raised as we think appropriate, and the same applies to your point on consultation.

00:29:57:09 - 00:30:25:24
On your query relating to the submission of additional information on alternatives, we would welcome that from you. The Annex A missing information, we will be considering whether we do require any additional information on those topics in the light of your request. And I'll also ask the applicant to comment on that. But before I do so, is there anything that you would wish to add?

00:30:29:28 - 00:30:57:04
Very, very quickly on the missing information, in particular, and Tracy will come back on, the raw data has been interpreted in the environmental statement. We have been trying to pursue to get the raw data. At the moment, we just have an interpretation of that. So if you could have particular regards to

that line item, that would be helpful. We've been trying, I think, since August to get the actual raw data.

00:30:59:17 - 00:31:50:14
Just to clarify, that's the raw data for the pilot plant trials that operated at both Peel Common and Buds Farm, where the applicant has provided a summary of the data. But technically, it's very difficult to interpret because things like, detection limits aren't supplied, and results are shown as zero, whereas actually, they're probably above a detection limit. And therefore, the, usefulness of the data is quite limited in its current form. So if the applicant could be instructed to provide that raw data, and part of that request was also if they would want to explain where there were problems with the plant that might have caused that data to go awry, to provide that to us as well so that we don't get bumped into details that might actually be agreed as not appropriate.

00:31:50:21 - 00:32:22:18
So it'd be really helpful if you could do that. We set it... We tried to set out in appendix a. I went through the whole of the water matters representation, which I appreciate is quite a long document, and tried to pick out all the points where we'd identified missing information under different topics. And we've summarized that to you in just a three or four page document. So we appreciate it's a weighted tomb, but it just goes to show the extent of the information that is actually currently missing, which we feel both yourself and we need in order to assess the application appropriately.

00:32:22:23 - 00:32:34:02
So if you could request that information, that be gratefully appreciated. I was gonna go through some examples just to show how critical it is, but I suspect you don't want me to do that. So...

00:32:35:03 - 00:32:40:05
No. But if you could put that in writing to the next to deadline one, that

00:32:40:07 - 00:32:40:22
would be...

00:32:40:24 - 00:32:43:27
We we have already summarized it at deadline a for you and Right.

00:32:43:29 - 00:32:56:17
Now I've I've got the PDA Yeah. Right by my side here, and you lit... Your Annex, and it's really helpful to have had that set out in an Annex. So... But if... Obviously, if there is any additional explanation you want to

00:32:56:19 - 00:33:26:18
make, then That'd be great. The next deadline. Yeah. Thank you. And and on the preliminary issues, we're grateful for you agreeing to have a look at those, and and we look forward to to hearing what you say. We think the application has been submitted in a way that is potentially misleading and may have meant that people haven't actually come forward to take part in the hearing because they think decisions have already been made, and that's certainly been backed up by emails and correspondence that I've received that's saying, oh, well, it's all too late, isn't it? You know, it's already been decided.

00:33:26:20 - 00:33:33:05
And we don't think it had been decided, but that was the impression that was given, and we think that's important. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

00:33:35:00 - 00:33:37:00
If we could hear from the applicant, please.

00:33:38:21 - 00:33:40:06
Robby Owen for the applicant.

00:33:42:21 - 00:33:53:23
I'm just looking at the documents submitted by Water Community Matters at procedural deadline A and Item six.

00:33:55:11 - 00:34:29:22
I think just two comments from me. The first relates to the Item six point two, failure by the applicant to follow the statutory process. And I effectively addressed that earlier in this meeting, referring to the decision taken by the Secretary of State to allow publication of the Water Resources Management Plan, which will now be done on or shortly before the twelfth of December. And therefore, all those issues about the statutory process relating to the Water Resource Management Plan were aired and considered during that process.

00:34:29:24 - 00:34:34:27
And we don't think a it's matter for this process for you to be troubled by them.

00:34:36:29 - 00:34:43:06
A related point, which again I touched on earlier, but I'll just develop a little bit now in terms of alternatives.

00:34:46:08 - 00:35:18:20
I think it is important to look at alternatives in the same breadth as need, really, in terms of what the national policy statement says about need and alternatives in the context of a published Water Resources Management Plan. And I referred earlier to the WRMP24 position statement. We've submitted a procedural deadline A and drawn attention to the provisions of the national policy statement on alternatives.

00:35:18:22 - 00:35:19:14
And therefore,

00:35:21:07 - 00:35:51:06
looking at the very end of Water Community matter Water Matters Community's statement at procedure deadline A, where they refer to additional written evidence on alternatives, I would just ask the examining authority just to bear in mind that we think some alternatives will be beyond the remit of the examination, given what the NPS says about alternatives that would not provide the need that's been identified in the WRMP.

00:35:52:27 - 00:36:01:01
The third and final point I'd wish to make is in relation to the Appendix A information.

00:36:02:22 - 00:36:12:19
Obviously, and you'd expect me to say this, we don't consider that, that is misleading or missing information from the application.

00:36:14:19 - 00:36:46:03
We suggest the best way to proceed, which I detect is what you're wanting to do is that you are considering Appendix A in the context of your ongoing examination, particularly what you might wish to include in your first written questions on the second of December. And therefore, if in your judgment, some of the matters included in appendix a are matters on which you would like some information, then I'm sure you will ask us. And that is how I suggest we leave matters for today's purposes.

00:36:46:29 - 00:36:47:23
Thank you.

00:36:47:25 - 00:36:49:26
Yes. That would be that would be our intention.

00:36:54:15 - 00:36:58:01
Just just briefly, and then I will have to hear from the applicant again.

00:36:58:03 - 00:37:35:17
Tracy Viny from Water Matters. Just wanted to come back on the point about needs and alternatives. Just draw attention to the secretary of state's letter from the thirteenth of August now appended to Southern Water's latest submission and draw attention to the fact that the alternatives, have not been properly looked at. The secretary of state makes that very clear, gives a list of fifteen alternatives that he does think need to be looked at. And our interpretation of what is being said effectively by this secretary of state is that the volume of need is agreed, and the plan is therefore allowed to be published.

00:37:35:29 - 00:37:51:02
But he doesn't think that the alternative... Sorry. She doesn't think that the alternatives have been adequately looked at, and therefore, we think it is perfectly right for the principal issue of alternatives to remain and be considered and give us the opportunity to submit more information on that.

00:37:52:23 - 00:38:00:11
Thank you. I don't know if you want to respond. I don't really want to debate on this, and now I've got everybody's points. Thanks.

00:38:06:20 - 00:38:13:00
So we have now covered the matters on the agenda for this preliminary meeting.

00:38:14:29 - 00:38:17:04
If there are no other matters...

00:38:19:16 - 00:38:22:19
I believe Ron Tate wanted to start item six. Thank you.

00:38:25:09 - 00:38:28:10
Thank you. Good afternoon.

00:38:29:05 - 00:38:33:09
I've

00:38:33:11 - 00:39:11:17
been invited to participate on behalf of the Benhampton Heritage Alliance, which was formed from the membership of six locally voluntary bodies, the common interest in the heritage of Benhampton, safeguarding its history and future amenities. That said, it has limited resources and has chosen to focus on heritage issues rather than and rely upon Attenborough Council dealing with the planning issues. Anyone studying the history of Bedhampton will recognize much of its fundamental settlement history emanates from the presence at its very heart of high quality spring water.

00:39:12:17 - 00:39:39:04
The high number of visitors of all ages to be remade can appreciate this. It flows from the ground, sometimes flooding sections of the recreation area. Remarkably, it's flowed for centuries and maintained its quality. It contributes a unique attribute to the history of Bedhampton. Generations can witness and enjoy it. It's part of their heritage. It sits within the conservation area.

00:39:39:28 - 00:39:58:14
Sorry. Could I just interrupt briefly? We're not listening to merits at this meeting. That would be for other hearings. Is there a specific point that you want to make on on this agenda? Any other matters? Any specific point you want to raise?

00:39:58:16 - 00:40:07:08
It was... Yes. Particularly, the the quality of the public engagement, the the ambiguity that was in the

00:40:08:27 - 00:40:12:01
statutory notice and the

00:40:14:10 - 00:40:34:20
concern that that generated locally and a fear that feeling and a fear of arising, and why would you bother to engage with it? Because if you read the statutory notice in that particular way, you think the decision's already been taken.

00:40:37:03 - 00:40:45:05
And that came to me firsthand because I'm project manager for Bid Brahmade Friends, and it's the sort of

00:40:47:03 - 00:40:49:15
topic among local concerns.

00:40:51:13 - 00:41:32:10
I I did raise this at the very time with the applicants. I never received any sort of response, and I'd like you to consider whether this flawed engagement could and should be repeated with better clarity in a form to fit within the time frame that's allowed for a decision to be reached on the DCO, an an action point is called for. It should focus on seeking answers to the simple question, does the public support the use of the reservoir for the storage of semi treated water? The government can then be advised upon the strength of opinion to be found throughout the region.

00:41:33:00 - 00:41:52:23
And, also, does it fit within the government guidance and policy? The test... This test, government policy, covers a wide umbrella and one aspect how close it fits with the cabinet office In their approach to the process of poly... Policy forming, they say they'll make Sorry.

00:41:52:25 - 00:41:56:14
Could I just say that we we are straying again into merits?

00:41:58:09 - 00:42:02:07
I'm If you could just summarize what your wish to raise for this.

00:42:02:09 - 00:42:26:04
Consider whether you want to get another exercise of public engagement, which isn't flawed, which isn't biased in any way, and you've got a long time frame at this moment to set the wheels in motion to do that. I'm not going to try and prescribe how that should happen, but it... You know, if if you're asked

00:42:27:24 - 00:42:35:27
in the process, and did the public appreciate this and things like that? No. They didn't. They they were concerned about

00:42:37:15 - 00:42:46:20
trying to interpret what was being... This Skeffington report came out in nineteen sixty nine. I started my planning career then.

00:42:46:23 - 00:42:51:14
They... I I do... We do have the point. So if there is any other explanation

00:42:53:26 - 00:43:02:26
of that that you want to provide, then I would ask you to put that in writing at deadline one. Thank you.

00:43:06:04 - 00:43:08:18
Does the applicant want to give any response?

00:43:10:06 - 00:43:41:17
Robby over to the applicant. Just just briefly, ma'am, to say that the following... The next six months starting from this afternoon are all about engagement with the public on the project. There are ample opportunities starting with the open floor hearing this afternoon for the public to engage in the project and the examination. Obviously, we don't accept what is said by Mr Tate about the flawed public engagement in the past, but there's six months worth of that to come now, which is what this whole examination is about.

00:43:46:23 - 00:43:47:21
Right. Thank you.

00:43:53:17 - 00:44:01:03
Alright. I don't see any other hands up online or in the room.

00:44:02:28 - 00:44:47:28
So that should cover all the matters on the agenda for this meeting. If there are no other matters that anyone wishes to raise on our closed meeting, we will consider our proposals for examining the application in the light of the discussion at the meeting and all the written submissions that we've received. The minutes and recording will be available on the project web page as soon as practicable. The rule eight letter, including the examination timetable, will be sent to you as soon as practicable after today's preliminary meeting, and we will include our decisions on any procedural decisions raised.

00:44:48:17 - 00:45:16:14
We would ask you to note the requirements of the upcoming deadlines, and we can confirm, subject to any changes we make following this meeting, our first written questions will be published as we have indicated in the timetable. I thank you all very much for your help and participation in this meeting. It is now closed. Thank you very much.