



## Coronavirus (COVID-19) and National Infrastructure Projects 21 January 2022

Taking account of [Government Guidance](#) to control the spread of COVID-19, from 27 January we will consider conducting examinations with the option of both in-person and virtual attendance. The Examining Authority will consider the appropriate format for the event making best use of available options.

An Examining Authority can also make a procedural decision to make a change to the examination timetable, to change the format of events and to vary the format between different events based on the needs of the participants and the requirements of the examination process.

Details on each project will be updated via the relevant project specific webpage on the [National Infrastructure webpage](#).

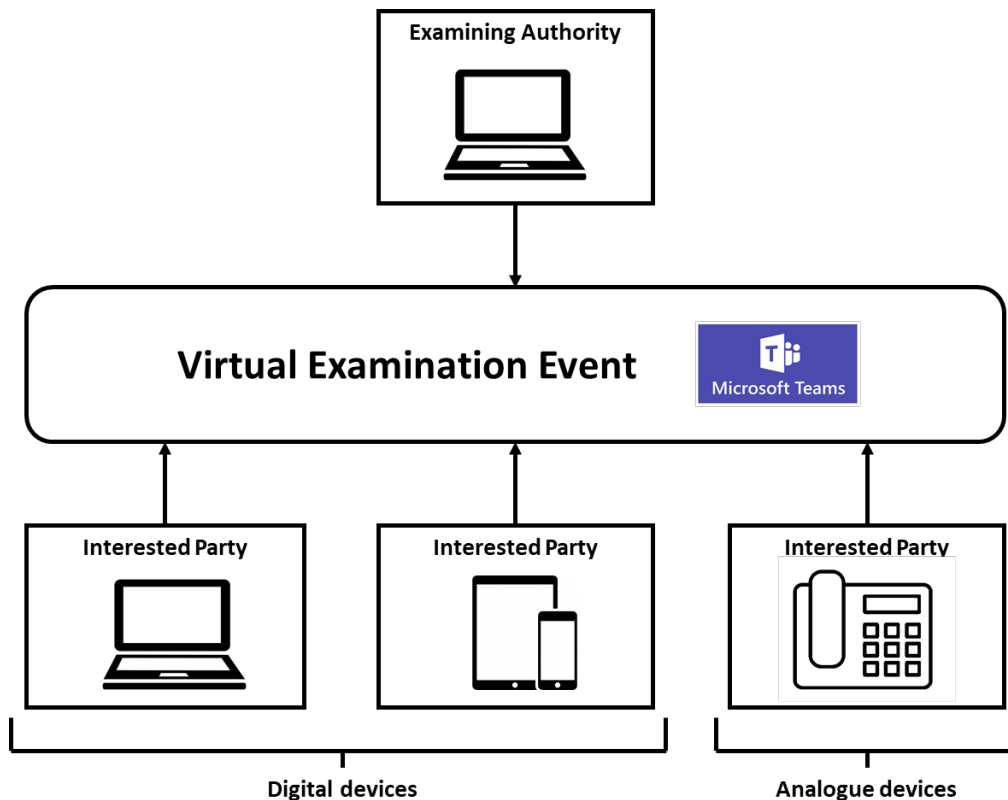
To ensure submissions are dealt with promptly, please use the project specific webpage or email wherever possible. Due to limited numbers of staff in our offices at this time, any submissions sent by post may be subject to delay.

If you have access to email but have not yet arranged to communicate electronically with the Planning Inspectorate, please send a request to the Case Team via the email address found on the project specific webpage, or provided in correspondence sent to you.

### Advice Note on Participating in Examinations

*Examinations are continuing via written/electronic submissions and the publication of documents online.*

[Advice Note 8.6](#) is available on our [Advice and Guidance tab](#) to explain in detail how examinations including Preliminary Meetings are held in different formats. Below is a short summary of the virtual format but please see Advice Note 8.6 for detailed explanations and diagrams.



A blended approach to events may include:

- Different events held in different formats over a number of sessions
- Entirely virtual events or sessions for Preliminary Meetings or hearings
- Some participants attending in person but with online access available to both those in the room and those attending virtually
- Some in-person only events where this is considered necessary by the Examining Authority

Hearings will continue to be recorded and the recordings and transcripts are made available on the project webpage shortly after the event.

The project specific webpage continues to be the main point of reference for notifications about each Examination. We will consider information submitted to Examinations and encourage other parties to continue to have relevant discussions and prepare information and written submissions where it is possible and safe to do so. The Examination process is primarily a written one and cases have continued to make good progress.

The Examining Authority will work through all material received and where relevant will issue additional written questions or procedural decisions to facilitate progress.

The Inspectorate continues to operate largely online and we are always mindful of the need to ensure fairness and open access to all parties. You can see the progress of examinations and pre-examination updates on the main National Infrastructure projects webpage.

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/>

#### *Site Inspections:*

The Examining Authority will make use of written submissions on matters which they should view and consider, so please continue to make written submissions which may support the examination of evidence via an Unaccompanied Site Inspection or respond to a request for evidence which may relate to an alternative to an Accompanied Site Inspection in the future. Where Unaccompanied Site Inspections are able to continue, notes from these inspections will be published on the project specific webpage after the visit.

Where the Examining Authority considers it necessary on a specific project that an Accompanied Site Inspection needs to be held, and where it can be undertaken in line with the Government's guidance on Covid-19, then it will be notified accordingly and published on the project specific webpage. Existing examination timetables may be updated to take account of the most recent guidance and will be shown on the project page.

Thank you for your co-operation with all these arrangements. We continue to make best use of time to review relevant evidence and to enable progress to be made on all submitted applications for nationally significant infrastructure projects in the interest of all parties. We continue to provide pre application advice to applicants, members of the public and other stakeholders.

**Please review the project specific webpage on a regular basis for updates.**