

**APP/J0350/W/25/3366043**

**Manor Farm, Poyle Road, Slough, SL3 0BL**

**Case Management Conference (CMC) to be held at 14.00 on Tuesday 22 July 2025 as a MS Teams meeting**

***Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment to comprise a Data Centre (Use Class B8) and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with ancillary substation, offices, associated plant, emergency backup generators and associated fuel storage, landscaping, sustainable drainage systems, car and cycle parking, and new and amended vehicular and emergency access from Poyle Road and other associated works.***

(Description of development taken from the appellant's application form)

#### **INSPECTOR'S PRE-CONFERENCE NOTE**

1. The Inquiry case management conference (the conference) will be led by myself, Ms R Barrett. The Inquiry Inspector is Mr D Rose.
2. I am a chartered town planner and Planning Inspector. Attached as separate documents are instructions for joining the event, a conference 'etiquette', and the conference agenda. There will be no discussion as part of the conference as to the merits of your respective cases and the Inspector will not hear any evidence.
3. The purpose of this event is for me to give a clear indication as to the ongoing management of the case and the presentation of evidence so that the forthcoming Inquiry is conducted in an efficient and effective manner. Following the close of this conference, I will issue a summary of the outcome of our discussion.
4. The Inquiry Inspector has a preference for an in-person event. That is most likely to be the format of the event, unless I hear anything from either party indicating to the contrary. I will make a final decision taking all parties' views into consideration. However, I would also like to investigate parties' virtual working arrangements in the event that something arises to indicate that is required.
5. The Inquiry is scheduled to open at **10.00 on Tuesday 14 October 2025**. It is currently expected to sit for no more than eight days. On the Inquiry Inspector's initial reading of the case, and in the absence of an agreed statement of common ground it could take more time. Therefore, the Inquiry Inspector requires two reserve days on 28 and 29 October 2025. Please ensure you have advocate and witness availability at the conference in the event that other dates are canvassed.
6. Dependent on the likely level of public interest, and scale of development proposed, I will be asking the Council for information about the venue, live

streaming/similar opportunities and pre-Inquiry arrangements with regard to interested parties. We can discuss this further at the conference.

## **Main Issues**

7. On the information so far available the Inquiry Inspector considers the main issues in this case likely to be:
  - Effects on the Strategic Gap between Slough and Greater London
  - Effects on the Colne Valley Regional Park
  - Need (national and local) including availability of alternative sites
  - Deliverability
  - Planning benefits
  - Green Belt/grey belt
  - Very Special Circumstances /planning balance
  - Conditions and S106
8. It will be essential that the main parties communicate effectively with one another to ensure that evidence is presented in the most effective manner. This should be an on-going conversation. You are therefore requested to give consideration in advance of the conference as to whether the identified matters encapsulate those most pertinent to the outcome of the appeal.

## **Dealing with the Evidence**

9. The Inquiry will focus on the above matters. With that in mind, the conference will explore how best to hear the evidence in order to ensure that the Inquiry is conducted as efficiently as possible.
10. On the basis of what he has read to date, the Inquiry Inspector considers all matters should be heard through focussed formal presentation and cross examination, using statement/s of common ground to best effect. The appellant's evidence will need to address any other matters raised by interested parties. The Inquiry Inspector will lead a round table discussion on S106 and conditions in the usual way.
11. You are requested to give the above careful consideration in advance of the related discussion at the case management conference. Any request for evidence to be heard other than as currently envisaged will need to be fully justified.
12. All the above points are included in the conference agenda.
13. The attached Annex sets out the preferred format and content of proofs and other material, which should be observed.

**R Barrett**  
INSPECTOR  
17 July 2025

## **Annex**

### **Content and Format of Proofs and Appendices**

#### Content

Proofs of evidence **should**:

- focus on the main issues identified, in particular on areas of disagreement;
- be proportionate to the number and complexity of issues and matters that the witness is addressing;
- be concise, precise, relevant and contain facts and expert opinion deriving from witnesses' own professional expertise and experience, and/or local knowledge;
- be prepared with a clear structure that identifies and addresses the main issues within the witness's field of knowledge and avoids repetition;
- focus on what is really necessary to make the case and avoid including unnecessary material, or duplicating material in other documents or another witness's evidence;
- where data is referred to, include that data, and outline any relevant assessment methodology and the assumptions used to support the arguments (unless this material has been previously agreed and is included as part of the statement of common ground).

Proofs **should not**:

- duplicate information already included in other Inquiry material, such as site description, planning history and the relevant planning policy;
- recite the text of policies referred to elsewhere: the proofs need only identify the relevant policy numbers, with extracts being provided as core documents. Only policies which are needed to understand the argument being put forward and are fundamental to an appraisal of the proposals' merits need be referred to.

#### Format of the proofs and appendices:

- Proofs to be no longer than 3000 words. Where proofs are longer than 1500 words, summaries are to be submitted.
- Proofs are to be spiral bound or bound in such a way as to be easily opened and read.
- Front covers to proofs and appendices are to be clearly titled, with the name of the witness on the cover.
- Pages and paragraphs should be numbered.
- Appendices are to be indexed using **projecting tabs**, labelled and **paginated**.