Planning Inspectorate

Second Pre-Inquiry Note – Haslar IRC

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 293D application)

27 October 2026

Application Reference: CROWN/2026/0000005

Site address: Haslar Immigration Removal Centre (IRC), Dolphin Way, Gosport PO12 2AW.

- The Crown Development Application was made under Section 293D of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA) by The Home Office.
- The site is located within the local planning authority area of Gosport Borough Council.
- The application dated 29 May 2026, and following validation, was accepted for consideration on 3 July 2026.
- The development proposed is an outline planning application with all matters reserved (except for access) for the expansion of Haslar IRC comprising the development of new accommodation blocks and ancillary supporting accommodation, the conversion and expansion of existing site infrastructure including internal roads, demolition of existing structures, minor amendment to coastal path to accommodate the creation of additional car parking, landscaping and associated site infrastructure.
- Inquiry date 17-20 November 2026 at Gosport Town Hall, High Street, Gosport PO12 1EB.

The planning file can be found here: CROWN/2026/0000005 Haslar IRC

Purpose of this note

This note follows the exchange of proofs of evidence and supplements the first Pre-Inquiry Note dated 6 October 2026. It identifies the topics on which the Appointed Person wishes to hear oral evidence at the inquiry and those matters which will be dealt with principally on the basis of the written evidence.

This Note does not alter the main issues identified in the first Pre-Inquiry Note. Rather, it is intended to focus the oral proceedings on the matters where the evidence discloses a material issue requiring examination and to ensure that the inquiry is conducted efficiently and proportionately.

No Detention No Haslar (NDNH) was granted Rule 13 status on 19 October 2026. NDNH was initially permitted to submit its statement of case and proofs of evidence by 27 October 2026. Following further representations, a final extension was granted until 5.00 pm on Friday 30 October 2026. In light of that extension, and in the interests of fairness to all parties, the deadline for the submission of any necessary

rebuttal proofs is extended from 3 November 2026 to **5.00 pm on Friday 6 November 2026**. The inquiry will open as scheduled on 17 November 2026

These arrangements are intended to enable NDNH to participate fully while preserving sufficient time for the other parties and the Appointed Person to consider its evidence before the inquiry.

Having regard to the grant of Rule 13 status to NDNH and the resulting scope of its participation, it is my expectation that an additional sitting day will be required to enable the evidence to be heard fairly and efficiently. The inquiry dates are therefore amended to 17–20 November 2026 inclusive. On Friday 20 November, the inquiry will commence at 9.30 am and will conclude no later than 3.00 pm.

To assist with the preparation of the inquiry programme, the main parties should provide, no later than 5.00 pm on Wednesday 11 November 2026, the names of the witnesses they intend to call and their time estimates for examination-in-chief, cross-examination and re-examination for each topic. Following receipt of that information, I will issue a detailed inquiry programme.

Sensitive evidence and section 321

I have been notified that the Applicant has requested that the Secretary of State make a direction under section 321(3) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in relation to certain sensitive evidence. To date, no such direction has been made.

Section 321(2) provides that, subject to any direction under section 321(3), oral evidence at the inquiry shall be heard in public and documentary evidence shall be open to public inspection. Rule 21(16) of the Town and Country Planning (Crown Development Applications) (Hearings and Inquiries) Rules 2025 also provides that the Appointed Person may take a document into account only if it is disclosed at the inquiry.

If a direction under section 321(3) is made, any evidence falling within its scope will be dealt with in accordance with the terms of that direction and the 2025 Rules. I will issue any further procedural arrangements necessary for the consideration of such evidence once the precise terms of the direction are known.

If a direction under section 321(3) is not made, there will be no closed evidence for the purposes of the inquiry. In that event, I intend to proceed on the basis of the open documents only, that is, those documents which are in the public domain and available to the parties. Any evidence upon which a party wishes to rely at the inquiry must therefore be disclosed and available for public inspection. I will not take into account any unredacted or other sensitive material which has not been disclosed at the inquiry.

It is for the Applicant to decide what evidence it wishes to place before the inquiry. The Appointed Person cannot compel the Applicant to place the material subject to the existing security direction into evidence. If that material is not put before the

inquiry in a form which I am lawfully able to consider, I will determine the application on the basis of the open evidence before me and will consider whether, on that evidence, the Applicant has made out its case in respect of the main issues.

Parties should therefore prepare their cases by reference to the open evidence. Unless and until a section 321(3) direction is made and alternative procedural arrangements are notified, the inquiry will proceed on the basis that evidence will be heard in public, and documentary evidence will be open to public inspection.

I have also considered NDNH's application dated 26 October 2026 seeking disclosure of redacted and withheld material. The existing direction under section 293H(7) remains in force. As Appointed Person, I am required to proceed in accordance with that direction and have no power to vary or disapply its terms. NDNH's application has therefore been forwarded to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for its attention, as any variation of the section 293H(7) direction is a matter for the Secretary of State.

The separate request for a direction under section 321(3) concerns the manner in which specified sensitive evidence may be dealt with at the inquiry and remains to be determined by the Secretary of State. I will therefore keep the procedural arrangements for dealing with any such evidence under review pending the Secretary of State's decision.

Topics for oral evidence

The Appointed Person wishes to hear oral evidence on the following topics:

1. Principle of development and the need case

This session will consider whether the principle of the proposed expansion is acceptable, having regard in particular to the operational need for the additional detention capacity and the weight to be given to that need in the planning balance. Witnesses should address the basis, scale and timing of the identified need; the role of the proposed 470 additional places within the wider Immigration Removal Centre Expansion Programme; the assessment of alternative sites or capacity options; the consequences of non-delivery; and the relationship between the proposal and the regeneration objectives for the Haslar Peninsula.

The session will be confined to the planning relevance and weight of the asserted need. It will not consider the merits or otherwise of Government immigration policy, the general desirability of immigration detention, or individual detention decisions, except insofar as a matter is demonstrated to be directly relevant to the land-use planning assessment

2. Landscape and visual effects

This session will consider the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. Evidence should address the

capacity of the site to accommodate the proposed quantum of development; the scale and distribution of landscape and visual effects, including effects on nearby residential receptors, Fort Road, Clayhall Road, the England Coast Path and other relevant public viewpoints; the implications of the building-height parameters; and the extent to which effects could be avoided or mitigated through reserved matters, landscaping, materials and subsequent planting.

3. Heritage and conservation

This session will consider the effect of the proposal on the significance of the Haslar Barracks Conservation Area and other nearby designated heritage assets, including any contribution made by their settings. Evidence should address the significance of the affected assets; the contribution of the application site and its surroundings to that significance; the effect of the proposed siting, scale, height, massing and indicative design; the extent to which harm could be avoided or reduced at reserved-matters stage; the degree of any residual harm; and the application of the relevant statutory duties and national and local heritage policies.

The relationship between any identified heritage harm, the wider heritage-led regeneration objectives for the Haslar Peninsula and the claimed public benefits of the proposal should also be addressed. Matters of below-ground archaeology appear capable of being dealt with through the written evidence and, if necessary, planning conditions.

4. Living conditions of local residents

This session will consider the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of nearby residents, with particular regard to:

lighting, including the likely operational lighting environment, light spill, hours of use and the scope for mitigation through detailed design and conditions;

privacy, including the relationship between the proposed development and neighbouring homes and gardens, and whether the outline parameters demonstrate that an acceptable detailed scheme could be achieved; and

noise, including operational and external activity noise, plant and servicing, and the effectiveness and enforceability of any proposed mitigation or planning conditions.

Evidence should distinguish between construction and operational effects and should identify clearly which matters are controlled by the outline application, which are reserved for later approval, and which are said to be capable of being secured by condition.

Matters to be dealt with in writing

All other matters identified in the first Pre-Inquiry Note will be dealt with principally through the submitted written evidence, the Statement of Common Ground, agreed planning conditions and any planning obligation. These include:

- highway access, highway capacity and safety, parking and overspill, sustainable travel, rights of way and construction traffic;
- flood risk, coastal change, drainage, climate-change resilience and emergency evacuation;
- ecology, biodiversity, protected species, habitats, nutrient neutrality and biodiversity net gain;
- the coastal environment and public access to the coast;
- air quality, land contamination, archaeology, employment and skills, and other technical matters capable of being addressed by condition; and
- whether sufficient information has been provided on those matters to enable the application to be determined.

The fact that a matter is to be dealt with in writing does not mean that it is immaterial or has been predetermined. The Appointed Person will take account of all relevant written evidence. Limited oral clarification may be sought where necessary, but parties should not prepare witnesses to give substantive oral evidence on these topics unless subsequently requested.

Presentation of evidence

The parties should liaise and provide an agreed detailed programme identifying the witnesses who will address each oral topic and the anticipated time required for examination-in-chief, cross-examination and re-examination. Duplication between planning, landscape and heritage witnesses should be avoided where possible. Where evidence overlaps, the parties should identify the appropriate lead witness.

Proofs should be taken as read. Examination-in-chief should therefore be confined to a concise summary of the witness's conclusions and any necessary updating evidence. Cross-examination should focus on the matters genuinely in dispute.

Any interested party who wishes to speak will be heard in accordance with the arrangements set out in the first Pre-Inquiry Note. Submissions should, so far as possible, be directed to the planning merits of the proposal and should avoid repetition.

Conditions, obligations and closing submissions

A round-table session will be held on planning conditions and any planning obligations. An agreed list of conditions, showing any areas of disagreement and the reasons for them, should be provided before that session. The parties should also identify the mechanism by which each proposed mitigation measure would be secured.

The inquiry will conclude with closing submissions, with Gosport Borough Council speaking first, NDNH second and the Applicant speaking last. Closing submissions should draw together the evidence and address the development plan, other material

considerations and the overall planning balance. They should not introduce new evidence.

Status of the first Pre-Inquiry Note

Except where supplemented by this note, the procedural directions and other matters set out in the first Pre-Inquiry Note remain in effect. In particular, the requirements of the Secretary of State's Security Direction continue to apply, and the inquiry remains expected to proceed in public.

D M Young JP BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI MIHE
Appointed Person