Planning Inspectorate

Third Pre-Inquiry Note – Haslar IRC

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

12 November 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 17-18 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 further supplements my Pre-Inquiry Note dated 6 October 2026, and Second Pre-Inquiry Note dated 27 October 2026. Its purpose is to update the arrangements for the inquiry in light of the latest information concerning the Applicant's request for a direction under section 321(3) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Section 321(3) direction

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has confirmed that the Secretary of State is presently minded to issue a direction under section 321(3). Notice of the proposed direction is being published on 12 November 2026 for a period of two weeks in accordance with the Planning (National Security Directions and Appointed Representatives) (England) Rules 2006. Any representations received must then be considered before officials make a recommendation to the Secretary of State on whether the direction should be issued. Consequently, the

direction cannot be confirmed before 26 November 2026 at the earliest and the process may take longer if representations are received.

The Attorney General's Office has been made aware that the Secretary of State is considering giving a direction. However, no representative has yet been appointed to represent the interests of persons prevented from hearing or inspecting evidence falling within any direction.

I have considered whether the substantive evidence sessions could proceed on the basis of the open, redacted evidence without awaiting the outcome of the section 321 process. However, a number of statutory consultees have had access to material which is not presently available to me for the purposes of the inquiry, and their positions have been revised in light of that material. Proceeding solely on the open evidence would therefore mean that I could not properly consider the basis for those revised positions insofar as they depend upon material which I am not presently entitled to see.

Moreover, if a direction is made and the Applicant intends to rely upon evidence falling within its scope, the necessary procedural safeguards will need to be established before that evidence can properly be considered. This may include the appointment of a representative by or on behalf of the Attorney General and allowing sufficient time for that representative to consider the relevant open and closed material and prepare for any closed evidence sessions.

In view of the timetable now confirmed, there is no realistic prospect of the section 321 process and any associated procedural arrangements being completed before the formal evidence sessions programmed for 18 to 20 November. I do not therefore consider that those sessions can properly proceed, and they will be postponed. Proceeding before the position has been resolved would create an unacceptable risk that the evidential picture would be incomplete or that evidence would need to be revisited, with consequent implications for fairness, transparency and the efficient conduct of the inquiry. The inquiry itself is not cancelled and will open on 17 November as set out below.

Further directions concerning the resumption of the formal evidence sessions will be issued once the outcome of the section 321 process is known and any necessary procedural arrangements have been established.

Inquiry arrangements – 17 and 18 November

The inquiry will formally open at 16.00 hours on Tuesday 17 November 2026 with the evening session. Given the number of people who have asked to address the inquiry, the session will sit until 19.30 hours.

The purpose of the evening session is to provide interested persons with an opportunity to make representations on the planning merits of the application. In order to accommodate the number of people who have asked to speak, individual

speakers will normally be limited to **three minutes**. Speakers are therefore encouraged to focus on the points they consider most important and, so far as possible, to avoid repeating matters raised by others. Where individuals or organisations have similar concerns, they may wish to nominate a spokesperson.

Those intending to speak at the evening session should also provide a short written summary of the submissions they intend to make. The summary should be sent to the Case Officer at crownapplications@planninginspectorate.gov.uk as soon as possible and, wherever practicable, before the inquiry opens. Speakers need not read their written summary in full and should use their allotted three minutes to draw attention to the matters they consider most important. Given the number of requests to speak, I cannot guarantee that it will be possible to hear everyone within the time available. If there is insufficient time for everyone wishing to speak to do so, their written submissions will nevertheless be taken into account in my consideration of the application.

Written representations will also be accepted from those who are unable, or do not wish, to speak at the evening session. These should similarly be sent to the Case Officer at the email address above.

I anticipate that people will be able to arrive and leave throughout the evening session between 16.00 and 19.30 hours. It will therefore not be necessary for those wishing to speak to be present at 16.00 hours or to remain until the session concludes once they have spoken. However, anyone intending to speak should make themselves known to the Case Officer on arrival so that the running order can be managed as efficiently as possible.

At this stage, those who are unable to attend the Tuesday evening session should not assume that a further opportunity to speak will be available during the resumed inquiry sessions. The formal evidence sessions presently programmed for 18 to 20 November are being postponed, and the Wednesday morning sitting is intended to be a short procedural session rather than an opportunity for further public representations. Written submissions therefore provide the appropriate means for those unable to attend the Tuesday evening session to ensure that their views are taken into account.

As previously advised, this inquiry is concerned with the planning merits of the proposed development. It is not a forum for debating the merits or otherwise of Government immigration policy, the general desirability of immigration detention, or individual immigration or detention decisions. The first Pre-Inquiry Note made clear that those matters are outside the remit of the Appointed Person. The Second Pre-Inquiry Note similarly confirmed that consideration of the need case is confined to its planning relevance and weight.

Speakers should therefore ensure that their submissions are directed to material planning considerations arising from the development proposed, including, where relevant, its need and planning justification, its effects on heritage and the character of the area, the living conditions of nearby residents, transport and parking, flood risk, ecology and biodiversity, and other land-use planning matters.

I recognise that some interested persons have strongly held views about immigration detention and wider Government policy. However, submissions which address the merits of such policies rather than their material land-use planning consequences cannot assist me in carrying out the statutory task with which I have been entrusted. I may therefore intervene where submissions move materially beyond the proper scope of the inquiry.

At the conclusion of the evening session, I intend to adjourn the inquiry and resume at 10.00 hours on Wednesday 18 November 2026.

The Wednesday morning sitting will be a short procedural session. No formal evidence will be heard. Its purpose will be to receive an update from the Applicant on the publication of the proposed section 321(3) direction, any representations received or anticipated, the likely timetable for a decision, the position regarding the appointment of a representative by or on behalf of the Attorney General, and the further procedural steps likely to be required before the formal evidence sessions can resume.

At the conclusion of that session, I anticipate that the inquiry will be adjourned. My intention is that the formal evidence sessions should resume on a date or dates in the New Year, subject to the necessary arrangements having been completed. Further procedural directions will be issued in due course.

The inquiry will not sit on Thursday 19 or Friday 20 November.

Existing evidence and procedural directions

The postponement of the formal evidence sessions does not alter the status of evidence already submitted to the inquiry or determine any issue arising in the application. The main issues identified in the previous Pre-Inquiry Notes remain unchanged.

Parties must continue to comply with the existing Security Direction. The direction under section 293H(7) remains in force unless and until it is varied by the Secretary of State. I have no power as Appointed Person to vary or disapply that direction.

Until further directions are issued, the witness programme and arrangements for formal oral evidence contained in the Second Pre-Inquiry Note are suspended. It is no longer necessary for the principal parties to submit witness timings by 11 November. Arrangements for the submission of conditions and obligations, and for closing submissions, will be addressed when the inquiry is reprogrammed.

A further procedural note will be issued once the position concerning the section 321(3) direction has been clarified.

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