Planning Inspectorate

Pre Inquiry Meeting Agenda (Rule 15)

Dated: 29 October 2025

Application Reference No: CROWN/2025/0000002

Applicants: Department for Transport (DfT), DEFRA, and HMRC

Local Planning Authority: Ashford Borough Council

Proposal description: *'Buildings, Goods Vehicle parking spaces, entry lanes, refrigerated semi-trailers, staff car parking spaces, access, site infrastructure, utilities, hardstanding, landscaping and ancillary facilities and associated works; and ongoing use of the site for an Inland Border Facility and Border Control Post, operating 24 hours per day, seven days per week.'*

Site address: Sevington Inland Border Facility, Mersham, Ashford TN25 6GE

Presiding Inspector: Mr C Parker, BA(Hons) PGCert MA FRGS MRTPI IHBC

Date Pre Inquiry Meeting: 11 November 2025

Time and location of Pre Inquiry Meeting: 9:30 to 11:00 via MS Teams

The Town and Country Planning (Crown Development Applications) (Hearings and Inquiries) Rules 2025
The Town and Country Planning (Crown Development Applications) (Procedure and Written Representations) Order 2025

The planning file can be found here: CROWN/2025/0000002 - Application information – Find a Crown Development Application

It would be helpful if prior to the Pre Inquiry Meeting, as an attendee, to review the website content. In particular, the document Statement of Matters (SOM), which was issued on 21 October 2025.

Rule 13 Parties

The following parties have requested, and been granted, Rule 13 status under Rule 13(4):

- Sevington with Finberry Parish Council
- National Highways

Outline Agenda

i) Introductions by the Inspector and advocates/spokespersons

ii) Review of Main Issues (Page 8 pdf of SOM)

iii) Skeleton outline of what Proofs and witnesses party's intend on calling

iv) Discussion on format of Inquiry sessions (Cross-examination, roundtable, or written representation)

v) Review of the progress on addressing 'Specific questions or queries on main issues' (Pages 8 to 31 pdf, and listed from 1 to 95).

vi) Close

All parties should continue to work together so as to narrow the issues wherever possible.

Please ensure that you register with the Case Officer at the Crown Development Applications Team at: crownapplications@planninginspectorate.gov.uk **before** the meeting.

Costs

All parties at the Pre-Inquiry Meeting and Inquiry, should be aware that, in some circumstances, costs can be applied for, and awarded, in relation to Crown Development Applications.

Further details of this can be found at: www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/appeals/guidance .

Whilst this refers to appeals, similar principles apply to Crown Development Applications.

Such situations may arise where one party considers another party has acted unreasonably in the lead up to or during the Inquiry, and in acting unreasonably this has caused unnecessary or wasted expense on the party making the application for costs. It is not an opportunity to recover general costs on the basis that you support or oppose the scheme, and / or the costs that you have incurred in supporting your case at or leading up to the Inquiry. The general expectation is that parties will cover their own costs in participating in the process.

Additionally, you should be aware that the appointed Inspector may, on their own initiative, make an award of costs, in full or in part, if they judge that a party has behaved unreasonably resulting in unnecessary application expense.

The following parties have been specifically notified in accordance with Rule 15:

Party	**Reason**
Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) agents for; Department for Transport (DfT), Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and His Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC)	*(a) the applicant*
Ashford Borough Council	*(b) the relevant local planning authority*
National Highways Limited South Eastern Power Networks PLC Kent County Council	*(c) any statutory party* (in this case identified on application form as landowners)
Kent County Council (as a county council, including functions such as LLFA, Local Highways Authority, Archaeology and heritage, Ecological Advice Service) Sevington with Finberry Parish Council and Mersham Parish Council (as the council(s) of the parish in which the land is situated and having made representations pursuant to Article 21 of the CDAO25) Historic England	*(d) any other person known to be entitled to appear at the inquiry* (Rule 19(1)) *Note: Mersham Parish Council is included as this parish appears to cover areas of land which are included within the 'blue line' area and to which parts of the s106 unilateral undertaking relate*
Ward Member for the Mersham, Sevington South with Finberry ward. Kent Downs National Landscape Team CPRE Ashford The Village Alliance Canterbury Diocesan Board of Finance Limited Environment Agency Natural England Southern Water	*(e) any other person whose presence at the meeting appears to the inspector to be desirable* *Note: these persons are considered desirable to be at the meeting as they have submitted detailed written representations and/or indicated that they wish to speak at a Hearing/Inquiry in their written representations. Their presence at the PIM is* ***optional****.* *Although no other parties have indicated that they wish to submit a Statement of Case at this stage, if we are notified and agree to such request, these parties will also be informed of the PIM.* *Attendance at the PIM for these persons is discretional and does not necessarily mean that you will have an opportunity to speak should you wish to. Nonetheless, attendance to observe can be helpful.*