Planning Inspectorate

To: Ashford Borough Council

RE: CROWN/2025/0000002

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

Development proposed described as: *'Existing 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.'*

Dated: 6 August 2025

Dear Mr Mills,

I write with regard to your email of 4 August 2025 and the request to extend the deadline for representations for Ashford Borough Council (as the relevant planning authority) from Friday 12 September 2025 to Thursday 25 September 2025 in relation to the above Crown development application.

In most cases, we would anticipate that the relevant planning authority would respond within the timescales set out in *The Town and Country Planning (Crown Development Applications) (Procedure and Written Representations) Order 2025* (the Order).

The application site here is the subject of a Special Development Order (SDO). As such any planning permission imposed would be subject to the constraints of the SDO it is subject to (Article 1 of the Order). Put simply, the SDO provides temporary planning permission for an inland border facility until 31 December 2025. If planning permission were to be granted prior to this date, it would be for a temporary period to 31 December 2025, as that is the extent to which the SDO imposes.

Accordingly, if planning permission were to be granted in the way that the Applicant is seeking (permanent planning permission), then this would need to be granted after 31 December 2025. This is because after this date, the SDO would cease to have effect in relation to its constraints of

only being able to grant temporary planning permission up to 31 December 2025.

To that end, in this case, there is scope for the last representation period for the relevant local planning authority to be distinct to that provided to others. This is possible under Article 21 (1)(b) of the Order, and would allow the Borough Council to exercise its Duty to respond to consultation under Article 23 of the Order.

Accordingly, I agree with the Council to an 'other period as may be agreed in writing between the authority and the Secretary of State' of their last representation date being **Friday 26 September 2025** (the additional day provides time, if required, for the outcome of the committee meeting to be written up for submission).

It would, nonetheless, be of assistance to the Inspector, and likely the Applicant, if the Council were able to provide a copy of the Officer's Report to Planning Committee once it has been published in the public domain before the committee meeting, at the earliest opportunity.

For the avoidance of doubt, this is the 'last representation period' as set out in Article 46 of the Order, and is **only applicable** to the local planning authority; Ashford Borough Council. After this date, and within five days, the procedure will be confirmed which may be by Written Representations, Hearing or Inquiry. We will write to the Applicant and to you, as the relevant planning authority, to notify you of the procedure.

For all other consultees or persons wishing to make representations, these will need to be made no later than **Friday 12 September 2025**, as advertised. Any information submitted by these parties after this representation period closes is likely to be returned.

I trust that this helps: I have sent a copy to the Applicant so that they are aware of the timescales agreed above.

C Parker Inspector and Appointed Person under s293I TCPA