

APPEAL REF: APP/M1900/W/24/3346607
Land at the former Hatfield Aerodrome, Hatfield Road,
Smallford, Hertfordshire, AL4 0HP

Proposed establishment of a new quarry, including new access onto A1057, aggregate processing plant and other ancillary facilities, together with the importation of inert fill material to restore the mineral workings.

**SUPPLEMENTARY CASE MANAGEMENT TELEPHONE CONFERENCE HELD AT
14.00 ON MONDAY 15 DECEMBER 2025**

INSPECTOR'S POST-CONFERENCE NOTE

1. The case management conference was led by the Inquiry Inspector, Melvyn Middleton. The resumed Inquiry will open on Tuesday **21 April 2026 at 10.00**. The Council has yet to decide on a venue where the Inquiry will be held. The Council should notify the Programme Officer, PINS and all third parties when this has been done.
2. The advocates were confirmed as Odette Chalaby of Counsel for the Appellant, and Matthew Dale Harris of Counsel, for the Minerals Planning Authority. The Colney Heath Group will not be legally represented.
3. The Council has reappointed Joanna Vincent of Gateley Hamer to be the Programme Officer to assist with administration and to act as a point of contact for participating Third Parties and other interested persons wishing to participate in the appeal, both before and at the event. All subsequent correspondence about the appeal should be sent to Joanna Vincent at Joanna.Vincent@gateleyhamer.com; Joanna can also be contacted on 07483 133975.
4. The Council is to draw the attention of previous interested parties to this Note, including posting a copy on its web site.

Scope of the re-opened Inquiry

5. The Secretary of State (SoS) has asked the Inspector to collect additional evidence on three points. The main one concerns the potential to redesign the public access strategy and phasing plans, which formed a part of the application that is the subject of the appeal. The others concern the ramifications of that for the proposed conditions and the Deed of Variation to the 2000 Section 106 Agreement.
6. He emphasised that the scope of the re-opened Inquiry does not extend any further than those three points. The addendum to his report to the SoS will be focussed only on the matters that have been identified and nothing more. That means that he will not accept or listen to any other evidence about the case that is not directly or indirectly related to improved public access through the

redesign of the access strategy and the phasing proposals. It is not an opportunity to reopen matters such as the principle of quarrying on the site or heritage or noise etc issues or even public access and phasing matters that are not concerned with cross-park public movement and the integration of restored areas with the unaffected eastern part of the park. Any such written evidence will be returned and anyone seeking to steer the verbal exchanges at the Inquiry, away from the prescribed matters, will be asked to cease.

7. The Inspector also reiterated the SoS's points that were outlined in his letter to the main participants in the previous Inquiry, at paragraphs 1 and 9 that "consideration of this case is at an early stage and no view on the final determination of the application has yet been reached".

Participation

8. In addition to the three main parties identified above, Popefield Farm and Salisbury Village indicated that they may wish to participate in the round table sessions. St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield Councils indicated that unless a change to the Deed of Variation was necessary, then they would be unlikely to attend the event. Similarly, Andrew Lewin and Daisey Copper indicated that written representations would be their most likely means of submission.

Main Issues

9. The issues, as set out in the Inspector's Pre-Conference note were discussed. It was agreed that the Main Issues, for consideration at the Inquiry, were likely to relate to:

- "Whether the identified concerns relating to cross-park public access and integration with the unaffected eastern part of EP, are satisfactorily improved through the revised public access strategy and phasing drawings.
- The extent (if any) to which this would need to involve changes to the existing conditions and the introduction of new conditions.
- The extent (if any) to which this would need to involve changes to the deed of variation, with particular reference to the potential for changes to phasing or redesign, or any other provisions".

Statement of Common Ground

10. The Appellant will prepare a draft Statement of Common Ground (including the identification of points of disagreement) and submit it to the Council and the Colney Heath Group for their agreement. A draft version is to be submitted to the Programme Officer by **20 March** and a signed version by **3 April**.

11. Work is to progress, where appropriate, to suggest any new or amended conditions that could be necessary, following the publication of the Appellant's proposed changes. A separate section on conditions will be included in the Statement of Common Ground.

Dealing with the Evidence

12. The evidence will be heard on a topic-by-topic basis sequentially and as listed under the main issues above (unless subsequently agreed otherwise). In the context of the finalised Statement of Common Ground and Statements of Evidence, the Inspector will lead round table sessions, but the parties will need to work together in advance, to prepare a draft agenda for each session, in order to ensure that all relevant matters are properly aired and interrogated.

13. Before that there will be an opportunity for other interested parties to present relevant Statements, providing there has been prior notification and the Appellant has had an opportunity to consider the Statement. Any outstanding matters, including matters raised by other interested parties and not covered in the round table sessions will be dealt with after the discussion on the deed of variation (or conditions if there is no need to discuss the Deed of Variation).

Conditions

14. Following initial discussions between the Appellant, the Council and the Colney Heath Group, a draft schedule of agreed, varied or additional planning conditions is to be submitted by **20 March**. A final version that includes the reasons for them, including references to any policy support, is to be submitted as an addendum to the existing conditions and by **3 April**. The Council is to take the lead in preparing that list, in discussion with the other parties.

15. Careful attention is to be paid to the wording, and the revised conditions will need to be properly justified, having regard to the relevant tests, in particular the test of necessity. Any difference in view on any of the suggested revised conditions, including their precise wording, should be highlighted in the schedule with a brief explanation given. If the differences are significant then alternative conditions should be submitted. I will lead the formal discussion on conditions.

16. In addition, and if necessary, there will be an informal discussion between the Inspector and representation from each side, following the conclusion of evidence presentation at the end of the first day. This would be an opportunity for the Inspector to express his thoughts on the final additional draft/ varied conditions, assuming that he still has issues about some of them.

Planning Agreement

17. If a revision to the Deed of Variation proves to be necessary then an early draft is to be provided by **20 March**, with a final version submitted by **10 April**. The final draft must be accompanied by an updated CIL Compliance Statement (if necessary), prepared by the Council. That statement is to set out a fully detailed justification for each obligation sought, detailing how it complies with the CIL Regulations. In particular the test of necessity in terms of how it would mitigate a particular harm arising out of the development proposed should be considered. The statement should include reference to any policy support and, in relation to any financial contribution, exactly how it has been calculated and on precisely what it would be spent. Regarding any financial contributions, whilst the pooling restriction has been rescinded, the Statement will still need to set out whether any relevant schemes are the subject of other financial

contributions in order for the Inspector to be able to come to a view as to whether any contribution sought in relation to this appeal is properly justified.

18. Although the submission of a signed version of any revised obligation needs to occur by **10 April**, if changes occur as a result of the discussion of evidence at the Inquiry, the Inspector will allow revisions to the text during the Inquiry and will consider an extension of time to allow the revised document to be signed.

Costs

19. The Inspector referred to the potential for costs and informed the meeting that if any party causes cost inconvenience to another party through unnecessary delays of any kind or any other inappropriate action, then they could be liable for costs. If any application is to be made, the planning practice guidance makes it clear that, as a matter of good practice, if possible, they should be made in writing before the inquiry.

Document Submission Dates

20. The Closing Date for responses to the Appellant's consultation on its revised access and phasing proposals is **15 March**. All representations in response to the Appellant's consultation should have been received by that date. There will also need to be a 30-day consultation period following the publication of any changes to the Environmental Statement.

21. Any representor wishing to participate in a round table session must notify the Programme Officer of their intent by **27 March** and submit a Statement by **10 April**.

22. All Statements of Evidence from main parties must be submitted no later than **27 March**. Details of the preferred format and content of Statements and other material were Annexed to the pre-conference note and are also attached to this note. Any Supplementary Statements (responding to points in the Statement of Evidence) from the main parties participating in the round table sessions should be received on or before **10 April**.

23. If representors not participating in round table sessions wish to add to their representation, then a Statement should be received by the Programme Officer by **17 April**.

24. Any changes to the existing Deed of Variation should be submitted in draft no later than **20 March** and should have been used to inform your respective proofs (if appropriate). The Statements of common ground, which should also inform the Supplementary Statements, should be submitted in draft by **20 March** and in final form by on or before **3 April**.

25. The Appellant is to prepare an addendum to the list of Core Documents, which should contain all new documents referred to by any party. A draft list is to be submitted by **27 March** and a final list by **17 April**. Available new core documents should be submitted at the same time. No new core documents will be accepted after **17 April**.

26. The Council is to ensure that a copy of the Inquiry notification letter and a list of those notified is sent into the Planning Inspectorate no later than **17 April**.

27. Advocates, along with a representative of the Colney Hearth Group, are to work collaboratively on the time estimates for each stage of their respective cases, with final timings for openings and closings, along with introductory statements for the round table sessions submitted in draft by **10 April** and in final form on or before **17 April**. A draft programme will be issued following receipt of the final timings, when the Inspector will have a better feel for the overall duration of the Inquiry. Other than in exceptional circumstances, you are expected to take no longer than the timings indicated, which will require the cooperation of both advocates and witnesses.

Melvyn Middleton

Inspector

6 January 2026

Timetable	Final dates for:
13 February	Revised proposals to be published. Any necessary revisions to the Environmental Statement to be published.
15 March	Receipt of representations.
20 March	Receipt of draft copy of any proposed revisions to the conditions (Council to lead). Receipt of draft copy of any revisions to the deed of variation (Appellant to lead). Receipt of draft topic-based Statements of Common Ground. (Appellant to lead).
27 March	Representors who wish to participate in round table sessions to notify the Programme Officer of that intention. Receipt of any main party statements. Draft list of any additional core documents (Appellant to lead) plus copies of all those that are available.
3 April	Members of the public who wish to address the Inquiry to notify the Programme Officer of that intention. Receipt of agreed copy of any revisions to the deed of variation (Appellant to lead). Receipt of final topic-based Statements of Common Ground. (Appellant to lead).
10 April	Receipt of any statements from representors who have notified their wish to participate in round table sessions. Receipt of any main party supplementary Statements. Receipt of agreed draft agenda (Appellant to lead). Receipt of signed copy of any revisions to the deed of variation, with relevant office copy entries. (Appellant to lead). Revised CIL Compliance Statement (if necessary), (Council to lead). Draft time estimates
17 April	Receipt of Statements from members of the public, who wish to address the Inquiry (but not participate in round table sessions). Council to send a copy of the Inquiry notification letter and a list of those notified to PINS. List of any additional core documents (Appellant to lead) plus copies of those not previously submitted. Final time estimates.
21 April	Inquiry opens 10.00 AM.