

APPEAL REF: APP/W1525/W/24/3344509

LAND SOUTH OF RUNWELL ROAD, RUNWELL, WICKFORD

**CASE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE TO BE HELD AT 10AM ON
FRIDAY 9 AUGUST 2024**

INSPECTOR'S PRE-CONFERENCE NOTE

1. The case management conference (CMC) will be held by Ms Susan Heywood. Attached is the conference agenda. Instructions for joining the conference and conference etiquette to be observed have already been forwarded by the Case Officer.
2. The inquiry will open on 29 October 2024 and is currently scheduled to sit for 6 days. The Inspector will seek the parties' views whether this is a suitable length of time to deal with the evidence, conditions, S106 (if there is likely to be one) and closing submissions as well as hearing from any third parties.
3. There will be no discussion as part of the CMC about the merits of the respective cases and the Inspector will not hear any evidence. The main purpose is to consider the procedural arrangements for the forthcoming inquiry.
4. The Inspector will wish to seek confirmation from the parties that the inquiry will be held face-to-face and will wish to discuss whether the Council intends to live-stream the event and / or enable people to attend virtually if they are unable to attend in person. Whichever is the case it will be for the Council to make the necessary arrangements.
5. The application is a full application for the following development proposal:

"Installation of a solar farm with battery storage and associated infrastructure."
6. The appeal is against Chelmsford City Council and Rochford District Council's refusal of planning permission. The Inspector notes that the decision notice only refers to the Chelmsford application (23/00532). She will wish to discuss the cross-boundary nature of the applications and appeals and clarify the status of the Rochford application (23/00285) in terms of whether it remains, technically, undetermined. She will also wish to clarify Rochford District Council's role in the inquiry.

7. The main issues are likely to focus on the reasons for refusal relating to Green Belt and landscape and visual impact. However other matters have been raised, in particular flood risk and heritage. The Inspector will wish to discuss whether there is a need for further evidence to be submitted in relation to flood risk, whether evidence will need to be heard at the inquiry, or whether it is a matter which will be capable of agreement through a Statement of Common Ground (SCG).
8. In relation to heritage matters, the Inspector will wish to discuss whether the parties intend to call separate witnesses to deal with these matters or whether they will be dealt with as part of the planning evidence. She will also wish to discuss how much of these matters could be set out in a SCG which could include areas of disagreement.
9. The Inspector will wish to discuss how other matters should be dealt with, in particular: need for solar developments; interested parties' concerns and the consultation draft of the NPPF.
10. There are several matters on which the Inspector will seek clarification at the CMC:
 - The number of witnesses for the parties, how the evidence will be grouped and the order of witnesses.
 - Which parts of the evidence will be dealt with by formal evidence and cross examination and whether any sessions would lend themselves to round table discussions / written statements only.
 - The likely involvement of any interested parties.
 - Whether there is likely to be a S106 agreement.
 - The preparation of Statements of Common Ground and the matters they should cover.
 - Submission of agreed conditions and agreement to any pre-commencement conditions.
 - The possible running order and timings for the inquiry and whether a reserve day should be allocated on 7th November.
 - Whether there are likely to be any costs applications and the timescales for written applications and response.
11. The Inspector will also wish to discuss the management of appeal documents:
 - Setting up a dedicated page on the Council's website
 - Core documents
 - Plans / large documents / appendices / appeal decisions
 - Proofs of evidence and rebuttal proofs
 - Documents submitted at the inquiry

12. The Inspector will set out a timetable for submission of documents prior to the inquiry.

Susan Heywood

7 August 2024