

APPEAL REF: 6002168

Mytax Farm, 4 Bourbles Lane, Preesall, Poulton-Le-Fylde, FY6 0PE

The extraction and processing of sand and gravel including the construction of new site access roads, landscaping and screening bunds, minerals washing plant and other associated infrastructure with restoration to leisure end-uses, agricultural land and biodiversity enhancement, using imported inert fill.

**CASE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE TO BE HELD AT 14.00 ON TUESDAY
3 FEBRUARY 2026**

INSPECTOR'S PRE-CONFERENCE NOTE

1. The case management conference (CMC) will be led by Mr Stephen Normington, a chartered town planner, chartered surveyor and Planning Inspector who has been appointed by the Secretary of State to determine this appeal. Attached as separate documents are instructions for joining the conference, a conference etiquette which is to be observed, and the conference agenda.
2. As the parties will be aware, there will be no discussion during the conference as to the merits of your respective cases and the Inspector will not hear any evidence. Rather its purpose is to give clear indication as to the ongoing management of this case and how the evidence will be presented at the Inquiry so that the event itself is conducted in an efficient and effective manner.
3. The Inquiry is scheduled to open at 10.00am on **Tuesday 14 April 2026**. At this stage, the venue for the Inquiry is unknown but during the CMC the Council will be expected to provide details of the likely venue.
4. Although a matter for discussion in the CMC, at this stage, it is envisaged that the Inquiry will likely proceed as a face-to face event. In the CMC the main parties will be expected to confirm whether any witnesses would need to participate by virtual means. Therefore, at this stage, the possibility of a 'blended' event' (part face-to-face and part virtual) using Microsoft Teams cannot be ruled out. In such circumstances, the Council will be expected to make arrangements for appropriate IT connectivity.
5. Other than the opening day, the Inspector considers that it would be prudent on subsequent days for the sitting sessions to open at 9.30am. The CMC will consider the likely duration of the Inquiry.

Letters of representation

6. The Inspector will have access to all letters of representation made to Hampshire County Council about the application, along with written representations provided at the Inquiry stage. All correspondence should be available in an electronic format for inspection at the Inquiry.

Main Issues

7. Planning permission was refused on 20 October 2025 for two reasons. The first relates to the impact on highway safety and the second relates to the impact of noise and dust on nearby residential properties.
8. Based on the material currently submitted, the Inspector considers that the main issues in this appeal are likely to be:
 - The effect of the proposed development on highway safety and the free flow of traffic.
 - The effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of the occupants of nearby residential properties with particular regard to noise and dust.
9. In addition, consideration will also need to be given to the need for the proposed development with particular regard to the demand, supply and landbank position for sand and gravel and the need for inert waste disposal in the County. Any benefits of the proposed development will also need to be considered that could be weighed in the overall planning balance.
10. Numerous other issues are raised by interested parties which were not the subject of the Council's reasons for the refusal of planning permission. Whether any of these matters are dealt with as main issues in the eventual decision letter will depend on whether, in light of the evidence submitted to and heard at the Inquiry in due course, they are determinative in relation to the outcome of the appeal.
11. It is essential that all parties communicate effectively with one another to seek to narrow the issues for consideration at the Inquiry. This should be an on-going conversation. You are all requested therefore, to give consideration in advance of the CMC as to whether the identified matters encapsulate those most pertinent to the outcome of the appeal, reaching agreement through discussion if possible.
12. The Inspector will review and possibly revise his views about the likely main issues as more information becomes available in the lead up to, and during the Inquiry.

Statement of Common Ground

13. The Inspector notes that a draft A Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been submitted by the Appellant but is not signed by the Council in its capacity as mineral planning authority. This should be submitted in an agreed form by **21 January 2026**.
14. The SoCG should not only confirm areas where there is consensus, but should also identify areas where there is disagreement, **summarising the actual reasons for those differences, rather than simply stating there is disagreement**. In doing that, the SoCG should draw on the documentation submitted with the planning application, further documents submitted with the appeal and any reports commissioned by the Council, as well as the relevant local and national planning policies.
15. For the same reasons of Inquiry efficiency, the Appellant is also encouraged to consider entering into a SoCG with the Council in its capacity as highway authority.

Structure of the Inquiry

16. The Inquiry itself will focus on areas where there is disagreement. With that in mind, the CMC will explore how best to hear the evidence in order to ensure that the Inquiry is conducted as efficiently as possible.
17. The Inspector would normally encourage the use of topic based round table sessions to deal with some specific topic-based issues. However, in this case it does appear that the main issues identified would be more appropriately dealt with through the formal presentation of evidence in chief by relevant witnesses for each of the parties, which would be subject to cross-examination. However, this will be a matter for discussion in the CMC.
18. There will be a discussion in a round table session (RTS) about conditions and any potential planning obligation which will be without prejudice to the case argued by those who take part in the discussion. This will not undermine their case and any questions the Inspector might have about possible conditions will be for clarification and will not be prejudicial to his decision on the planning merits of the proposed development. The Inspector will, again on a without-prejudice basis, comment on the wording of suggested conditions. He would like the views in writing of all parties about the need for conditions and their wording. Where possible these should be agreed, and if not, state clearly any disagreements or suggested alternative wording.
19. The Inspector will prepare a draft Inquiry Programme for consideration by the parties by **19 March 2026** with a final programme being prepared by **2 April 2026**.
20. At this stage it is not known whether any Rule 6 Party is likely to wish to participate in the Inquiry. However, the Inquiry is likely to follow a programme in which the highway issues are considered in the afternoon of day 1 and the morning of day 2 of the Inquiry. The afternoon of Day 2 and the morning of Day 3 will focus on dust matters. Noise would be considered in the afternoon of Day 3 and the morning of Day 4. The CMC will explore the extent to which noise and dust matters can be combined but at this stage the Inspector is working on the assumption that there would be a separate witness for each of these impacts.
21. There will be a RTS on conditions and any planning obligation which is likely to be in the afternoon of Day 4. Planning evidence, including the need for the mineral and inert waste disposal would likely be considered on Day 5 (Tuesday 21 April).
22. After the discussion of all of the evidence, the Inspector will invite closing submissions from the Council and the Appellant which is likely to be in the morning of Day 6. In this regard, the Inspector will canvass the views of the main parties whether there is any preference for closings to be undertaken in person or by virtual means. If there is a consensus for virtual closings then these could effectively occur in the morning of Day 6 or any other subsequent day that week. The closing submissions should be available in writing prior to the commencement of the closings.
23. At some point in the Inquiry arrangements would need to be made for an accompanied site visit. At this stage, the site visit would likely occur in the afternoon of **Monday 20 April 2026** but this date may be subject to change.

24. Interested parties will be invited to provide contributions to the Inquiry in the afternoon of the opening day (day 1) with the possibility of further provision being made later in the Inquiry.
25. You are requested to give the above careful consideration in advance of discussion at the CMC. Any request for evidence to be heard other than as currently envisaged will need to be fully justified.
26. The parties are invited to give some advance thought to an itinerary for the site visit and whether it would be possible for the Inspector to see some aspects unaccompanied and prior to the opening of the Inquiry. If parties wish the Inquiry to visit particular sites, in addition to the appeal site and its surroundings, then an early indication would assist programming. The Inspector will not be able to hear representations or evidence on the accompanied site visit. Those attending will only be allowed to point out physical features. All evidence must be given at the Inquiry.
27. An agreed map and itinerary showing routes and viewpoints will be required in advance of the site visit. All parties are to work together in preparing an itinerary for the Inspector in this regard which should be submitted to PINS no later than **10 April 2026**. In the event that the site visit involves the travelling to numerous vantage points, the Council and the Appellant may be asked to consider the provision of suitable transport so that all parties can travel together.
28. The Inquiry is not the appropriate forum for challenging the merits of current and any emerging Government policy or for debate on the direction of future policy. These are matters for consultation and discussion outside the scope of the present application and Inquiry. However, it is not known at this stage whether there would be any published revision to the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).
29. In this regard, the main parties may wish to consider whether there are any relevant matters contained within the consultation National Planning Policy Framework: proposed reforms and other changes to the planning system and the accompanying Written Ministerial Statement (WMS), published on 16 December 2026, that may constitute material considerations which would need to be taken into account in the determination of this appeal.

Planning Obligation

30. At this stage, the Inspector has no information on the need or otherwise for a planning obligation. This will be a matter for discussion in the CMC.
31. If a planning obligation is necessary, this should be completed before the close of the Inquiry but as this will be subject to discussion in the Inquiry itself this may not be possible. Therefore, if necessary, a short period of time will be facilitated after the close of the Inquiry to enable the completed obligation to be submitted to PINS.
32. The final draft must be accompanied by the relevant office copy entries and a CIL Compliance Statement prepared by the Council. The statement must contain a fully detailed justification for each obligation sought, including monitoring, setting out how it complies, or otherwise, 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. It should include reference to any policy support and, in relation to the financial contribution, exactly how it has been calculated and on precisely what it would be spent. Although the restriction on the pooling of contributions has been lifted, the Statement will still need to set out whether any of the schemes are the subject of other pooled financial contributions, in order to allow the Inspector to be able to come to an informed view on whether any contribution sought in relation to this appeal is justified.

Conditions

33. An agreed schedule of suggested planning conditions and the reasons for them must also be submitted at the same time as the proofs (**17 March 2026**). Careful attention will need to be paid to the wording of the suggested conditions and they will need to be properly justified having regard to the tests for conditions and in particular the test for necessity.
34. The main parties are also reminded, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, that planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and that conditions that are required to be discharged before development commences should be avoided unless there is clear justification. Any pre-commencement conditions will need the written agreement of the Appellant.
35. Any difference in view on any of the suggested conditions, including suggested wording, should be highlighted in the schedule with a brief explanation given. The Council should take the lead on preparing the final agreed/disagreed list of conditions, in discussion with the Appellant.

Programming and efficient use of Inquiry time

36. Although there will be no formal appointment of a programme officer, it would be helpful for the Council to consider the provision of some administrative assistance to the Inquiry. Such responsibilities, under the Inspector's direction, will include:
 - Assisting in co-ordinating the compilation of core documents.
 - Co-ordinating the submission of evidence during the Inquiry.
 - Maintaining the Inquiry library.
 - Most importantly acting as the point of contact between Inquiry participants and the Inspector outside the formal proceedings.
37. Throughout the Inquiry the PINS Case Officer will continue to be the main point of contact but liaison with the Inquiry Programme Officer will be likely.

Core Documents/Inquiry Documents

38. A list of Core Documents prefixed by 'CD' should be co-ordinated by the Council/Appellant in conjunction with any other relevant parties. Those presenting evidence should note that the Inspector's decision will be based on the evidence and submissions put to him at the Inquiry. He will not be doing his own research or looking up references online. If parties consider it necessary for him to see material beyond what is set out in their proofs, it is up to them to provide it in copy. Simple references to published reports etc. or links to web sites are not sufficient, especially as web sites can be

changed or deleted at any time. The Inquiry Document Library should be maintained by the Council unless otherwise agreed with the Appellant.

39. All documents forming part of this appeal must be available to all taking part in the Inquiry electronically, including the agreed Core Documents. Notwithstanding the need for dedicated webpages, the Inspector may require hard copies of some of the Core Documents, plus proofs and any rebuttals etc, although where any documents on which it is intended to rely are lengthy, only relevant extracts need to be supplied, as opposed to the whole document. Such extracts should, however, be prefaced with the front cover of the relevant document and include any accompanying relevant contextual text. The CMC will discuss the anticipated arrangements and web addresses for hosting the Core and Inquiry documents.
40. It is expected that all necessary documents will be submitted in advance of the Inquiry. Any necessary additional documents can only be handed up to the Inquiry with the Inspector's permission. If accepted, these should be forwarded to the PINS case officer for forwarding to the Inspector. The Council will be required to provide administrative support to ensure that such documents are speedily placed on the Inquiry webpages from where they will be available to all parties.
41. Unique reference numbers will be given to all documents that are submitted to the Inquiry (ID). Inquiry Documents will be numbered sequentially as received. A copy of all ID's should be added to the Inquiry Library. Normally no evidence or other material, unless expressly requested by the Inspector, will be accepted after the close of the Inquiry.

Proofs of evidence and other statements

42. Proofs to be submitted no later than 4 weeks before the start of the Inquiry and thus by **17 March 2026**. The attached Annex sets out the preferred format and content of proofs and other material, which should be observed. In addition to the electronic submission of the proofs of evidence by the date above, the Inspector also requests that hard copies of all proofs are submitted to PINS by no later than **20 March 2026**.
43. Rebuttal proofs can save Inquiry time but should be provided only where there is a clear justification for them. Rebuttals must be confined to addressing specified evidence submitted by other parties. They must not be used to introduce new matters that could have been covered in main proofs of evidence. If rebuttal proofs are to be submitted, then these should be provided by **31 March 2026**.
44. Any legal submissions should be in writing, submitted before the end of the Inquiry, and include a list of references / copies of any judgments.

Environmental Statement

45. The submitted Environmental Statement is currently subject to review by PINS Environmental Services Team. At this stage the review is not complete and therefore the possibility of further information being required pursuant to Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 cannot be ruled out.

46. Whilst the Inspector is endeavouring to be provided with an early formal response on this matter, any further request for information would be on the basis of a formal written request to the Appellant pursuant to Regulation 25. Although unlikely, the parties are advised that any such action may have an impact on the current Inquiry opening date.

Costs

47. At this stage there is no indication that an application for an award of costs is likely to be submitted by any party. Any application for costs should be made in writing and if possible before the opening of the Inquiry. It is recognised that this is not always possible but the last formal part of the Inquiry will be a discussion on costs and therefore parties should make each other and the Inspector aware of the nature of any such applications in advance of this to give opportunity for any response.

48. Notwithstanding the above, the Inspector recognises that the position of parties regarding costs may change during the course of the Inquiry. Therefore, whilst the Inspector would like to see an early draft of the cost's application, this matter will be further discussed after closing submissions at which point a formal submission should be made. Appropriate time will be provided after the closure of the oral aspects of the Inquiry for formal responses to be made.

Stephen Normington

INSPECTOR

14 January 2026

Annex

Content and Format of Proofs and Appendices

Content

Proofs of evidence **should**:

- focus on the main issues identified, in particular on areas of disagreement;
- be proportionate to the number and complexity of issues and matters that the witness is addressing;
- be concise, precise, relevant and contain facts and expert opinion deriving from witnesses' own professional expertise and experience, and/or local knowledge;
- be prepared with a clear structure that identifies and addresses the main issues within the witness's field of knowledge and avoids repetition;
- focus on what is really necessary to make the case and avoid including unnecessary material, or duplicating material in other documents or another witness's evidence;
- where case law is cited in the proof, include the full Court report/transcript reference and cross refer to a copy of the report/transcript which should be included as a core document.

Proofs **should not**:

- **duplicate information already included in other Inquiry material**, such as site description, planning history and the relevant planning policy;
- **recite the text of policies referred to elsewhere**: the proofs need only identify the relevant policy numbers, with extracts being provided as core documents. Only policies which are needed to understand the argument being put forward and are fundamental to an appraisal of the proposals' merits need be referred to.

Format of the proofs and appendices:

- Proofs to be no longer than 3000 words if possible. Where proofs are longer than 1500 words, summaries are to be submitted.
- Proofs are to be bound in such a way as to be easily opened and read.
- Appendices are to be bound separately.
- Appendices are to be indexed using **projecting tabs**, labelled and **paginated**.