

Putting your case to the IPC about the application

The Preliminary Meeting

What is the purpose of the preliminary meeting?

The purpose of the preliminary meeting is to give people who are interested parties in the Rookery South proposal submitted to the IPC the opportunity to make representations to the Commissioners about how the application should be examined.

Interested parties are those who have either registered to make their case to the IPC, or those who are by right interested parties such as organisations which have been defined as statutory consultees.

The preliminary meeting will be about the procedure for examining the application only, including, setting the timetable for making more detailed written representations. It is not an opportunity to discuss the merits of the application.

Who runs the meeting?

The meeting is run by the lead member of the Panel of three Commissioners who have been appointed to examine the application. The Commissioners should be addressed as 'Sir'.

Where will the meeting be held?

The meeting will be held at the Park Inn Hotel, 2 St. Mary's Street, Bedfordshire, MK42 0AR, at 10 am, on 17 January 2011.

Will the meeting venue have wheelchair access? Will there be a hearing loop?

The venue at the Park Inn Hotel has wheelchair access. Please let the IPC Case Team know (see contact details at end of this note) at least 7 days before the meeting if you have any specific needs, for example due to visual or hearing impairment. This will enable us to ensure that appropriate provision is made whenever reasonably possible.

Can anyone attend?

The preliminary meeting is held in public. Where space is limited because of the maximum capacity of the venue, priority will be given to interested parties. It will be helpful if you could notify us in advance that you will be attending the meeting, using the contact details at the end of this note.

Can I speak at the meeting?

The Commissioners will decide who will be invited to speak at the meeting. Any party wishing to speak who has not previously advised the IPC in writing of their wish to do so should inform a member of IPC staff as soon as they arrive at the meeting. The Commissioners will confirm whether or not this request can be granted at the beginning of the meeting.

Where several people or organisations wish to express the same view, they are encouraged to identify a representative who can speak on their behalf. The Panel will not wish to hear the same point repeated by different parties.

Will there be a time limit?

The lead Commissioner may need to set a time limit for people to speak. If this is the case, he will also ensure that speakers do not exceed the time limit they have been allocated. Everyone who speaks should aim to be clear, concise and to remain focused on the issue being discussed.

The Commissioners may wish to ask a speaker questions if they need more information about a particular matter.

What's the agenda?

The proposed agenda for the meeting is set out in advance in a letter to all interested parties. This includes a list of the principal issues for the examination, which have been identified at this stage by the Commissioners based upon the information provided in the application and the representations submitted to the IPC about the application.

The letter also includes a draft timetable for the examination, including deadlines for more detailed information to be submitted to the examination, along with any proposals for hearings.

When do I get to state my views on the proposal?

The preliminary meeting is not the forum for stating your views on the proposal. Nor is it necessary to attend the preliminary meeting in order to have an opportunity to do so during the examination. Whether or not you attend this meeting, you will later have the same rights to provide further written details of your views and to attend any hearings.

The IPC examination will rely heavily on the written views people have submitted. Any initial representation made when registering as an interested party is already part of the evidence the Commissioners will consider in their examination.

At the preliminary meeting, one of the issues that will be discussed is whether it will also be necessary to hold any issue-specific hearings as part of the examination. Commissioners will only hold an issue-specific hearing if they consider that it is necessary to ensure adequate examination of the issue or that an interested party has a fair chance to put forward its case.

There will also be an opportunity for anyone who is an interested party to request an open floor hearing. An open-floor hearing must be held if one is requested. It will provide interested parties with an opportunity to make oral representations, based on their written representations about the application, subject to the Commissioners' running of the hearing.

What do I do if I think that a key issue is being overlooked?

If you think that a key issue is being overlooked, please write to the IPC Case Leader for the proposal, explaining what the issue is and why you think it is important for this to be discussed at the preliminary meeting. Your request should be received by the IPC at least 7 days before the preliminary meeting.

Can I ask the Commissioner a question?

The Panel will determine whether it is possible at any point to consider questions from those attending. As the meeting will run to a timetabled agenda, it is important to raise any questions you have with the IPC before the meeting, by contacting the Case Team or by telephoning the IPC helpline on 0303 444 5000. It is not possible to email or telephone the Commissioners directly.

What happens next?

Following the preliminary meeting, the Panel will provide written notes of the meeting to all interested parties. A copy of the decision made about how the application is to be examined will also be sent and will include:

- The deadline for providing more detailed written views to the IPC on the application.
- Details of any hearings - including open floor, issue-specific or compulsory acquisition hearings.
- The deadlines for providing comments on others' representations.

These documents will also be published at the IPC's website and copies can be requested in writing or by telephone.

All interested parties will be kept up to date, in writing, about any changes to the examination timetable and the arrangements for any hearing(s).

Where can I get further information?

Further information is available from the IPC. The IPC Case Team can be contacted on:

Telephone: 0303 444 5000

Email: rookerysouth@infrastructure.gsi.gov.uk

Address: Infrastructure Planning Commission, Temple Quay House, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6PN.