



Inspector's pre-Inquiry Note and Authorising Authority's notice in writing

CASE REF: PCU/CPOP/C4235/3370163

The Metropolitan Borough Council of Stockport (72-74 Wellington Road South, Stockport SK1 3SU) Compulsory Purchase Order 2025

1. This note is to set out my requirements ahead of the inquiry, which is scheduled to open at 10:00 on Wednesday 1 April 2026. It is programmed to sit for one day.
2. The Acquiring Authority (AA) is The Metropolitan Borough Council of Stockport and the only objector is Kieran Henry (72/74 Wellington Road South, Stockport SK1 3SU).
3. A copy of this note should be placed on the AA's website, along with all other documentation relating to the inquiry.
4. The Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to conduct the inquiry is Katie McDonald MSc MRTPI.
5. The case officer is Matthew Meredith. All correspondence should be sent direct to him at: matthew.meredith@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Authorising Authority's notice in writing

6. The Inspector requires the AA, the remaining objector and any other person who has notified the Planning Inspectorate of their intention to appear at the Inquiry to send a statement of case. This is normally within 6 weeks of the date of this notification, however, given the date for the inquiry is 1 April, in this instance, a shorter deadline of 4 weeks is necessary. The deadline for submission is **19 February 2026**.
7. A list of topics (and witnesses) which each party is intending to present evidence on should be sent to the Programme Officer by the **same day**. Please also inform the Inspector who will be legally representing the AA and the objector.

Venue

8. The venue for the inquiry will need:
 - suitable capacity for members of the public

- level and open access
 - microphones
 - hearing loop
 - internet access
 - photocopying
 - accessible toilets
 - retiring room for inspector
 - car parking and accessible by public transport
 - point of contact for any interested parties
9. Guidance for setting up a venue for a public inquiry is provided [here](#). Please note paragraph 6 of the Guidance, which details electronic working requirements. I will need a monitor (with USB-C connection) and a wireless (Bluetooth) keyboard and mouse.
10. Water is to be provided in the inquiry room.
11. Please inform the case officer of the venue arrangements at least **6 weeks** prior to the inquiry opening.

At the inquiry

12. This will take the following format:
- (1) AA's case in general.
 - (2) Mr Henry's case:
 - a) evidence-in-chief by Mr Henry or his witness.
 - b) cross-examination by AA.
 - c) re-examination (*if represented by an advocate*).
 - d) Inspector's questions (if not dealt with during evidence).
(procedure repeated for objector's second and subsequent witnesses (if appropriate)).
 - (3) AA's case for Mr Henry's objection:
 - a) evidence-in-chief by AA's witness(es) specific to the objection.
 - b) cross-examination of the AA's witnesses by Objector
 - c) re-examination.
 - d) Inspector's questions (if not dealt with during evidence).
(procedure repeated for AA's second and subsequent witnesses (if appropriate)).
 - (4) Objector's submissions (if appropriate)
 - (5) AA's Final Submissions

Matters to be considered at the inquiry

13. It is important to address the matters in paragraphs 12-15 of the Guidance on Compulsory Purchase Process, along with paragraph 109. At the opening of the inquiry, the AA will be asked to confirm that there has been compliance with all statutory requirements.

Site visit

14. A site visit would be made in conjunction with the sitting of the inquiry. I will need to be accompanied by representatives of each main party attending the inquiry. A site visit itinerary should be prepared by the AA.

Core Documents/Inquiry Documents

15. An agreed Core Document list is to be sent electronically to the case officer 4 weeks before the inquiry opens (**4 March**). This is to ensure that the Core Documents can be properly referenced in advance of formulating the Statements of Evidence. Preparation of the Core Documents will be the AA's responsibility, but parties are to liaise with each other in formulating the list.
16. The Core Documents will be made available on the AA's website and any documents submitted during the inquiry will also be uploaded to the website.
17. Access to online copies of the Core Documents and evidence is to be provided at the venue for any interested parties. The Core Documents should comprise only those documents to which witnesses will be referring.

Submission of Statements of Case and Evidence

18. Statements of Evidence and all Core Documents are to be submitted by **17:00 on 11 March (3 weeks before)**. Statements of evidence from the AA should comprise one document, split with general issues and then specific replies to the objection.
19. Time estimates, draft order of witnesses and copies of the public notifications are required by **17:00 on 18 March (2 weeks before)**. A draft timetable will be issued following the submission of these details. Other than in exceptional circumstances, participants are expected to take no longer than the timings indicated, which will require the cooperation of advocates and witnesses.
20. There is no reference in the Rules or the Procedural Guide to supplementary or rebuttal proofs and the Planning Inspectorate does not encourage the provision of such. However, they are extremely useful to narrow areas of disagreement and save inquiry time. Where rebuttals are to be submitted it is important that they do not introduce new issues. Copies should be provided no later than **17:00 on 25 March**.

Format of Proofs of Evidence and Statements

21. The details at the end of this note sets out the preferred format and content of proofs/statements of evidence, which should be observed. Closing submissions should be in writing and sent to the case officer.



Timings

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| 17:00 – 18 February | Venue details |
| 17:00 – 19 February | Statements of case, list of witnesses and topics and advocates |
| 17:00 – 4 March | Core Documents List |
| 17:00 – 11 March | All statements of evidence |
| 17:00 – 18 March | Detailed time estimates Draft order of witnesses Copies of public notifications |
| 17:00 – 25 March | <i>Necessary</i> rebuttal statements |
| 10:00 – 1 April | Inquiry opens |

Costs

22. A party's failure to comply with the normal procedural requirements of inquiries risks an award of costs for unreasonable behaviour.
23. Additionally, where objectors are defending their rights, or protecting their interests, which are the subject of a compulsory purchase order, they may have costs awarded in their favour if the order does not proceed or is not confirmed. Costs will be awarded in favour of a successful remaining objector unless there are exceptional reasons for not making an award. The award will be made by the Secretary of State against the authority which made the order after the decision has been made.

Final comments

24. If there are to be any modifications to the Order, please inform the case officer **ASAP**.
25. Compulsory purchase is intended as a last resort to secure the assembly of all the land needed for the implementation of projects, and it is **imperative** that both parties continue to communicate and negotiate prior to the Inquiry, following the guidance in paragraphs 17-19 of the Guidance.

Katie McDonald
INSPECTOR

22 January 2026



Content and Format of Proofs and Appendices

Please also see Annex F.10 of the [Procedural Guide: Planning appeals – England](#) for guidance on Proofs of Evidence.

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 necessary to make the case and avoid including unnecessary material, or duplicating material in core documents or another witness' 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.
- Where data is referred to, include that data, and outline any relevant assessment methodology and the assumptions used to support the arguments (unless this material has been previously agreed and is included as part of a Statement of Common Ground).

Proofs **should not**:

- Duplicate information already included in other inquiry material;
- Recite the text of policies referred to elsewhere: the proofs need only identify the relevant policy numbers, with extracts being provided as core documents.

Format of the proofs and appendices:

- Proofs to be no longer than 3,000 words if possible. Where proofs are longer than 1,500 words, summaries are to be submitted.
- Front covers to proofs and appendices are to be clearly titled, with the name, preferred title (Miss, Mrs, Ms, Mr, Dr, Prof etc) and qualifications of the witness on the cover.
- Pages and paragraphs **must be numbered**.
- PDF proofs are necessary and must be enabled to run a word search.