

Appeal Reference: 6002030

Land East of Ansty, Cuckfield Bypass, Cuckfield, West Sussex, RH17 5AG

Inspector's Post-Case Management Conference Note

1. The case management conference with the appellant, the Council, and the Parish Councils took place on 17 April 2026.
2. This note should be placed on the Council's website.

Likely main issues

3. The parties agreed that the main issues for this appeal are likely to include:
 - a) whether the proposal would be in a suitable location, with particular regard to national and local planning policy and access to services and facilities;
 - b) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to coalescence, trees, and the High Weald National Landscape;
 - c) whether the proposal would make appropriate provision for infrastructure; and
 - d) the overall planning balance, including the emerging development plan.
4. I have noted the parties' comments about the need to discuss prematurity, and will keep this in mind as the provision of evidence progresses.
5. Appearances for the main parties based on these likely main issues are as follows:

Appellant

Zack Simons KC and Anjoli Foster who will be calling:

- Clare Brockhurst, Landscape
- Steven Brown, Planning
- Matt Stevens, Highways and sustainable location
- Annie Gingell, Affordable Housing
- Iain Warner, Care Home
- Andy Moger, Self-Build
- Gail Stoten, Heritage

6. In addition to the formal provision of evidence, Mr Stevens will be expected to participate in a question and answer session on day 1 of the inquiry. This will allow interested parties the opportunity to ask questions on highways issues.

7. Whether Ms Stoten participates in the inquiry in due course will depend on the extent to which I need to examine the evidence on heritage matters. It may be that a heritage round table discussion will be held, but I will confirm this once I have received a topic specific statement of common ground on heritage and any heritage appendix to the appellant's planning proof of evidence.
8. Ms Gingell, Mr Warner and Mr Moger are all expected to provide proofs of evidence, but it is uncertain whether it will be necessary for them to appear at the inquiry. I will write to the parties in due course after proofs of evidence have been exchanged and statements of common ground have been submitted.

Council

Paul Brown KC who will be calling:

- Josh Peacock, Landscape
- Chloe Salisbury, Planning Policy
- Martin Dale, Planning

The Parish Councils

Jack Parker who will be calling:

- Mark Connell, Planning
- Louise Hooper, Landscape
- David Lewis, Transport/sustainable location

9. Additionally, interested parties have raised issues which the appellant will need to address appropriately in their proofs of evidence, preferably in an appendix or appendices to their planning proof of evidence.

How the likely main issues will be dealt with

10. I anticipate that the likely main issues will be dealt with topic by topic (where possible) with main issues a), b) and d) dealt with by cross-examination and main issue c) addressed by the round table discussion on obligations. I will consider whether landscape evidence should be addressed by round table discussion following receipt of the topic-specific statement of common ground on landscape and the proofs of evidence. However, for the time-being, the parties should proceed on the basis of landscape evidence being by cross-examination.

Amended plans

11. During the conference, Mr Simons confirmed that there had been ongoing discussions between the appellant and the County Council in its role as the Local Education Authority in relation to the location of education provision on site. Concerns had been raised by the County Council about the proximity of an adjoining road and the risk of noise and disturbance to the educational environment. As a result, the appellant has produced a set of amended plans to

move educational provision within the site. These amended plans have not yet been provided to the Planning Inspectorate or the other main parties.

12. The appellant has agreed to provide the amended plans by no later than **21 April 2026**. Once received, the Council should undertake a further public consultation for a period of not less than 21 days. This public consultation should make clear the rationale behind the amended plans and confirm that these amended plans have not been accepted by the Inspector at this point. It would be of assistance if the appellant could provide a brief explanation of what the proposed amendments would consist of, so that this can be included in the public consultation letter. It should be made clear in the public consultation letter that I have all previously made representations before me and responses should be focussed on only the amended plans.
13. When providing the amended plans, I would be grateful if the appellant could outline its views as to whether the amended plans would have consequential effects on any existing documents such as the Environmental Statement.
14. Once representations have been received, they should be collated and sent onto the Planning Inspectorate and the parties. The Council should confirm to the other parties and to the Planning Inspectorate the date on which public consultation commenced and the date by which all representations will be provided to the Planning Inspectorate and the other parties. The Inspector appreciates the additional workload this will place on the Council, but would be grateful if the processing of representations could be undertaken swiftly to assist the inquiry.
15. To assist the preparation of proofs of evidence and statements of common ground, it would be helpful if the original dismissed plans could be referred to as Scheme A, while the amended plans could be referred to as Scheme B. I will reach a view in due course as to whether I will accept the amended plans.

Timetabling and submission of documents

16. Amended plans should be submitted by **21 April 2026**.
17. I expect to receive the agreed main statement of common ground not later than **6 May 2026**.
18. The topic-specific statements of common ground on landscape, heritage, affordable housing, care home, and self-build should be submitted no later than **12 May 2026**. No other topic-specific statements of common ground are expected.
19. The deadline for submission of proofs of evidence is staggered, due to the publication of a long list of sites on 15 May 2026. The dates are as follows:
 - **1700 on 12 May 2026** for all proofs of evidence other than planning;
 - **1700 on 22 May 2026** for all planning proofs of evidence.

20. There is no reference in the Rules or the Procedural Guide to supplementary or rebuttal proofs and none are encouraged. However, where necessary to save inquiry time, it is important that any submitted supplementary or rebuttal proofs do not introduce new issues. An addendum to the statement of common ground may be preferable to rebuttals. If such documents are to be provided, the deadlines are:

- **1700 on 26 May 2026** for all rebuttals to proofs of evidence other than planning;
- **1700 on 2 June 2026** for all rebuttals to planning proofs of evidence.

Inquiry arrangements

21. The event will open at **1000 on 9 June 2026**. At present, the 12 sitting days are 9 – 12 June, 16 – 19 June and 23 – 26 June 2026. There is one further reserve virtual sitting day on 29 June 2026. While it is possible that not all of these sitting days will be required, the main parties should keep all the aforementioned dates for the inquiry in case of unforeseen circumstances.
22. The inquiry will need to sit no later than 1630 on both 11 and 18 June 2026 due to evening meetings in the Council Chamber.
23. It was agreed at the CMC that no evening sessions would be timetabled as yet, but the Parish Councils would canvass the need for an evening session for interested parties to speak. The Parish Councils should provide an update on this matter no later than **26 May 2026**.
24. The inquiry will be held in the Council Chamber at the Council's offices at Haywards Heath. I confirmed at the CMC that it would be helpful if the inquiry is livestreamed so that interested parties can watch proceedings remotely. This would not enable virtual participation, but would purely be to observe. The Council has agreed to investigate the scope for livestreaming by **12 May 2026**. If livestreaming is to go ahead, this information should be included in the notification letters, press notice, and site notice.
25. The Council should allow sufficient time for notifications of the date, time and location of the inquiry to take place. The minimum notification period is two weeks prior to the commencement of the inquiry. Confirmation of notification by letter, press notice and site notice should be provided to the Planning Inspectorate by no later than **26 May 2026**.
26. Furthermore, I would be grateful if the Council's notification letters could ask interested parties whether there are any particular viewpoints or locations to visit that should be factored into the inquiry site visit. There should be a named officer and email address to supply this information to. The viewpoints/locations should be included in the updated itinerary for the site visit.

27. The main parties should work together on timing estimates to inform the draft inquiry programme. Final timings for openings and closings, and any evidence in chief and cross-examination should be submitted no later than **26 May 2026** as a suggested programme. A draft inquiry programme will be issued by me following receipt of final timings. Other than in exceptional circumstances, participants are expected to take no longer than the timings indicated, which will require the cooperation of both advocates and witnesses.
28. The main parties' closings should be no longer than one hour each.

Site Visit

29. I will undertake an unaccompanied familiarisation site visit to the area prior to the inquiry. I will also visit the appeal site during the inquiry to view the site. I will confirm with the parties prior to or during the inquiry whether the site visit will be accompanied and who wishes to participate in the inquiry site visit.
30. Before my familiarisation site visit, the main parties should produce an agreed itinerary and annotated plan with all necessary viewpoints.
31. As interested parties may wish to promote viewpoints during the inquiry, the itinerary and annotated plan with viewpoints should be considered to be a living document, capable of being updated prior to and during the inquiry. This should ensure that the inquiry site visit includes a full range of viewpoints requested by the main and interested parties. Although the site visit itinerary can remain live, I would be grateful if it could be sent through in its latest version by **12 May 2026**.

Management of core documents and other documents

32. The Council has confirmed that it will publish and manage the core documents webpage for the inquiry. The link to the inquiry's core documents webpage should be provided to me by no later than **1700 on 12 May 2026**. Proofs of evidence and core documents should be clearly numbered, including within the PDF tab when a document is open.
33. With the agreement of the other main parties, a document that will be referred to by more than one party can be added to the core documents. Where documents are lengthy, relevant extracts should be supplied and prefaced with the front cover of the document.
34. Any documents submitted once the inquiry has opened will be recorded as inquiry documents, overseen by me. As well as any paper copies handed to me, any inquiry documents, including openings and closings, should be submitted electronically to the case officer and the other main parties when agreed by me. These documents will need to be placed on the core documents webpage once they have been accepted as an inquiry document and numbered accordingly.
35. Any lists of documents to be referred to during proceedings should be submitted to me at the inquiry before the relevant session. This allows me to ensure that I

have all the relevant electronic documents open and ready to refer to during the inquiry.

36. I have asked that a paper set of plans and the landscape and visual impact assessment be provided for me at the venue at the beginning of the inquiry.

Conditions

37. I have received a schedule of draft conditions from the Council. I will provide comments on those draft conditions as soon as possible. A final draft schedule of conditions to respond to my initial comments should be provided to me by **26 May 2026**.
38. If there is disagreement about any final draft conditions, I require a tabulated schedule of conditions with an explanation of the reasoning behind any difference between the main parties and the preferred wording of the main parties.
39. Conditions will need to be properly justified having regard to the tests for conditions, particularly the test of necessity. Conditions should also be provided in order as the Planning Practice Guidance advises.

Planning Obligations

40. I also require an early draft legal agreement by **12 May 2026**. I will provide comments on the early draft legal agreement once submitted.
41. I will need to see a further draft legal agreement no later than **26 May 2026**. This should preferably be the final draft legal agreement, but will remain a working document during the inquiry. This should be accompanied by the relevant office copy entries and a Compliance Statement prepared by the Council. The statement must contain a fully detailed justification for each obligation sought. Should it be necessary, a reasonable period of time will be allowed after the inquiry for submission of a signed and executed legal agreement.

Costs

42. No application for costs has been made at this stage. If applications for costs are to be made, the Planning Practice Guidance makes it clear that they should be made in writing to me before the inquiry. You should give the other party timely notice to enable them to compose a response. You are also reminded that in order to support an effective and timely planning system in which all parties are required to behave reasonably, I have the power to initiate an award of costs in line with the Planning Practice Guidance.

Joanna Gilbert

INSPECTOR

17 April 2026

Summary of Key Dates and Deadlines

1700 on 21 April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadline for the submission of amended plans
1700 on 6 May 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadline for the submission of agreed main statement of common ground;
1700 on 12 May 2026	<p>Deadline for the submission of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic-specific statements of common ground on landscape, heritage, affordable housing, care home and self-build; • All proofs of evidence and appendices excluding planning proofs of evidence; • Confirmation re scope to livestream the inquiry; • Core documents, including an index for the core documents and link to the core documents webpage; • Early draft legal agreement; • Initial itinerary for site visit and annotated plan with viewpoints.
1700 on 22 May 2026	<p>Deadline for the submission of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All planning proofs of evidence and appendices;
1700 on 26 May 2026	<p>Deadline for the submission of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any necessary rebuttals/addendum to main statement of common ground or to topic-specific statements of common ground in respect of all matters excluding planning; • Evidence that the notification letters have been issued, and press and site notices have been published or displayed; • Final draft schedule of agreed planning conditions; • Final draft legal agreement with office copy entries; • Council's Compliance statement; • Final timing estimates and suggested programme; • Confirmation re need for an evening inquiry session.
1700 on 2 June 2026	<p>Deadline for the submission of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any necessary rebuttals/addendum to main statement of common ground in respect of planning.
1000 on 9 June 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiry opens.