

Southport Inquiry

Protocol for applications for core participant status

What is a core participant?

1. The Chair may designate a person, organisation, or entity as a core participant. The designation of core participants is governed by criteria set out in Rule 5 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 (SI 2006/1838) (“the Rules”).
2. The Chair may designate a person as a core participant at any time during the course of the Inquiry, providing that person consents to be so designated.
3. Rule 5(2) states that when deciding whether to designate a person as a core participant, the Chair must in particular consider:
 - a. whether the person played, or may have played, a direct and significant role in relation to the matters to which the Inquiry relates,
 - b. whether the person has a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which the Inquiry relates; or
 - c. whether the person may be subject to explicit or significant criticism during the Inquiry proceedings or in the report, or in any interim report.
4. Those designated as core participants may participate in the Inquiry in a number of ways:
 - a. receiving in advance of hearings disclosure of evidence which the Chair considers relevant;
 - b. making an opening and closing statement at certain hearings;
 - c. suggesting lines of questioning to be pursued by Counsel to the Inquiry;
 - d. their recognised legal representative may apply to the Chair to ask questions of a witness.
5. A core participant need not be a core participant for the whole of the matters in the terms of reference or for the entire duration of the Inquiry; they may just be a core participant for a specific part.

Applications for core participant status

6. Applications to be designated as a core participant must be made in writing to the Solicitor to the Inquiry and must clearly and briefly state the grounds upon which such designation is sought. The Chair will give careful consideration to all such applications and, if he considers that further information is required before he can make a decision, may require the applicant to provide such further information as he considers necessary. Further, if he considers it to be necessary, the Chair may

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require an applicant to appear before him to make an oral application for core participant status.

7. The Chair may consider an application for core participant status at any time during the Inquiry. However, see paragraph 9 below.
8. If at any stage during the Inquiry the Chair considers it appropriate to do so, he may invite a person, organisation, or entity to become a core participant.

Call for Applications by 4 June 2025

9. Applications for core participant status should be submitted to the Inquiry in writing by **4pm 4 June 2025**.
10. Where the Chair requires an oral application to be made, the person or their legal representative will be notified no later than 3 clear days before the date of the hearing at which he will hear that application.

Content of Applications

11. Applications should be submitted in writing to the Solicitor to the Inquiry by email to solicitor@southport.public-inquiry.uk The email header should state '*Application for Core Participant Status*' and the name of the individual(s) or organisation for whom the application is made.
12. Applications should be submitted in English.
13. Applications should specify in what respects the applicant considers that they meet the criteria for designation. As a minimum, all applications should:
 - a. confirm that the applicant consents to being designated as a core participant, if their application is successful;
 - b. indicate which of the matters within Rule 5(2) of the Rules applies to the application and why;
 - c. confirm whether the applicant is or wishes to be legally represented and, if so, the name and contact details of the lawyer concerned.
 - d. State whether an application for public funding will be made.

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14. In relation to each person, organisation or entity making an application for core participant status, the application should not exceed 2 sides of A4 paper. Applications which exceed this limit without good reason will be returned for amendment.

Legal Representation

15. The designation of a core participant's Recognised Legal Representative (RLR) is separate from the decision to designate a person as a core participant.

16. Where a core participant has appointed a qualified lawyer to act on their behalf, the Chair must designate that lawyer as that person's designated legal representative in respect of the Inquiry proceedings or the relevant part of the Inquiry proceedings, as the case may be, in accordance with Rule 6 of the Inquiry Rules.

17. However, where two or more core participants each seek to be legally represented and the Chair considers that:

- a. their interests in the outcome of the Inquiry are similar;
- b. the facts they are likely to rely on during the course of the Inquiry are similar;
and
- c. it is fair and proper for them to be jointly represented;

in accordance with the rule 7(2) of the Rules, the Chair will direct that those core participants shall be represented by a single RLR.

18. Where the Chair makes such a direction, core participants must agree the designation of a single RLR. If they do not do so within a reasonable period, the Chair will designate an appropriate lawyer who he considers has sufficient knowledge and experience to act in that capacity.

Applications for legal representation at public expense

19. Section 40 of the Inquiries Act 2005 ("the Act") allows the Chair to make awards for the cost of legal representation subject to such conditions or qualifications determined by the Minister and notified to the Chair. The Chair will consider applications for an award of legal expenses in accordance with section 40 of the Act after designation of an individual or organisation as core participant. Any such application should be made in accordance with the Inquiry's Costs Protocol which

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will be published in due course and the Minister's Determination under section 40(4) of the Act.

This protocol may be subject to review and amendment.

Issued under the delegated authority of the Solicitor to the Inquiry on 20 May 2025
