

Planning Inspectorate casework during the election period

News story

Information regarding issuing appeal decisions and recommendations during the election period in England.



Image by RachelH_ <https://www.flickr.com/photos/bagelmouse/17246052428>

On Thursday 5 May 2022, elections will be taking place:

- to the Northern Ireland Assembly;
- to a number of local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales, including a number of directly elected Mayors.

The Planning Inspectorate always aims to issue decisions and recommendations promptly after the event. However, in the run-up to the May 2022 elections we are concerned to ensure that appeal decisions or recommendations relating to proposals which have raised particular sensitivities or interest in an area cannot be seen to have influenced the election or have been used to electoral advantage by any interested body.

Accordingly, we will not be issuing decisions, reports or advisory letters in cases or examinations where known candidates have made representations until the election results have been announced.

Appeals casework

In appeals we will also hold back cases that may give rise to electoral sensitivities because of their nature and / or the issues involved. This might include:

- where there has been an extensive local campaign or where the decision raises very controversial local issues like inappropriate and / or unauthorised development in the Green Belt

- major green field housing
- renewables
- where there is an emerging Neighbourhood Plan

Whether a decision should be held back until the election results have been announced is a judgement taken by the Inspector in conjunction with senior managers at the Planning Inspectorate based on the circumstances of the case. We shall, of course, ensure that any such delayed decisions are issued promptly after the election.

National Infrastructure Casework

As National Infrastructure Examinations are required to comply with a statutory time limit, once the Preliminary Meeting has been notified and the Examination Timetable has been set the examination is expected to run to the published timetable.

Local Plans

All scheduled local plan examinations and hearing sessions will continue during the pre-election period and new examinations will also begin. However, to avoid making announcements that could be politically sensitive, the Planning Inspectorate will not be issuing any letters regarding the soundness or legal compliance of local plans, or final reports (including for fact check), until after the elections.

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