

I am representing Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council at the hearings. The Parish Council wishes to raise the following issues:

- Draft Examination Timetable: We are concerned about the fact that the timetable runs over the Christmas period, including deadlines to make submissions at this time. This may be detrimental to parishioners wishing to respond.
- Examination Procedure - There has been some confusion about what is needed when - the Rule 6 letter does not quite marry up with the online Have your Say form. Also the links in the Rule 6 letter to access further guidance appear to go to the wrong place at times.
- Use of virtual methods - it is the local community who will be most impacted by the proposal. Concerns have been raised about the fact that the hearings are being held in Ashford - many of our parishioners are unable to travel. Equally, we have a number of older parishioners who are less able to access the hearings online. The Parish Council is taking steps to assist parishioners, for instance televising the sessions at the village hall, but this has been a constraint for many wishing to take a more active role in proceedings.
- Site visits: The Rule 6 letter asks for additional areas to add to the site visit timetable (although there is nowhere on the Have Your Say form to submit this) - we would request that visits include from the views identified as significant to the local community as shown in Policy AB4 of the Aldington and Bonnington Neighbourhood Plan:
<https://www.ashford.gov.uk/media/sxtjfyzk/aldington-bonnington-neighbourhood-plan.pdf>
There is a further view from just beyond the northern parish boundary towards Station Road, on the bend near to Aldington Reservoir, that also looks down onto the site, which would be severely compromised.
- Parishioners are concerned about the impact of the site on local public rights of way. For instance, the diversion, or in some cases, closures of footpaths throughout the lifespan of the scheme. See document library ref: 7.15 Outline Rights of Way and Access Strategy (PDF, 2MB). Presently there is no Issue Specific Hearing on access (active travel) and we would like the opportunity to raise these issues.