

Press release

29 September 2026 - For immediate use

Campsfield Public Inquiry postponed

The [Public Inquiry into Campsfield expansion](#), which was due to open at the offices of Cherwell District Council in Banbury on Tuesday 6 October, has been postponed.

The Inspector chairing the Inquiry announced the postponement on Friday 25 September.

The postponement follows a [letter](#) from lawyers acting *pro bono* on behalf of the Coalition to Close Campsfield, requesting the Home Office to publish more material relating to its planning application to expand the Immigration Removal Centre from 160 to around 400 places.

Large parts of the material supporting the application had been withheld or redacted. The letter argued that without these, proper public scrutiny is not possible.

Participants in the Inquiry

The main participants in the Inquiry will be the Home Office and Cherwell District Council. The Coalition will also be there, as the *only* outside party acting as a core participant.

A number of significant organisations and individuals who oppose the increase in immigration detention are likely to speak.

Anyone who believes they have a relevant point to make can apply to the Planning Inspectorate at crownapplications@planninginspectorate.gov.uk or call 0303 444 5000 to be an 'interested party'. If accepted, they will be given three minutes to state their case.

A landmark moment

This public inquiry will be a landmark moment in the contested history of Campsfield House, but also in the implementation of the government's immigration detention policy. The government argues that to achieve more 'removals', more detention spaces are needed. This reverses the trend, following Sir Stephen Shaw's reports in 2016 and 2018, to reduce the use of detention and use alternatives. The numbers entering detention each year fell from over 30,000 in 2015 to just under 18,400 in 2023. A number of centres, including Campsfield, closed.

There has been no legislation, no parliamentary debate, no scrutiny by select committees, and no local planning process to examine the increase in immigration detention. Instead, the government is using a new way of doing planning applications – the Crown Development route, by which one government department says it has a project of 'national importance' and another makes the decision yes or no.

In practice, that decision is delegated to the National Planning Inspectorate which, following a mass of objections at the consultation stage, has decided that the Campsfield expansion needs a public inquiry first.

The Inquiry is the first occasion where the Home Office's argument for many more detention spaces will be publicly scrutinised and tested. There will also be a Public Inquiry into the expansion of Haslar detention centre at Gosport near Portsmouth.

For updates and documentation, see the [Planning Inspectorate website](#).

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