

# The limestone inquiry

## The Inspector's group

You are one of the Inspector's panel in charge of the Public Inquiry. You have to listen to the various arguments put forward, then present a report to the Government.

While listening to the arguments, you must bear in mind:

- the need to quarry here
- whether there are reasonable alternatives
- the effect of quarrying on the environment

These points are a summary of Government policy that is given in more detail in the general briefing.

The panel comprises an inspector and assessors (advisors), so before the Inquiry starts, you should decide who will be the Inspector speaking at the meeting.

It will be the job of the Inspector to run the Inquiry and keep order. Much of the success of the Inquiry depends on you!

## Organizing the inquiry

### Preparation

Arrange the seating in the room where the Inquiry will be held. Remember there will be three groups speaking in favour of the quarry extension (RQH, the quarry operators; the industrial users of limestone; and the trades unions). There will be three groups against (the National Park Authority; local residents; and the local conservation group supporters).

### The Inquiry

Call the meeting to order. Remind the speakers that they should bear in mind the Government tests when they present their arguments. A maximum of three minutes for the company and the National Park and two minutes for others will be allowed for the presentation of arguments. During the speeches, do not allow anyone to interrupt.

- Call on the representatives of RQH to state their case appealing against the decision by the National Park Authority not to allow the quarry extension.
- Call on the representatives of the National Park Authority to explain why they refused planning permission.
- Call on first the industrial users of limestone, then on the trades unions to support the case made by RQH.
- Call on first the local residents and then the local conservation group to make their case against the extension.

Give everyone a final opportunity to answer points made by opposing groups. If you think there is anything that has not been clearly explained, ask the speaker. Do not allow anyone to talk too long or to stray off the subject.

Close the Inquiry by saying when you will be publishing your report with its recommendations.

## **The role of the inspector**

The inspector should not discuss the case and arguments other than in the Inquiry itself (in the format above) with anyone except the assessors – it should be treated like a court in which he or she is the judge.

After the Inquiry, the inspector will consult with the assessors and write a short report stating, with reasons, whether or not planning permission should be granted based on the strengths of the cases put by each side. He or she should say clearly why they came to their decision. If permission is granted, the inspector should state any conditions to be met by the quarry operators. These conditions are rules which the company will have to follow in operating the quarry. The inspector will submit a report to the Government (the teacher) who will announce the final decision. In real life, this would be in about six months' time.