



**NOTICE OF DETERMINATION**  
**CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION**  
**MODULE 2 - SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT**

**Introduction**

1. In my [Opening Statement](#) on 21 July 2022, I explained that Modules would be announced and opened in sequence, with those wishing to take a formal role in the Inquiry invited to apply to become Core Participants for each module. On 31 August 2022, the Inquiry opened Module 2 and invited anyone who wished to be considered as a Core Participant to that Module to submit an application in writing to the Solicitor to the Inquiry by 23 September 2022.
2. The Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 2 provides that this module will examine the decision-making by the UK Government during the Coronavirus pandemic. Further modules will be announced and opened in due course, to address other aspects of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.
3. On 23 September 2022 the Inquiry received an application from the Secretary of State for Transport ('SST') for Core Participant status in Module 2.
4. I made a provisional decision not to designate the Secretary of State for Transport ('SST') as a Core Participant in Module 2, thereby declining the SST's application ("the Provisional Decision"), on 13 October 2022. The SST was provided with an opportunity to renew the application in writing by 12pm on 20 October 2022.
5. The Applicant did not renew the application by the prescribed deadline. Accordingly, this Notice sets out my final decision on the application.

## Application

6. Applications for Core Participant status are considered in accordance with Rule 5 of the Inquiry Rules 2006, which provides:

*5.—(1) The chairman may designate a person as a core participant at any time during the course of the inquiry, provided that person consents to being so designated.*

*(2) In deciding whether to designate a person as a core participant, the chairman must in particular consider whether—*

- (a) the person played, or may have played, a direct and significant role in relation to the matters to which the inquiry relates;*
- (b) the person has a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which the inquiry relates; or*
- (c) the person may be subject to explicit or significant criticism during the inquiry proceedings or in the report, or in any interim report.*

*(3) A person ceases to be a core participant on—*

- (a) the date specified by the chairman in writing; or*
- (b) the end of the inquiry.*

7. In accordance with the approach set out in my Opening Statement and the Inquiry's [Core Participant Protocol](#), I have considered whether the application fulfils the requirements set out in Rule 5(2) in relation to the issues set out in the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 2.

## Summary of Application

8. This application is made by the Secretary of State for Transport ("SST"). It is made on the basis that the SST's department, the Department for Transport ("the DfT") played a direct and significant role in relation to areas identified in the scope of Module 2 as the DfT was involved in the decision-making and implementation of UK-wide non-pharmaceutical interventions, including controls at borders, guidance for travelling on public transport in England, the 'stay at home' declaration form, coordinating NPIs and guidance with the devolved administrations and leading the implementation of legislation and regulations relating to Travel Corridors. The application states that DfT officials were involved in supporting the former SST in preparing for press appearances relating to key updates relating to transport during

the Covid-19 response. The application also asserts that the SST has a significant interest, given DfT's significant involvement in some of the NPIs and its interest in ensuring that any recommendations can be properly implemented by DfT.

### **Decision for the Applicant**

9. I have considered with great care everything that is said in the SST's application. Having done so, in my discretion, I consider that the SST does not meet the criteria set out in Rule 5 for designation as a Core Participant in Module 2 and, therefore, I have decided not to designate the SST as a Core Participant in Module 2.
10. Whilst I recognise that the Applicant played a direct and significant role in decision making and has a significant interest, other departments played a more significant role and had a primary decision making role in the context of Module 2.
11. Furthermore, I do not consider, in any event, having regard in particular to the need to manage the Inquiry effectively and efficiently, that its interest in decision making by the UK Government is sufficiently significant as to grant it Core Participant status in this Module. I am determined to run the Inquiry as thoroughly and as efficiently as possible, bearing in mind the Inquiry's wide-ranging terms of reference and the need for the Inquiry process to be rigorous and fair. Given the vast numbers of people who were involved with, or adversely affected by, the Covid-19 pandemic, very many people in this country could potentially have an interest in it and not everyone can be granted Core Participant status for the purposes of the Inquiry hearings.
12. In my Opening Statement, I said that I will publish more information about the issues intended to be covered by later modules in the coming months. The applicant is encouraged to consider making an application for Core Participant status in relation to future modules which are of relevance to them.
13. It is also not necessary for an individual or organisation to be a Core Participant in order to provide evidence to the Inquiry. The SST may have relevant information to give in relation to matters being examined in the Inquiry and the Inquiry will be reaching out in due course to a range of individuals, organisations and bodies to seek

information, to gain their perspective on the issues raised in the modules and, where appropriate, to ask for witness statements and documents.

14. For all of those reasons, having considered all of the information provided by the SST, in light of the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 2, I consider that the SST did not play a direct and significant role in relation to the matters sought to be investigated in Module 2, nor does the SST have a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which Module 2 relates. I have therefore decided that the SST should not be designated as a Core Participant in Module 2 and I confirm that this is my final decision.
  
15. I will keep the scope of Module 2 under review. My decision not to designate the SST as Core Participants in Module 2 does not preclude it from making any further applications in respect of any later modules. The SST may wish to consider applying for Core Participant status in relation to future modules likely to deal more directly with the matters which have been referred to in the application. I will consider any future applications the SST may wish to make on their merits at the time they are made.

**Rt Hon Baroness (Heather) Hallett DBE**

**Chair of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry**

**26 October 2022**