



**NOTICE OF DETERMINATION**  
**CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION**  
**MODULE 9 - ECONOMIC RESPONSE**

**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 9 July 2024, the Inquiry opened Module 9 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 6 August 2024.
2. On 6 August 2024 the Inquiry received an application from the Local Government Association and Welsh Local Government Association for Core Participant status in Module 9. This Notice sets out my determination of the application.
3. The Inquiry has published the [Provisional Outline of Scope](#) for Module 9, which states that this module will examine how economic support was delivered by the UK Government, the Devolved Administrations and Local Government by examining a broad range of economic interventions in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes economic support for business, jobs, the self-employed, vulnerable people and those on benefits. It will also consider additional funding given to relevant public services and the voluntary and community sectors.

**Application**

4. 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.*

5. 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 9.

## **Summary of Application**

6. In making this determination, the fact that I have not referred to every matter or detail which is set out in the application does not mean that I have not considered it. The points addressed below are intended to capture what appear to be the most important points made in support of the application.
7. The application is a joint application between the Local Government Association ('LGA') and Welsh Local Government Association ('WLGA') pursuant to Rule 5(2)(a), (b) and (c).
8. The LGA and WLGA are the national representative bodies of local authorities in England and Wales respectively. They represent all but two of the local authorities across England and Wales. The applications state that the LGA and WLGA's members played a direct and significant role in relation to matters which Module 9 will investigate as local government delivered a wide range of welfare support and business grants. The WLGA additionally states that it had a significant role in

developing and negotiating financial and economic interventions to support the work undertaken by the local authorities in Wales.

9. Both applications provide examples of their roles relevant to each paragraph of the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 9. Both Applicants also state that they have a significant interest in the matters addressed which the Inquiry will consider in Module 9 as in their roles as the 'national voice' for local government in England and Wales they contributed to discussions and decision-making fora on a range of issues relating to the economic interventions in response to the pandemic.
10. Both the LGA and WLGA state that their members may be the subject of explicit or significant criticism during the Inquiry proceedings or report, particularly regarding the administration of certain grants and other financial support to business. Additionally, the LGA states that it may be subject to criticism as an organisation regarding communication and cooperation between the organisation, central governments and its members.

### **Decision for the Applicant**

11. I have considered with great care everything that is said in the application. Having done so, I have decided, in my discretion, to designate the Local Government Association and Welsh Local Government Association as joint Core Participants in Module 9. With regard to the provisions of Rule 5(2), I am satisfied that the Local Government Association and Welsh Local Government Association each have a significant interest in the matters under investigation and that it and its members played direct or significant roles in such matters. As representatives of the vast majority of Local Authorities in England and Wales who were responsible for administering a range of economic schemes including grants to support local businesses, many of the areas listed in the Provisional Outline of Scope either fall directly within, or touch upon, matters for which the Applicants are responsible.
12. Whilst the Applicants state there may be the potential for them or their members to be criticised, it is too early at this stage in the Inquiry for me to determine whether any

criticism will be made, particularly whether it might amount to explicit or significant criticism.

## **Legal Representation**

13. Applications for designation as the Recognised Legal Representative of a Core Participant are governed by Rules 6 and 7 of the Inquiry Rules 2006, which provide:

6.—(1) Where—

- (a) a core participant, other than a core participant referred to in rule 7; or*
- (b) any other person required or permitted to give evidence or produce documents during the course of the inquiry,*  
*has appointed a qualified lawyer to act on that person's behalf, the chairman must designate that lawyer as that person's recognised legal representative in respect of the inquiry proceedings.*

7.—(1) *This rule applies where there are two or more core participants, each of whom seeks to be legally represented, and the chairman considers that—*

- (a) their interests in the outcome of the inquiry are similar;*
- (b) the facts they are likely to rely on in the course of the inquiry are similar; and*
- (c) it is fair and proper for them to be jointly represented.*

*(2) The chairman must direct that those core participants shall be represented by a single recognised legal representative, and the chairman may designate a qualified lawyer for that purpose.*

*(3) Subject to paragraph (4), any designation must be agreed by the core participants in question.*

*(4) If no agreement on a designation is forthcoming within a reasonable period, the chairman may designate an appropriate lawyer who, in his opinion, has sufficient knowledge and experience to act in this capacity.*

14. I am satisfied that the Local Government Association and Welsh Local Government Association has appointed Thelma Stober as its qualified lawyer in relation to this module. I therefore designate Thelma Stober as their recognised legal representative in accordance with Rule 6(1).

15. Directions will be given in relation to applications for an award under section 40(1)(b) of the Inquiries Act 2005 of expenses to be incurred for legal representation, at the forthcoming preliminary hearing. I will determine any such applications in accordance

with the provisions of section 40 of the Inquiries Act 2005, the Inquiry Rules 2006, the [Prime Minister's determination](#) under section 40(4) and the [Inquiry' Costs Protocol](#).

**Rt Hon Baroness Heather Hallett DBE**

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

**13 September 2024**