



Michael Humphries KC

Call: 1982 QC: 2003 [Public Access](#)

Practice areas:

Major Infrastructure Projects, Compulsory Purchase and Compensation, Planning, Environment, Public Law, Local Government, Rating



Practice Profile

Michael Humphries specialises in all aspects of property development law, but is particularly well known for his major infrastructure planning and compulsory purchase and compensation work, where he has acted in relation to some of the largest and most important projects in recent years. Michael has acted for and advised utilities, developers, landowners and objectors, as well as central and local government. Michael also has an extensive compulsory purchase inquiry and Lands Chamber practice.

Michael was the Chambers and Partners UK Bar Environment and Planning Silk of the year in 2013 and 2021. In the Chambers and Partners UK Bar online guide 2022 he was the highest ranked London Planning Silk. He is always one of the highest rated planning barristers in the annual Planning Magazine Law Survey and has been the highest ranked infrastructure planning silk every year that the survey has been undertaken.

Michael was a Senior Visiting Fellow in the University of Cambridge Land Economy Department where he delivered an annual lecture on infrastructure planning.

Major Infrastructure Projects

Michael is the general editor of the (Bloomsbury Professional) a leading practitioner manual and was the Chambers and Partners UK Bar Environment and Planning Silk of the year in 2013 and 2021. In the Chambers and Partners UK Bar online guide 2023 he was the highest ranked London Planning Silk. He is always one of the highest rated planning barristers in the annual Planning Magazine Law Survey and has been the highest ranked infrastructure planning silk every year that the survey has been undertaken.

Comments on Michael in the chambers and Partners Guide to the UK Bar 2023 include:

"He is known as the king of infrastructure."

"He is without a doubt the leading expert in infrastructure planning work."

"He is the leading DCO barrister."

Legal 500 2023 says:

"Michael's knowledge is encyclopaedic, and he is able to condense a lot of complex information into terms easily digestible by the client."

Michael's experience in promoting major infrastructure projects is very strong indeed. He has extensive experience of promoting projects under the new Planning Act 2008 regime, as well as under the Transport and Works Act 1992, the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Electricity Act 1989, the Highways Act 1980, the Gas Act 1965, and the Pipelines Act 1962.

Types of projects Michael has worked on include nuclear power stations, gas fired power stations, carbon capture and storage, offshore wind, solar farms, overhead electric lines, underground electric cables, international subsea cables, gas pipelines (including both hydrogen and carbon dioxide), underground gas storage, onshore gas production, airports, ports, roads, road tunnels, rail, waste water transfer and storage tunnels, and sewage treatment works.

Michael is very experienced in managing the planning and related aspects of large infrastructure projects and has extensive knowledge of many technical aspects of such schemes including: agricultural resources, air and ground noise, air quality, air traffic forecasting, alternatives, community and population, economic benefits, employment, energy, geology, ground contamination, health impacts, landscape and visual impacts, minerals, need, planning policy, nature conservation, nuclear power generation, overhead lines, third party risk, transport, waste and water resources.

Michael has advised on the drafting of Development Consent Orders, Planning Statements, Environmental Statements, Health Impact Assessments, Design and Access Statements, Economic Impact Reports, Funding Statements and Water Resource Management Plans.

Infrastructure cases of note that Michael has worked, include:

- Heathrow Airport Terminal 5 project 1995-1999 – acting for Heathrow Airport Limited
- Stansted Generation 1 (single runway expansion) project 2006-2007 – acting for Stansted Airport Ltd
- Lee Tunnel project 2008 – acting for Thames Water Utilities Ltd
- Stansted Generation 2 (second runway) project 2006-2009 – acting for BAA plc and Stansted Airport Ltd
- Wingas underground gas storage project 2009- 2010 – acting for Wingas Gas Storage Limited
- Ryedale gas project 2011 – acting for Moorland Energy Group Ltd
- Preesall underground gas storage project 2011-2012 – acting for Halite Energy Group Ltd
- Thames Tideway Tunnel (London Super Sewer) project 2007-2014 – acting for Thames Water Utilities Ltd
- Hinkley C connection project 2010 – acting for National Grid Electricity Transmission Ltd
- North London Reinforcement Project 2011-2013 – acting for National Grid Electricity Transmission Ltd
- A30 improvement project 2012-2014 – acting for Cornwall County Council (the promoter)
- Progress Power gas fired power station project 2014-2015 – acting for Progress Power Limited
- North London Heat and Power Project 2016 – acting for the North London Waste Authority
- Richborough Connection Project 2016 – acting for National Grid on the UK section of the UK-Belgian electrical interconnector

- Silvertown Tunnel Project 2016–2017 – acting for Transport for London
- Viking Link project 2018–2019 – acting for National Grid Viking Link Ltd on the UK section of the UK–Danish interconnector
- Wylfa Newydd nuclear power station project 2015–2019 – acting for Horizon Nuclear Power
- Manston Airport project 2019–2021 – acting for the promoters RiverOak Strategic Partners
- M25 Junction 10 improvement project 2019–2021 – acting for Highways England
- Lower Thames Crossing project 2020–2022 – acting for Kent County Council
- Heathrow Airport Third Runway project 2014–2021 – acting for Heathrow Airport Limited
- East Anglian 1 North and East Anglia 2 offshore windfarm projects 2021 – acting for National Grid in respect of the onshore substation and grid connection
- Bristol Airport expansion planning inquiry 2021 – acting for Bristol Airport Limited
- East–West Rail project 2021–2022 – acting for EWR Limited
- HyNet North West decarbonisation project 2021–2022 – acting for HyNet
- Luton Airport expansion project 2021–2023 – acting for London Luton Airport Limited
- Bramford–Twinstead connection project 2021–2023 – acting for National Grid
- Humber Pipelines project 2021–2023 – acting for National Grid Ventures
- Fern Brook solar farm inquiry 2022 – acting for Low Carbon

Michael has also been active in infrastructure work in the Courts. Notable cases include:

- *Barbone v Secretary of State for Transport* [2009] EWHC 463
- *R (oao Halite Energy Group) Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change* [2014] EWHC 17 – acting for Halite Energy Group
- *R (oao Blue Green London Plan and LB Southwark) v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2015] EWCA 876
- *R (oao Thames Blue Green Economy Limited) v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2015] EWCA 876
- *R (oao Heathrow Hub Limited) v Secretary of State for Transport* [2020] EWCA 213 – acting for Heathrow Airport Limited
- *R (oao Friends of the Earth Ltd) v Heathrow Airport Limited* [2020] UKSC 52 – acting for Heathrow Airport Limited
- *EwF Group Limited v Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy* [2021] EWHC 2697 – acting for EfW Group Ltd
- *Tidal Lagoon (Swansea Bay) plc v Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy* [2021] EWHC 3170 – acting for Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon
- *R (BAANCC) v Secretary of State for Transport and Bristol Airport Limited* – acting for Bristol Airport Limited
- *R (Dawes) v Secretary of State for Transport and RiverOak Strategic Partners* – acting for RSP (the proposed developer of Manston airport)

Michael is the General Editor of Bloomsbury Professional's publication the 'National Infrastructure Planning Handbook' (now in its 4th edition) and the online version the 'National Infrastructure Planning Service'.

Michael helped to set up the National Infrastructure Planning Association (NIPA) and has been its Treasurer of NIPA since 2011

Michael has given numerous conference papers and seminars on national infrastructure planning issues.

Compulsory Purchase and Compensation

Michael has appeared for, or advised, a large number of clients in relation to compulsory purchase and compensation matters, acting for both acquiring authorities and claimants. Michael is often brought in at an early stage by acquiring authorities to advise on potential claims and negotiations with landowners. He is very experienced at dealing with expert valuation advice and directing large teams of expert witnesses. Michael has extensive experience of issues such as 'open market value', comparable evidence, residual valuations, 'planning assumptions', the statutory 'disregards' under the Land Compensation Act 1961, the Point Gourde principle, injurious affection, equivalent reinstatement and disturbance payments.

Comments on Michael in the chambers and Partners Guide to the UK Bar 2023 include:

"Michael is incredibly approachable and user-friendly. Clients simply love him, and deservedly so, he is quite simply at the top of his game."

"Michael has a keen understanding of the client's internal commercial drivers and acknowledges this when advising on how to succeed with the case."

Michael has advised on and acted in relation to a large number of compulsory purchase orders over the years. Recent examples include:

- R (oao Takeley Parish Council) v Stansted Airport Limited [2005] EWHC 3312 – acting for Stansted Airport Ltd
- Castle House Investments v City of Bradford MBC [2007] 3 WLUK 242 – acting for acquiring authority
- The Liverpool City Council (Great Homer Street) Compulsory Purchase Order 2012 (2012) – acting for Liverpool City Council and St Modwen
- Bishopsgate Parking No 2 v Welsh Ministers [2012] UKUT 22 – acting for the claimant
- G Park Skelmersdale v Electricity North West Limited [2014] UKUT 456 and [2015] EWCA 1157 – acting for the claimant
- Hanbury-Tenison v Monmouthshire County Council [2014] UKUT 531 – acting for the acquiring authority
- Hoo Hing Limited v London Development Agency (2014-15) – acting for the acquiring authority
- The Allied Trust v Government of Bermuda (2014-15) – acting for the Government of Bermuda
- London City Airport expansion Compulsory Purchase Order 2016 – acting for London City Airport
- JS Bloor (Wilmslow) Ltd v Homes and Communities Agency [2013] UKUT 231 and [2017] UKSC 12 – acting for the acquiring authority in the Upper Tribunal, Court of Appeal and in the Supreme Court
- National Grid Viking Link Compulsory Purchase Order 2018 – acting for National Grid Viking Link
- Bristol Airport Compulsory Purchase Order 2021 – acting for Bristol Airport Ltd
- HIFI Didcot Relief Road compulsory purchase order acting for Oxfordshire County Council 2021-2023

Michael was the Senior Editor of the Bloomsbury Professional's publication 'The Law of Compulsory Purchase'.

Michael helped to set up the Compulsory Purchase Association (CPA) in 2003 and was its first Treasurer. In 2013 made an Honorary (i.e. senior) Member of the CPA for services to the association.

Planning

Environment

Public Law

Local Government

Rating

Qualifications & Appointments

Called to the Bar: 1982

Queen's Counsel: 2003

Bencher of the Inner Temple: 2010

Treasurer of National Infrastructure Planning Association

Committee member of the Joint Planning Law Conference (i.e. the Oxford Planning Conference)

Past-Chair and current governor of the Anglo-American Real Property Institute

Past-Treasurer of the Compulsory Purchase Association

Quotes

"Michael Humphries is the go-to silk for DCO promotional work."

Chambers and Partners, 2024

"He is exceptionally good, and clients hang on his every word."

Chambers and Partners, 2024

"He is known as the king of infrastructure.", "He is without a doubt the leading expert in infrastructure planning work.", "He is the leading DCO barrister.", "Michael is incredibly approachable and user-friendly."

Clients simply love him, and deservedly so, he is quite simply at the top of his game." and "Michael has a keen understanding of the client's internal commercial drivers and acknowledges this when advising on how to succeed with the case."

Chambers and Partners, 2023

"Michael's knowledge is encyclopaedic, and he is able to condense a lot of complex information into terms easily digestible by the client."

The Legal 500, 2023

"He knows everything you could possibly need to know about planning and environmental law." "He is truly excellent – a very tactical advocate with a huge breadth of knowledge."

Chambers and Partners, 2022

"Michael has a knowledge of the infrastructure planning regime that is second to none. He has a good strategic approach to the giving of advice and a nice collaborative nature. He is always accessible and puts clients at ease. Similarly he works well and collaboratively with other counsel brought in to assist in his cases."

The Legal 500, 2022

"He is incredibly knowledgeable and highly commercial, and his advice is always clear, client-focused and practical." "He's got a lot of gravitas and experience."

Chambers and Partners, 2021

"He's good at seeing the big picture and advising on overall strategic issues." "Michael is a big gun to roll out when heavyweight authority on a point is needed on complex infrastructure projects. He adds gravitas to proceedings."

Chambers and Partners, 2020

"He's very approachable, very knowledgeable, very friendly and provides clear advice. He's obviously a leader in national infrastructure projects and is enjoyable to work with."

Chambers and Partners, 2019

"He is head and shoulders above the rest of the Planning Bar for major infrastructure projects. He mixes commercially focused strategic advice with an incredible eye for detail. Clients love him."

Chambers and Partners, 2019

"Exudes a calm confidence, head and shoulders above everyone else for major infrastructure projects."

The Legal 500, 2018

"Known to all as the leading name in Infrastructure Planning Law"

Chambers and Partners, 2018

"He is a deeply experienced advocate across the entire space advising and acting for utilities, objectors, land-owners developers and public entities."

Chambers and Partners, 2018

"An outstanding KC – the number-one choice for any major infrastructure project."

Chambers and Partners, 2018

He has an incredible grasp of every detail of the case and the ability to distil complex issues into clear and simple terms that the rest of the team can understand and act upon."

Chambers and Partners, 2018