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Michael Humphries QC



QC 2003
Year of call 1982

Michael Humphries specialises in all aspects of property development law, but is particularly well known for his major infrastructure planning and compulsory purchase 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 and is the general editor of the "National Infrastructure Planning Handbook" (Bloomsbury Professional) and senior editor of "The Law of Compulsory Purchase" (Bloomsbury Professional); both leading practitioner manuals.

He is always one of the highest rated planning barristers in the annual Planning Magazine Law Survey and in 2013 appeared in Planning Magazine's 'Power 100' list as one of the most influential people in the UK planning system.

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

In the Chambers & Partners Guide to the Bar (2018), Michael was identified as one of the six "star individuals" at the London Planning Bar.

Testimonials

"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." Legal 500, 2022

"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." 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 QC - the number-one choice for any major infrastrucrure 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

'Known to all as the leading name in infrastructure planning law. He has an excellent reputation for working on projects of all types, especially the often vast NSIPs. He also heralded for his compulsory purchase work and edits leading publications in both areas.' Chambers and Partners 2017

'He is a deeply experienced advocate across the entire [planning] space, advising and acting for utilities, objectors, landowners, developer and public entities.' Chambers and Partners 2017

"Renowned for his expertise in infrastructure law" Chambers and Partners, 2015

"An extremely intelligent operator, with laser-like focus on the issues." Chambers and Partners, 2015

"Excellent on CPO compensation, he is very practical and user-friendly." Chambers and Partners, 2015

"Able to cut through significant detail in sensitive matters and identify key issues." Chambers and Partners, 2015

"Provides very clear, commercial advice." Chambers and Partners, 2015

"Increasingly the name in large infrastructure projects" Chambers and Partners, 2013

Experience

Michael has practiced in the fields of planning, compulsory purchase and related areas of law since 1982 and over that time has developed a wide practice in all aspects of property development. Michael became Queen's Counsel in 2003 and almost immediately appeared in the directories as one of the highest rated planning silks.

INFRASTRUCTURE

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, overhead electric lines, underground electric cables, international subsea cables, gas pipelines, 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:

- 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 ongoing - 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 in the UK section of the UK-Belgian electrical interconnector
- Silvertown Tunnel Project 2016-2017 - acting for Transport for London
- Wylfa Newydd nuclear power station project 2017 - acting for Horizon Nuclear Power

Michael is the General Editor of Bloomsbury Professional's publication the 'National Infrastructure Planning Service'.

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

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

LAND VALUATION

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.

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

- 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) - acting for the claimant
- G Park Skelmersdale v Electricity North West Limited (2013-14) - acting for the claimant
- Hanbury-Tenison v Monmouthshire County Council (2013-14) - 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
- JS Bloor (Wilmslow) Ltd v Homes and Communities Agency (2017) - acting for the acquiring authority in the Supreme Court

Michael is the Senior Editor of Bloomsbury Professional's publication 'The Law of Compulsory Purchase' (now in its second edition).

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

Qualifications and Appointments

Called to the Bar: 1982

Queen's Counsel: 2003

Bencher of the Inner Temple: 2010

Privacy Notice

Treasurer of NIPA

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
