

Tendring District Council Local Plan Part II Examination In Public

Virtual Hearings

Inspectors' Note to Participants

Introduction

This note provides guidance to participants on how to join and take part in the Stage 2 hearing sessions.

The Stage 2 hearing sessions will be held virtually using 'Teams', and will commence on **Tuesday 23rd February 2021**. A full programme of the sessions can be viewed separately in the Hearings Programme.

Teams is an online video conferencing system which allows virtual meetings to be held. The use of this technology allows us to progress with the Local Plan hearings despite the restrictions imposed by Covid-19. Therefore, you will be able to take part at home or from a safe place.

Joining the event as a participant

Participants will be sent an email with a link to the hearing event. To join the meeting by video conference you will need to click on the electronic link in the invitation. Please note that if you are participating in more than one hearing session you will receive a separate invitation for each session.

All participants should ensure that they join the meeting at least 30 minutes prior to the start. This should allow sufficient time for any problems to be resolved. The Programme Officer, Andrea Copsey, will let you into the meeting and will take the names of those present before the Inspector arrives.

If you experience any problems joining the event on the day, please immediately call or email the Programme Officer for assistance (copseyandrea@gmail.com or tel 07842643988) If you are late the Programme Officer will try and let you into the meeting as soon as possible.

Alternative via telephone

Participants without access to the internet can dial-in to the virtual hearing by telephone. The details will be provided in the invitation. Please notify the

Programme Officer by **Friday 29th of January** if you intend to use the telephone function.

Watching the hearing

The sessions will be available for non-participants and the public to watch live on the internet. A link will be available on the Tendring Local Plan examination webpage to the Council's YouTube channel. This will enable people to watch the hearings as they would a physical hearing. It will also enable those in the same organisation or team as participating colleagues to keep up with proceedings in real time.

Start of the hearing event

Once you have joined the video conference session and confirmed your appearance with the Programme Officer you should turn off your camera and mute your microphone until invited to speak. The camera and mute button are located on the control bar (usually along the top of the screen).

Format of the hearing

The aim is to make the virtual hearings as similar as possible to physical hearings in the way that they are run and the way you participate. The purpose of the hearings is for the Inspector to gain the information needed to examine the soundness of the Plan.

The Inspector will lead the discussion, introduce each topic and ask specific questions.

If you wish to respond to a question or to speak, please use the 'raise hand' facility in Teams.

Each participant who raises their hand will be given an opportunity to have their say. Only one participant will be invited to speak at a time. ***When you are invited to speak, you should unmute your microphone, and state your name and, if any, your organisation or who you represent.***

Please make responses brief and focused and stick to the agenda. You do not need to repeat your case in full as the Inspector will have read all of your representations. The Inspector may ask questions about aspects of your verbal or written submissions.

Participants should aim to speak only once on each separate matter on the agenda. If, exceptionally, you have already spoken on a particular matter but believe that you could help further on the subject, you can raise your hand again. However, please use this facility sparingly and only when you have important and relevant evidence.

When you have finished speaking you should switch off your camera and mute your microphone.

Documents and evidence

The examination library on the Council's website contains all of the relevant documents for the hearings <https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/localplan/section2>. The hearing will therefore not use the document sharing facility in Teams. Nor should you hold a document in front of your camera. Please note that new documents will NOT be accepted at the hearings, unless it is something that the Inspector specifically requests.

The chat facility in Teams will not be used during the hearings.

Preparation for the event

Please ensure as far as you can that your working environment is quiet and that the hearing is not disrupted by any external noise. Other distractions and movements are also discouraged.

You may wish to have water or a drink handy at your desk. Tea/coffee breaks will also be built into the programme. Sessions are likely to be around 1.5 hours long and we will aim to have 3 sessions each day.

Please familiarise yourself with Teams before joining the event.

If you experience internet connectivity issues during the event, try switching off other devices or moving closer to the router. If you lose connection during the event, please try to re-join using the electronic link in your email. The hearing may continue in your absence. As a back-up you can re-join by telephone using the number in your invitation. Transferring from wifi to mobile data or making a wifi hotspot are other contingencies you may wish to consider. If you are having on-going problems please alert the Programme Officer on 07842 643988.

Participants are encouraged to read the Hearing Statements and other key evidence in the examination library prior to the event. At the hearing you should have a copy of the agenda to hand (these will be available on the Council's website a week before the session).

Test event

The Council is running a test event for anyone who is unfamiliar with Teams or who wishes to practice joining a virtual hearing. This will be held on around 2 weeks before the event. Please contact the Programme Officer, Andrea Copsey on copseyandrea@gmail.com or tel 07842643988 if you wish to attend this event.

Privacy advice

Please have regard to the Council's and the Planning Inspectorate's privacy notices. These will be sent to participants and posted on the Council's examination webpage once they are concluded.

Each hearing session will be livestreamed on the internet. Please ensure your camera is positioned to provide a clear view of your face. If you don't want your image to be seen you can turn off your camera. Please inform the Programme Officer before the event if you intend to do this.

Please ensure your background is cleared of any personal item/information. If you prefer, Teams allows you to blur your background, but please do not use any of the other backgrounds that are available on Teams.

The meeting will be recorded by the Council for reference. Please do not make your own recording. As other people will be watching/listening you are advised to avoid disclosing private and confidential material. If you feel that you need to do so to support your case, please seek procedural advice from the Programme Officer in advance, by **Friday 29th of January**.

Further information

If you need any further advice before the event or have any technical or procedural questions, please contact the Programme Officer (Andrea Copsey copseyandrea@gmail.com or tel 07842643988).