

# APP/W0530/W/21/3280395

## Inspector's Advice for Inquiry starting 7 December 2021

### Introduction

1. This Inquiry will proceed virtually using Zoom. It will commence on Tuesday 7 December 2021 at 10am, participants should be in place by 9:45am. The inquiry will commence at 10am on Wednesday 8 December, participants should be in place by 9:45am. The inquiry will commence on subsequent days at 9.30am, participants should be in place by 9:15am and will follow the programme that will be published separately.
2. The use of technology such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams is becoming the norm, largely as a result of Covid19 pandemic restrictions. However, we may still need to adapt, make allowances and learn from the experience. In any event, as usual, the Inquiry will be conducted in a fair, open and impartial manner to provide the requisite full and complete hearing of all points of view.

### Purpose of this advice

3. This note sets out how the Inquiry will be conducted using Zoom. If everyone fully understands the protocol and technical considerations, then we are more likely to have virtual hearings without mishaps. There is other [published advice](#) on procedure at Inquiries in general.

### Joining the virtual hearings as a participant

4. If you have been listed as a participant, then you will be sent an invitation to join the Inquiry you will be participating in. You should join using the electronic link in your invitation. If you do not have access to the internet you can dial-in to the virtual hearing by telephone. The telephone number will also be provided within your invitation.
5. To make the best use of Inquiry time and avoid disruption, the sessions will start strictly at the time indicated on the agenda. Before the start of each session, please make appropriate arrangements to ensure that your working environment is quiet and that the Inquiry (and your ability to concentrate on it) will not be disrupted by external noise or other distractions.
6. Whether using Zoom or telephone, you must join the hearing at least 15 minutes before the start time indicated on the agenda that will be circulated in advance. If you experience any problem joining the event on the day, please call or text the Council's hosting officer, Aaron Clarke.
7. Once you have joined the hearing you should mute your microphone (if you are a telephone participant please enter \*6 on your keypad to mute/unmute your microphone) and turn off your camera until invited to speak. This will be monitored by the Hosting Officer and he will do so on your behalf if needed.

## Watching the virtual hearings

8. The Inquiry will be broadcast live by the Council. Join [via Zoom](#).

## Participating in the virtual hearings

9. The aim is to make the virtual Inquiry as similar as possible to conventional Inquiries in the way that it is run and the way that speakers participate. Please bear in mind that the purpose of the Inquiry is for the Inspector to gain the information that is needed to come to a decision on the case.
10. Inquiries are formal events, with appropriate conduct. All participants, their views and evidence, are treated with fairness and consideration. Participants should not interrupt each other. The chat facility in Zoom should not be used and may, indeed, be disabled. If you are likely to need to confer with another person during the hearing session, you should arrange how to do so in advance.
11. Before the start of each Inquiry session, if you have a telephone or other device nearby during the sessions, please make sure that it is muted or switched off. If you are joining using Zoom, please ensure that your camera is positioned to provide a clear, front-on view of your face and avoid sitting where you are silhouetted in front of a window or light.
12. At the start of each session the Inspector will confirm who is appearing at that session. He will lead the Inquiry, introducing each stage and may ask specific questions.
13. Some parties, and the Council, will wish to have evidence presented by more than one person at the hearings, for example where planning agents or other technical experts are supporting their case. Where this is so, everyone who is likely to speak at an Inquiry session should join at its commencement, in line with the instructions above, and will be admitted into the session when it starts. However, the Inspector's remarks will be directed at the primary person representing each party. Therefore, if you are the primary representor and wish to call a technical expert to give evidence – then you should say so and introduce the witness to the Inquiry. You should then turn off your microphone and the substitute should turn hers/his on and introduce themselves.
14. If more than one computer in a room is being used to take part in an Inquiry session or to watch it, the volume on all the computers must be reduced to nil and headsets should be used. This is necessary to avoid feedback that may disrupt the Inquiry session.
15. If you wish to intervene or to gain the Inspector's attention at any time, please use the "raise hand" facility in Zoom (to do this you will need to click on the hand symbol which is at the bottom of the screen. If you are a telephone participant, please enter **\*9 on your keypad** to raise your hand to indicate you wish to speak and **\*6** to unmute/mute your microphone. The Inspector will give all participants who have raised their hands an opportunity to make their contribution. Only one participant will be permitted to speak at a time. When you are invited to speak, you should unmute your microphone, and state your

name and the person(s) or organisation(s) that you represent, where applicable.

16. Please make responses brief and focused and adhere to the agenda. You do not need to repeat your case in full because the Inspector will have read all your representations, but it can be helpful to draw his attention to key parts of your evidence. He may ask questions about aspects of your verbal or written submissions. When he has heard your comments and is about to move on to the next participant, please mute your microphone, switch off your camera and lower your hand if you used the “raise hand” facility.
17. Most of the Inquiry will be conducted by formal presentation and cross-examination of witnesses and other participants but there will also be several “round table” discussions in which the Inspector will lead the discussion by asking questions, there will be no cross-examination and no interruption, and all responses should be directed to the Inspector.
18. At certain points in the Inquiry, the Inspector will invite participation by others than the two main parties. If you wish to respond to the Inspector’s invitation, do so by using the “hand raise” function.
19. As well as a break for lunch, the Inspector will be taking other breaks during the Inquiry. When the Inquiry is adjourned for a break, please turn off your camera and mute your microphone (or your telephone if you have joined that way) but **do not log out of the hearing session**. Please allow the Inspector to leave the Inquiry first, before you do and please return to the Inquiry before the Inspector resumes.
20. At the end of each Inquiry session, the Council’s hosting officer will end the session and ask all participants to log out of the Zoom meeting.

## Documents and evidence

21. The Inquiry webpages contain all the relevant examination documents. These are available to all participants, stakeholders and the public. The Inquiry will not therefore normally need to use the document sharing facility available on Zoom. New documents should only be submitted during the Inquiry at the Inspector’s invitation. These should be emailed to the Inspectorate’s case officer Tim Salter so that he can pass them on to the Inspector and to the Council for them to be placed on the examination webpages.

## Privacy

22. It is important that people read the privacy notices. They will be posted on the examination webpages shortly before the hearings commence.
23. If you are joining using Zoom but you do not want your face to appear on the screen, you can turn off your camera.
24. You must ensure that no-one else appears on your camera and you should clear your background of personal information. If you prefer, Zoom allows you to blur your background. You must not share any personal information during the hearing, either yours or anyone else’s.

25. If you have any concerns about the security of your device, or out of preference you do not wish to install the Zoom app or client, you can join through your internet browser. In order to do this, after following the Zoom link, please select 'Join from your browser' on the page that is displayed.
26. If you are dialling into the meeting using a telephone. Your phone number will only be masked if using the dial in service '141' before dialling the number in question. The service will not mask your number automatically, you will be asked to verify your identity upon joining the meeting and shortly afterwards, the obscured number will be replaced by your full name by the Hosting Officer.

## Use of Zoom

27. If you will be taking part via Zoom, please do familiarise yourself with it before joining the Inquiry. You will be responsible for making sure that all your equipment is functional and that you have everything in place and working to enable you to join the hearing via Zoom. It is strongly advised that before each session you ensure that your Zoom app, Zoom client or your internet browser (if joining by the 'join from your browser' route) are up to date.
28. If you experience electronic interference during the session, try switching off your mobile phone or other electronic devices nearby, if you have not already done so. If you experience internet connectivity issues, try switching off some other devices which share your Wi-Fi, or move closer to the router. If you are unable to join, or you lose connection during the hearing, try to join again using the link provided in your invitation. As backup you can re-join by telephone using the number in the invitation. Transferring from Wi-Fi to mobile data or making a Wi-Fi hotspot using a mobile phone are other contingencies you could try.
29. If you do experience technical problems and all else fails, you should contact the Hosting officer, Aaron Clarke immediately, as it is likely that the hearing session will continue in your absence. His details are set out below. Although Aaron Clarke will not generally be appearing on the screen, he will be observing the hearing sessions and will be available to assist whenever necessary.
30. Finally, the Inspector would like to extend his thanks in advance to all those who are participating and to Aaron Clarke. As always, he will be pleased to help you with any administrative or procedural queries that you may have during the examination.

*P. W. Clark*

Inspector

30 November 2021