

Havant Borough Local Plan Examination - Virtual Hearings

Inspector's Note for Participants

Introduction

We are unable to hold these hearings physically in Havant due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Nevertheless, the Council has the technology to allow the hearings to proceed virtually and we have therefore decided to proceed on this basis, using Microsoft Teams.

Some people will be more familiar with this technology than others, and we will have to adapt, make allowances and learn from the experience as we go along. However, as previously, all of our hearings will be conducted in a fair, open and impartial manner. If you are to participate in any of the virtual Hearings then please read this note carefully, as it sets out the procedures and rules for how the hearings will be conducted.

Joining the hearing as a participant

Participants should join their session using the electronic link in their invitation. Please note that if you are participating in more than one hearing session across different days then you will receive a separate invitation for each session. Participants without access to the internet can dial-in to the virtual hearing by telephone. The telephone number will be provided within the invitation.

Watching a hearing

The hearing sessions will be available for non-participants and the public to watch live. This enables people to watch the hearings as they would with a physical hearing. If you wish to observe the hearings, they will be live streamed on the Council's website. You can go to the Council's [Examination Webpage](#). The webpage will be updated shortly before the hearings start to include the live stream. The hearings are also being recorded and will be uploaded on the Examination Webpage after each session.

The hearing format

Our aim is to make the virtual hearings as similar as possible to physical hearings in the way that they are run and the way that you participate. Please bear in mind that the purpose of the hearings is for us to gain the information that we need to examine the plan's soundness.

At the start of each hearing session we will check appearances. As there are two Inspectors, we will also make it clear which one of us is leading the particular session. We will then go onto introduce each topic and ask specific questions about the topic. Discussion will follow the Inspectors' *Matters and Issues* that have already been provided and are on the examination document library. If you wish to respond to a question, please use the "raise hand" facility in Microsoft Teams to indicate your desire to speak. We will give each of the participants who have raised their hands an opportunity to speak. Only one

participant may speak at a time. When joining the meeting you should do so with your camera off and microphone muted. When you are invited to speak, you should turn on your camera and unmute your microphone, and state your name and, if any, the person(s) or organisation(s) that you represent.

There are a lot of issues to consider at some sessions, so please make your response brief and focused. You won't need to repeat your full case in detail, or give any sort of formal presentation, as we will have read all of your representations. We may ask questions about aspects of your verbal or written submissions. When we have heard from you and we are about to move on to the next participant, your microphone should be muted and camera turned off.

There will not be any cross examination or participant interruption, and responses should always be directed to us. Unless a discussion is appropriate we will normally invite participants (other than the Council) to speak only once on each separate matter that is on the agenda, so please be patient until it is your turn, and say what you need to say about the matter in question when you have the opportunity.

If 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 new, important and relevant evidence which will help us gain the information that we need to comprehensively consider the proposal's soundness. Raising your hand to repeat what you or others have already said, or to register that you don't agree with another participant, is not appropriate. We will terminate the discussion on any particular topic when we have enough information. As we move towards the end of each topic or sub-topic, we will ask the Council for their comments on the points raised, if we have not already done so. At the end of each hearing, we will end the session and ask all participants to log out.

Documents, evidence and presentation

The examination website contains all of the relevant examination documents. These are available to all participants, stakeholders and the public. The hearing will not therefore use the document sharing facility available on Microsoft Teams. Nor should you hold any document in front of your camera. New documents should only be submitted during the hearings at our request. If we do request a new document from any party, for example a statement of common ground, it should be emailed straight to the Programme Officer, Charlotte Glancy, so that she can pass it to us and ensure it is put on the examination webpage. The chat facility in Microsoft Teams must not be used under any circumstances nor should the reaction facility.

Conduct

Local plan examination hearings are a formal event, that require appropriate conduct from participants. The views and evidence of all participants are treated with fairness and consideration, and participants do not interrupt each other. You should use the formal Mr, Mrs and so on, not first names.

You should have made appropriate arrangements to ensure that your working environment is quiet, and that the hearing (and your ability to concentrate on it) is not disrupted by external noise and unnecessary distractions. It is a good idea to have a glass of water or a soft drink with you during the hearing session, however, eating and snacking is not appropriate whilst giving evidence. Comfort breaks will be built into the programme.

Those who use Microsoft Teams will have grown used to the idea that people can come and go during virtual meetings. However, that does not apply to examination hearings. You must make sure that you attend the hearing to which you are invited from start to finish. Leaving the screen midway through a session, coming and going, and leaving early, may mean that you miss the opportunity to speak or to come back on a particular point that is of concern to you.

To make the best use of hearing time and to avoid disruption, the virtual hearings will start strictly at the time indicated on the programme. You will receive an invitation from the Programme Officer to the relevant session or sessions. You must join the hearing at least 15 minutes before the time indicated on the programme. You will then be held in a waiting lobby until you are admitted into the hearing by the Programme Officer. When adjournments are announced, please make a careful note of the resumption time and be back at your screen before that time.

Privacy

Please have regard to the privacy notices of the [Council](#) and the [Planning Inspectorate](#). Copies are posted on the Examination webpage. 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. You can turn off your camera if you don't want your image to be viewed. Please inform the Programme Officer before the hearing if you wish to do this. Please do not make your own recording of a hearing. You must ensure that no-one else appears on your camera and you should clear your background of personal information. You must not share any personal information during the hearing, either yours or anyone else's.

Please do familiarise yourself with Microsoft Teams before joining the hearings. You will be responsible for making sure that all of your equipment is functional and that you have everything in place and working to enable you to join the hearing. 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 lose connection during the hearing, try to join again using the link provided in your invitation. The hearing may continue in your absence. 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.

Finally, we should like to extend our thanks in advance to all those who are participating, to the Council, and also to Charlotte Glancy, the Programme Officer. As you will know, all the examination documents are on the website, but if you need assistance, the Programme Officer is there to help. As always, she will also be pleased to help you with any administrative or procedural queries that you may have during the examination.

Jonathan Manning and Thomas Hatfield

INSPECTORS

01 July 2021