

Examination of the Cheshire East SADPD (the Plan)
INSPECTOR'S VIRTUAL HEARING ETIQUETTE GUIDANCE

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Introduction

1. This note provides more detail on the key points set out in my Guidance Note [INS/06] about the way participants are expected to take part and conduct themselves in the virtual Hearing sessions.

Participating in Virtual Hearing Sessions

2. The aim is to make the virtual Hearing sessions as similar as possible to physical Hearing sessions in the way they run and the way you participate.
3. At the start of each Hearing session I briefly explain the proceedings and how and when participants should introduce themselves and speak. I will lead the Hearing, introduce each topic and ask specific questions about the topic. If you want to respond to a question, please use the 'raise hand' facility in MS Teams to indicate your wish to speak.
4. I will give each person who has raised their hand an opportunity to speak. Only one participant may speak at a time. I will ask all participants in a session to have their video turned on, but their microphone muted until invited to speak. When you are invited to speak, please unmute your microphone, and state your name and, if any, your organisation if it is your first time speaking during the session, before making your point. If I have agreed the attendance of more than one participant per Representor in advance of the Hearing session, only the main speaker should have their video switched on, the other participant should remain on mute, with their camera off, until they change places with the main speaker.
5. Please make your response brief and focused and adhere to the agenda. You will not need to repeat your full case, or give any formal presentation, as I will have read your representations. I may ask questions about aspects of your verbal or written submissions. The format will be a structured discussion, which I will lead. There will not be any formal cross examination and responses should always be directed to me. I will invite participants to speak in turn and, as there will be a lot to cover, please be patient.
6. If you have already spoken on a particular topic but believe that you can help further on the subject, raise your hand using the facility in MS Teams. Please ensure that anything you say here is new, important and relevant. Simply repeating what you or others have already said, or to register that you do not agree with another participant, is not necessary.
7. I will ask the Council for their comments on the main points raised and will terminate the discussion on any topic when I have enough information. At the end of each Hearing session, I will end the session and ask all participants to log out of MS Teams, unless otherwise stated.

Connectivity Issues

8. If you experience electronic interference during a session, try moving your mobile phone away from your computer. If you experience other connectivity issues, try switching off some other devices which share your Wi-Fi, or move closer to your router.
9. If you are unable to join, or lose connection during a Hearing, try again to join using the link provided in your invitation. The Hearing may continue in your absence. As a backup you can re-join by telephone, using the number in the invitation. If you do use the dial-in facility, you should dial 1471 before dialling the main number, so that your personal number cannot be viewed in MS Teams. Transferring from Wi-Fi to mobile data or making a Wi-Fi hotspot using a mobile phone are other contingencies that you may wish to use. If none of these resolves the issue, please contact the Programme Officer (PO) for assistance on **07397 909822**.

Conduct, Documents, Evidence and Presentation

10. Local Plan Examinations are a formal event, with appropriate conduct. All participants, their views and evidence are treated with fairness and consideration, and participants should not interrupt each other.
11. To make the best use of the Hearing time and to avoid disruption, the virtual Hearing sessions will start strictly at the time indicated on the agenda. You will receive an invitation from the PO to the relevant session or sessions along with a Privacy Policy. You must join the Hearing on MS Teams at least 20 minutes before the time indicated on the agenda. The PO is responsible for admitting participants into the Hearing session, so you must wait to be admitted. You will be held in a waiting lobby until you are admitted into the Hearing by the PO. Attempting to join the Hearing after the time indicated on the agenda will cause disruption and you may not be admitted for that reason.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. You must make sure that you attend the Hearing session you are invited to from start to finish. Leaving midway through a session or coming and going are not respectful, and you may miss the opportunity to speak, hear other people's contributions and listen to the Inspector's announcements.
15. When adjournments are announced, please make a careful note of the resumption time and be back at your screen before that time. If you need to leave early for any reason, please inform the PO.
16. The chat facility in MS teams must **not** be used under any circumstances. It does not form part of the formal Hearing procedure and I will not view any posts made. You should consider whether you are likely to need to

confer with another person (Agent, Legal Representative, Colleague etc) during the event. If so, agree how you intend to do this e.g. SMS, Email, WhatsApp, etc. before the event. Participants should also **not** use the 'reactions', 'yes', 'no', 'go slower', 'go faster' functions.

17. The Examination website contains all the relevant Examination documents. These are available to all participants, stakeholders and the public. The Hearing will **not** use the document sharing facility available on MS Teams. Nor should you hold any document in front of your camera.
18. New documents should only be submitted during the Hearing sessions at my invitation. If I request a new document from any party, for example a statement of common ground, it should be emailed to the PO so that it can be passed to me and uploaded on the Examination website.

Privacy

19. The Hearing will be conducted in line with the Council's data protection policies and processes as set out here: [Strategic Planning \(including Neighbourhood Planning Team\) - privacy notice \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](#)

Please have regard to the privacy notices contained in this link.

20. Please do not make your own recording of the Hearing. Each session will be live streamed, as well as being recorded and published on the Council's website and/or YouTube within 24 hours for anyone to view and will be available until my Report has been submitted to the Council. A link to the live streaming and recording will be provided on the Examination website <https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial-planning/cheshire-east-local-plan/site-allocations-and-policies/sadpd-examination/sadpd-examination.aspx>. If you do not want your image to be viewed, please turn your camera off before entering the Hearing session. You must ensure that no-one else appears on your camera unless it has been otherwise agreed, and you should clear your background of personal information. If you prefer, MS teams allows you to blur your background, but please do not use any of the other backgrounds that are available on MS teams. You must also not share any personal information during the Hearing, either yours, or anyone else's.

The Hearing Sessions

21. The Hearing will begin at **10.00 am** on **Tuesday 12 October 2021** and is programmed to sit on the following days:

Tuesday 12 October to Friday 15 October 2021

Tuesday 19 October to Thursday 21 October 2021

Tuesday 2 November to Thursday 4 November 2021

22. Each day of the Hearing will normally consist of three sessions, which, after the first day, will run between 09.30 am and 11.00 am, 11.30 am and 13.00 pm and 14.00 pm and 15.30 pm to allow for appropriate screen breaks. Further details are included in the draft Hearing Programme in the Examination library on the Examination website.
23. Only one participant is allowed per Representor, unless I have agreed

otherwise in advance of the Hearing, in line with the procedure explained below. However, in view of their particular position in covering the whole Plan, two or sometimes more Council representatives may take part in a Hearing, depending on the subject under discussion.

24. I recognise that the Hearing sessions cover a range of topics, requiring different technical knowledge. However, other than the Council, I will normally only permit one person to represent and participate on behalf of each Representor at any one session. If you consider that you need more than one witness at any one session, please supply the reasons why this is necessary and I will consider it.
25. In those cases where there is more than one participant per Representor, I expect only one participant to keep their camera on, but with their microphone muted, unless they are invited to speak. All other participants should join with their cameras and microphones off. For those areas of the discussion where a different participant needs to speak, they must 'virtually' change places with the current participant by switching their camera on and the current participant switching off theirs, to ensure that only one participant from each Representor is sitting around the 'virtual' table at any one time.
26. Representors are requested to keep in touch with the PO and/or the Examination website regarding the Hearing programme, which may be subject to change.

Mike Hayden

INSPECTOR

October 2021