

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Local Plan

Stage 1 Hearing Sessions

21st June to 23rd July 2021

Guidance for Participants and Observers

How do I participate in the sessions?

All of the hearing sessions will be held at the Ipswich Hotel with participation being by either in person attendance, or joining through virtual online hosting using Microsoft Teams, or by phone. Participants have already identified how they wish to participate.

If you are a Participant and your name appears on the Examination Hearing Programme you will be invited to attend the 'Virtual meeting' or in person at the The Suffolk Suite, Ipswich Hotel, Old London Road, Copdock, Ipswich. IP8 3JD.

I am not on the Participants list can I observe the hearing sessions?

All of the hearing sessions are public events. However, due to social distancing requirements and the limit on numbers, observers will not be allowed to attend the Ipswich Hotel. However, anyone can observe the Hearings as they all will be **live streamed** to YouTube (link below). If you are unable to access on the internet, please contact the Programme Officer who will endeavour to assist you.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOEeG6C0zFZIY8W19YM5tHQ>

Please note once on the YouTube channel you click on the **live now** button. The relevant YouTube channel link will also be displayed on the Councils' Examination homepage website areas:

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/new-joint-local-plan/joint-local-plan-submission/joint-local-plan-examination/>

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/new-joint-local-plan/joint-local-plan-submission/joint-local-plan-examination/>

The live stream will broadcast audio and video camera images from the room or will display the Microsoft Teams hosting screen when someone is participating virtually online.

The video will be accessible to view as the hearing sessions take place. The live stream is not being recorded and will not be available after the end of the Hearing

sessions. Recordings taken will be deemed unauthorised.

Privacy Notices relating to the hearing sessions will be available on the Examination website.

I am a member of the Press can I attend the meeting?

You can observe the Hearings by the live stream video.

How do I gain access to participate in the Virtual meeting?

Participants will receive an email from the Programme Officer with a link to a Microsoft Teams meeting. There will be a virtual waiting lobby before you enter. The Programme Officer will only admit those expected, so please help by ensuring you clearly identify yourself by full name in Microsoft Teams.

You will need to have the [Microsoft Teams software downloaded to your device](#), or alternatively use the [Microsoft Teams 'browser' version](#) and follow the link sent to you by the Programme Officer. Please ensure that you have downloaded and tested your connection and made yourself familiar with the use of Microsoft Teams before the day of the Hearing session.

Please make sure you connect to the meeting in good time, at least 30 minutes before the start of the session, so you have time to be admitted to the meeting, to test your audio and video settings and make sure you have the documents you need.

If you have concerns that your system will be unable to connect, please seek your own IT support or contact the Programme Officer, but please don't leave this to the morning of the Hearing session.

When you join the meeting please have your computer camera switched on, microphone switched off, and make sure that your name is displayed correctly on screen so that the Inspectors can address you by name.

You will arrive in the meeting 'lobby' and you will then be admitted from the 'lobby' to the meeting by the Programme Officer or her assistant. Please be patient as this may take a few minutes.

Once joined, participants will be able to see and hear the Inspectors and participants in person in the meeting. Please only speak when invited by the Inspector(s). At all other times please keep your microphone muted. It is ideal if you can have your camera on when you are speaking, however, you can have your video turned on or off throughout the hearing session at your own discretion.

If you have technical difficulties during the session, or need to join the hearing session by phone, please contact the Programme Officer by phone on 07775 771026.

If technological problems, or unexpected personal circumstances, mean that a Participant is unable to participate online or by phone during the hearing session, they should inform the Programme Officer at the earliest opportunity. If they cannot make their contribution later in the session, arrangements will be made for them to exercise their right to be heard on one of the reserve days, or at another time if deemed necessary by the Inspectors.

How do I attend in person at the Ipswich Hotel?

For those attending in person, the hearing sessions will be held in a Covid-secure environment in The Suffolk Suite, at the Ipswich Hotel, Old London Road, Ipswich, IP8 3JD. There is a large free car park at the rear of the hotel, where you will also find The Suffolk Suite.

The Councils have undertaken a specific Covid-19 risk assessment for the Examination Hearing sessions. This sets out measures, consistent with the relevant legislation and guidance of Government, aimed at ensuring that the Hearings will be safe. The document is to be published in the Examination Core Document library, in the set of “Post Submission Documents”.

Nobody should attend a hearing session if they have any of the covid-19 symptoms on that day. Furthermore, neither should they attend if Government guidance indicates that they should self-isolate, including because they have had symptoms within the last 10 days, or any member of their household had symptoms in the last 14 days. If any participant is unable to attend for this reason, or due to other changes in personal circumstances, they should inform the Programme Officer as soon as possible. Arrangements will then be made for them to participate online or by phone.

Each participant must arrive to the venue on their own and cannot bring non-participating observers. If any participant considers it essential to be accompanied to the venue by someone else, for example because they need particular care or support, please let the Programme Officer know as soon as possible and no later than one week before the relevant session. If you require to bring additional technical support or clients to the venue who also wish to speak in addition to your participation you may bring a maximum of 2 in addition to yourself. Please contact the Programme Officer so appropriate arrangements can be made.

On the day of the hearing please arrive at The Suffolk Suite, Ipswich Hotel at least 30 minutes before the start of the hearing session to allow time for the safety procedures.

Unless you are medically exempt, you must wear a face covering whilst moving around the building. You may remove your face covering whilst you are seated in your allotted place at the table. If you are using the NHS Covid-19 app please scan the QR code on your arrival or abide by the venue’s alternative track and trace arrangements if you cannot scan the QR code.

Please also use the hand sanitisers which will be available in the corridors and rooms. Hand washing facilities are also available in the foyer as you enter the Suffolk Suite.

You will be directed to your seat at the hearing table and will be requested to stay seated within that place throughout the Hearing session. Please maintain a two metre social distance (or one metre whilst wearing a face covering) at all times with everyone who is outside your participation bubble (yourself and others supporting your role at the session).

Each seat within the Hearing Room has it's own microphone which will be cleaned between hearing sessions. You will not need to touch or switch on the microphone to be heard. Sanitising wipes will be provided to allow users to clean their own desk prior to, and after, each session.

There will be a comfort break during the morning and afternoon sessions, as well as a lunch break. If participants wish to leave their seat they may do so, but please wait until the Inspectors have left the room, wear a face covering, maintain two metres social distancing at all times and do not mingle outside of your participation bubble.

If the fire alarm sounds everyone must leave the building using the signed emergency exit route, this is through the main doors of the Ipswich Hotel out of the main external doors, to the meeting point in the car park. Whilst social distancing should be adhered to as far as possible in such circumstances, the first priority is to leave the building. When safely out of the building, all should maintain two metres distancing.

Will I be able to use the toilets or get a drink?

There are toilet facilities available for the use of Participants within the foyer of the Suffolk Suite. Please abide by the venue's requirements at the time (which may be use of the toilet area by one person at a time).

A self-serve drinks station is available within the Suffolk Suite and you may wish to pre-order lunch directly with the Ipswich Hotel. There are cafes available on the A12, however as the duration of the lunch break cannot be guaranteed, participants should consider bringing their own food and drink, but please take all waste packaging with you when you leave.

Will the meeting room be clean when I arrive?

Hard surfaces of the chair and desk will have been cleaned before you arrive.

The individual spaces will be cleaned between sessions. To maintain cleanliness,

you are asked to only use the space to which you are directed.

Will I be able to see and hear people who join virtually?

A large display screen will show those people who have joined the hearing session virtually and the sound system will ensure that they can be heard by people in the meeting room.

Can I bring my laptop and use WiFi in the meeting room?

Laptops and similar devices are allowed in the meeting room during the hearing sessions. The use of paper documents should be minimised. Please bring the documents you need and/or a device that you can use which has the documents on it which you may need during the Hearing sessions. Please download the documents you need to your device in advance. Free WiFi is provided by the Ipswich Hotel.

Can I use a hearing aid?

An induction loop system will be provided in the Ipswich Hotel. A sound system will be in use to ensure that all Participants can be heard within the room and through virtual online means.

Further information

If anyone has any queries about the hearing sessions, please contact the Programme Officer.

Finally, I'm sure you will appreciate that during this difficult time arrangements may need to alter at very short notice so please keep up to date with the examination website or in contact with the Programme Officer.