**Planning Inquiry – Joining Instructions**

The following pages provide you with further explanation and information to enable you to participate in the Planning Appeal Inquiry for **55 Vastern Road - ref APP/E0345/W/21/3276463** commencing on **26 October 2021 at 10:00** and scheduled for 15 days. The duration is not fixed and will depend on how the evidence emerges.

Please read this document carefully as it contains important joining instructions.

**Preparing for the Inquiry**

The technology we will be using is Microsoft Teams.

To take part using video, participants will need to have access to Microsoft Teams (via an app or web browser). This link gives further information: <https://support.office.com/en-gb/teams>

Alternatively you can take part by telephone. Please note that joining by telephone to the 020 number will incur charges. You should check the rates with your provider <https://www.gov.uk/call-charges>

If you will be accessing the inquiry via Microsoft Teams you will be able to access and speak at the event over the internet using the video link. If you do not wish to appear on video, you can disable your camera and use voice only.  You should familiarise yourself with the Microsoft Teams functions in advance of the event.

If you do not have an internet connection, or you do not feel confident or able to use a digital device, but you have a telephone with a keypad, you can instead use the telephone number provided in the invitation, enabling you to be heard.

**On the day of the Inquiry**

* Please access the virtual event 15-30 minutes before the scheduled start time.  This gives time to admit everyone to the event and for any joining issues hopefully to be resolved.  You will be held in a silent ‘lobby’ until you are admitted.
* For those joining via the internet on a computer or smartphone, please follow this link:

***Please email*** ***Planning.Administration@reading.gov.uk*** ***or*** ***Christina.Kilbee@reading.gov.uk*** ***if you wish to join or observe the inquiry and the meeting link will be emailed to you.***

* Alternatively, if you are joining via telephone, please dial the telephone number in the above link, entering the stated conference ID when prompted, followed by the # key using your telephone keypad. IMPORTANT NOTE: If you wish to hide your telephone number from the other participants, please dial 141 before dialling the number above (other methods may apply on certain mobile carriers/telephones). You should also note that joining by telephone to the 020 number that will be used will incur charges. You should check actual rates with your provider <https://www.gov.uk/call-charges>
* Once admitted to the Inquiry, you will then be able to follow the proceedings by video link, audio link or telephone.
* The Inspector will lead the proceedings and will invite you to speak when it is your turn.
* The Teams chat function will not be available for participants
* The “raise hand” function can be used to signify to the Inspector that you want to speak. Use the same button to turn this off once you have spoken.

**Troubleshooting**

* It is suggested that you print this document or make a note of the LPA’s details below in case you need them.
* If you are disconnected from the meeting, please click the link again and re-join as soon as possible.
* If you internet connect is slow, please switch off the camera function and just use audio alone.

**LPA contact details:**

Email: Planning.Administration@reading.gov.uk or Christina.Kilbee@reading.gov.uk

Tel: 0118 937 2381

Documents relating to the appeal can be viewed on the Council website:

<https://www.reading.gov.uk/planning/55-vastern-road/>

**Inspectorate Case Officer Contact details:**

Alison Dyson; Tel: 03034445304

Email: alison.dyson@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

**Annex 1: How to use Microsoft Teams.**

The following link will take you to information about how to use Microsoft Teams.

<https://support.office.com/en-gb/teams>

**Annex 2: Good Practice Points**

**Before** the virtual event:

* Read all of the information in the invitation to/notification of the event that you have been sent.
* Make sure that you have the joining instructions to hand and know how to dial in.  Join the Microsoft Teams lobby at least 15 minutes before the event is scheduled to start.
* If you are using video, de-personalise your background as far as possible.
* If you will be represented at the event by an agent or lawyer, consider how you will communicate confidentially with them during the course of the event.  You will not be able to use the meeting’s chat function.
* Make sure the device you are using to access the event is fully charged/ plugged in, so that you do not get cut off from the event.
* Let the Case Officer know in advance if you intend to refer to a document on the Council’s website.
* If you do not understand something or need assistance in preparing to be involved in a virtual event, contact the Case Officer in reasonable advance of the event taking place.  You should note however, that the Planning Inspectorate nor the Local Planning Authority cannot provide technological support.

**During**the virtual event:

* Be in a quiet, private place and let everyone in your location know that you must not be interrupted
* If you are using video, set your screen at 90 degrees so you face can be seen properly, making sure that the view behind you is blank or neutral, ensuring, if possible, that you are not back-lit.  You might consider using the ‘blur background’ function on Microsoft Teams.
* Dress code - please dress as you would if attending an actual event, being respectful of the process.
* Don’t have your speakers too loud – it can cause feedback.
* Turn off audio notifications and put phones etc onto silent to avoid distracting noises.
* When you join, give you name to the LPA administration officer and then mute your microphone and turn off camera if using.
* During the event, unless you are speaking, it is helpful if you keep your microphone muted and camera off, to minimise background noise and maximise bandwidth.
* Listen carefully to the Inspector who will lead the event.  The Inspector will introduce participants and guide the proceedings, inviting particular persons to speak at particular times.  You should not speak unless invited to.  Each time you speak, state your name and, if applicable, who you are representing.
* You are expected to observe the usual rules and formalities associated with the respective event.  If the Inspector considers that the behaviour of a party is not appropriate for some reason, they will be warned, with the Inspector having the ability to mute that person’s contributions at the event, with the ultimate sanction of ejected them from the event in extremis.  Any such action would only be considered by the Inspector if previous warnings are not adhered to.
* If you cannot connect to the event for some reason, or lose connection to the virtual event, contact the LPA administration officer by email or telephone (details above) who will assist if they can.