Examination of Doncaster Local Plan

Inspector: William Fieldhouse
Programme Officer: Elaine Reeson
Telephone Number 01302 862376
Email: EIP.Programmeofficer@doncaster.gov.uk
Address: Civic Office, Doncaster Council, Waterdale, Doncaster, DN1 3BU
Examination webpage: https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/planning/local-plan-examination

INSPECTOR’S NOTE NO. 10
PARTICIPATING AT HEARING SESSIONS

Introduction

As previously announced, hearing sessions will be held in Doncaster Civic Office on the following dates:

- Week 1: Wednesday 14 to Friday 16 October 2020
- Week 2: Tuesday 20 to Thursday 22 October 2020
- Week 3: Tuesday 3 to Thursday 5 November 2020
- Week 4: Wednesday 11 to Friday 13 November 2020
- Week 5: Monday 30 November to Wednesday 2 December 2020 (reserve days)

The matters to be discussed at each session will be as previously set out in the annex to INSP7 published on 13 August 2020. An agenda will be published a few days before each session confirming the issues to be discussed and participants.

All of the hearing sessions will be held in the Council Chamber in Doncaster Civic Office, with participation being by either physically attending, joining online using Microsoft Teams, or by phone. Participants listed in the annex to INSP7 should inform the Programme Officer how they wish to participate as soon as possible, and no later than one week before the relevant hearing session.

Observing hearing sessions

All of the hearing sessions are public events. However, due to the limit on numbers no one will be allowed to attend the Chamber to observe. All sessions will be broadcast live and will be subsequently available to view online via a link on the Council’s website.

Participation by attending at the Civic Office

The Council has undertaken a covid-19 risk assessment of the Civic Office, and a separate risk assessment specifically for the examination hearings. These set out measures, consistent with relevant legislation and Government guidance,
aimed at ensuring that the hearings will be safe. Both documents have been published in the examination library under Council Examination Documents refs DMBC 21 and DMBC22.

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 had symptoms within the last ten days, or any member of their household had symptoms in the last 14 days. If any participants 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 attend on their own. 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.

Participants should arrive at the Civic Office no later than 8.30 in order to allow safety procedures to be followed and the session to start promptly at 9.30. Please queue outside the emergency side door located between the main entrance to the reception and the staff side entrance (accessed from the Civic Square).

Everyone must maintain a two metre social distance at all times outside and inside the Civic Office and must not mingle with others.

Unless exempt, everyone should wear a face covering before entering the Civic Office and at all times other than when seated in their dedicated seat in the Chamber. Participants may wear a face covering whilst at their seat if they wish.

On arrival at the Civic Office, participants will be met by a member of Council staff outside the building. They will be asked to have a temperature test, complete a health declaration form and provide test and trace contact details. Participants that have downloaded the NHS Covid-19 tracing app will be able to scan the QR code that will be displayed at the entrance to the Civic Office and Council Chamber and elsewhere. Once those procedures are completed, participants will be escorted to their dedicated seat in the Chamber.

No more than 25 people will be allowed in the Chamber during each session. An indicative seating plan in the Chamber is attached as an annex to this note. This identifies a total of 25 seats (marked in green) that can be used safely. The 3 seats on the “top table” are for the Inspector and Programme Officer. A block of 5 seats on the right (when viewed from the top table) are for the Council (including Barrister and any ICT support if necessary). The remaining 3 blocks will be allocated to other participants (17 seats).

Each designated seat will have its own microphone and arrangements will be made for cleaning of these in-between breaks/sessions. Sanitising wipes will be
provided to allow users to clean their own desk/microphone prior to, and after, each session.

There will be comfort breaks of between 20 and 30 minutes during the morning and afternoon sessions, as well as a longer lunch break (up to one hour in duration). If participants wish to leave their seat they may do so, but please wait until the Inspector has left the room, maintain two metres social distancing at all times and do not mingle. There is circulation space and seating areas on the second floor outside the Chamber, which can be used by participants during breaks. However, if anyone wishes to leave the building they will need to be escorted. Furthermore, if they wish to re-enter the building they will need to have another temperature test and sign in again.

There are 3 toilet blocks available for participants on the corridor outside the Chamber (see annex). Locks have been fitted to the external doors so that no more than one person can occupy any block at any given time.

No refreshments will be provided in the Civic Office, nor are there any catering facilities for participants to use. There are numerous shops and cafes available within a few minutes’ walk of the Civic Office, although the duration of a lunch break cannot be guaranteed. Participants may therefore wish to bring their own food and drink, but please only consume water in the Chamber during hearing sessions.

No paper documents will be available or can be circulated before, during or after hearing sessions. Participants should therefore bring paper or electronic copies of all documents that they may need. Wi-Fi access will be available for all participants in the Chamber.

At the end of the session, participants will be escorted from the building via the downward only stairs of lift.

If the fire alarm sounds, everyone must leave the building promptly and safely and go to the assembly point in Civic Square. 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.

**Participation by Microsoft Teams or by phone**

Participants who cannot or do not wish to attend the hearing in person must inform the Programme Officer as soon as possible, and no later than one week before the session (unless this is unavoidable due to changed circumstances). Participants will be invited via email; this will set out the steps that will need to be taken to join the session via Microsoft Teams. This will involve the participant entering a virtual lobby, from where the Programme Officer will join them to the session shortly before the scheduled start time.

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1 The fire alarm is tested at 11.00 each Friday so if a session is being held at that time it is unlikely that the building will need to be evacuated in response to the alarm.
Once joined, participants will be able to see and hear the Inspector and participants in the Chamber. They should have their camera on so that they can be seen on screens in the Chamber, and have their microphone on mute unless asked to speak by the Inspector. The Inspector will be able to mute participants’ microphones if they forget to do so.

If any participant wishes to contribute by phone, they should inform the Programme Officer as soon as possible and no later than one week before the session so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

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. 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 Inspector. In such circumstances, the participant may find it helpful to first watch the relevant session online via the link on the Council’s website.

**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.

*William Fieldhouse*

INSPECTOR
29 September 2020