

Taking part in the inquiry

16.1. When you speak at the inquiry you should focus on the main points you want to get across to the Inspector. It is not necessary to read out all the detail you may have put in your written representations. The Inspector will already have that information. There is no need to repeat what other speakers have said, you can just say that you agree with them. You should not introduce new factual detail at this stage. This may result in delay to the inquiry if other parties need time to respond.

16.2. The Inspector will usually ask if you are willing to answer questions about your evidence. You do not have to do this, although it is often helpful to do so, and it may add weight to your evidence. Do not feel intimidated. The Inspector will not let anyone ask you hostile or unfair questions. If you oppose the appeal the appellant's representative may ask you questions. If you support it, the LPA's representative may ask you questions.

East Suffolk Council etiquette :

For all those watching or taking part virtually – Please ensure your camera and microphone are switched off at all times unless you are asked to speak, upon which you should turn on both your microphone and camera. After 'your' part, please revert to having microphone and camera switched off.

We ask you speak only when spoken to. Unsolicited interruptions may lead to being thrown out of the inquiry.

Before the inquiry

9.1. Interested parties are encouraged to take part in the inquiry. Local knowledge and opinion can often be a valuable addition to the evidence given by the appellant and the LPA.

9.2. Before the inquiry, if you want to see what the appellant and the LPA have written, the LPA should make these documents available. The LPA's and the appellant's statements of case and the agreed statement of common ground should be available 5 weeks after the appeal start date.

For further information on the full statement of case see:

- [section 12 in the planning appeals procedural guide](#)

For further information on the statement of common ground see:

- [section 13 in the planning appeals procedural guide](#)

9.3. Inquiries are open to members of the public, and although you do not have a legal right to speak, the Inspector will normally allow you to do so. If you want to speak at an inquiry, you need to think about what you want to say and how you want to say it. Some people prefer to make, or read out, a brief statement giving their views. If there are several people with the same views, it is a good idea for one person to speak on behalf of the others. A group of interested people may appoint one agent, solicitor, or barrister (who would be their advocate) - to represent them all.

9.4. If you/the group want to take a leading role in the inquiry and call your own witnesses, you should consider requesting 'rule 6 status'. You will need to submit a statement of case and you will be sent copies of the documents sent to us by the other main parties (that is, the appellant, the LPA and any other rule 6 parties). For further information see the [Guide to rule 6 status on planning appeal or called-in application](#) for interested parties involved in an inquiry.

Openness and transparency

13.1. Inquiries are open to journalists and the wider public, as well as interested people. Provided that it does not disrupt proceedings, anyone will be allowed to report, record and film proceedings including the use of digital and social media. Inspectors will advise people present at the start of the event that the proceedings may be recorded and/or filmed, and that anyone using social media during or after the end of the proceedings should do so responsibly.

13.2. If you want to record or film the event on equipment larger than a smart phone, tablet, compact camera, or similar you should contact us and the LPA in advance to discuss arrangements.

14. What happens at the inquiry

14.1. An inquiry is the most formal of the appeal procedures. It usually involves larger or more complicated appeals. Often expert evidence is presented, and witnesses are cross-examined (asked questions about their evidence). An inquiry

may last for several days, or even weeks. It is not a court of law, but the proceedings will often seem to be quite similar. The parties may be formally represented by advocates.

14.2. The Inspector will ensure that evidence is thoroughly tested so that they can reach a properly reasoned decision.

14.3. The starting time for the first day of the inquiry will normally be 10:00, but the notification letter you receive from the LPA and the notice displayed on the site will contain the starting time for the particular inquiry so you should check this.

14.4. At the start of the inquiry the Inspector will agree the sitting times and starting times. It is often agreed that the inquiry will start at an earlier time on subsequent days. Inquiries usually sit until about 17:00 or 17:30 each day. There will usually be a mid-morning and mid-afternoon break and a 1-hour adjournment for lunch. The Inspector should not be approached during breaks because other participants in the inquiry would not know what was being said.

14.5. If you want to speak at the inquiry, it is important that you are there when it opens, because this is when the Inspector will:

- go through some routine matters
- set out the timetable and the order of proceedings
- ask if any interested people want to speak at the inquiry
- will register their names

14.6. The Inspector will then usually give an outline of what the case is about and what the main issues are.

14.7. At a long inquiry, it is difficult to predict at what stage interested people will be given the chance to speak. If you cannot stay at the inquiry all the time, tell the Inspector at the start. The Inspector will understand and will try to help, if possible, by hearing your representations at a different stage of the inquiry. However, if you wish to ask the appellant or the LPA questions, you will need to be at the inquiry when they are giving their evidence.

14.8. The Inspector decides the order of appearances at the inquiry. This will be set out in the inquiry timetable. The appellant and the LPA will usually make opening statements. The witnesses for the LPA will usually be heard before the witnesses for the appellant. After each witness for the LPA has given their evidence, the appellant will be allowed to cross-examine them. The same will apply to the witnesses for the appellant, who will be cross-examined by the LPA.

14.9. The Inspector may allow interested parties to ask questions of witnesses from the opposing side. The Inspector has the discretion to decide how that would be done. It would usually be after any cross-examination and must not repeat questions that have already been put. Any such questions must be relevant to the evidence that the witness has given.

14.10. You must make sure that your questions are relevant to the evidence the witnesses have given. You should not repeat questions that have already been asked. This is not the time for you to give your views – that will come later (see 16).