

Suspension of the hearing process to the end of August 2021

Revised timeline for the hearing process and report to the council

Following our last statement dated 12 March 2021, we have now prepared the following revised “best case scenario” timeline, which extends from September 2021 to November 2022. The end date is the date which the council provided as a new statutory deadline for the making of the order. This timeline would apply to both the Celtic Park/Emirates Arena Order and the Ibrox Stadium Order.

Revised Table 1 – timeline for the hearing process and report to the council

Stage	Due date	Notes
Council statement	December 2021	We have allowed an extended period of time for the council to prepare its statement including any proposed modifications, also taking into account the festive period
Others' statements	February 2022	We have allowed 2 months for this given that the extent of any proposed modifications may not be known until the council has submitted its statement
Rebuttal statements	March 2022	One month remains feasible for rebuttal statements
Hearings and site inspections	May 2022	Whilst the actual period for the hearings (for both orders) is expected to be around 2 weeks, we have included a period of 2 months to provide some flexibility in the actual timing of the hearings and the associated site inspections. Site inspections remain the most challenging part of the process, being dependent upon the timing of football matches and upon any remaining Covid -19 restrictions
Report to council	September 2022	The period for reporting remains the same as set out in the original timeline, with the same qualifications
Council decision on orders	November 2022	The estimated period for this remains dependent upon earlier process

The qualifications set out in our original statement of 7 January 2021 still apply, but the overall prospect of progressing the hearing process timeously has improved.

There is more confidence in the period for the preparation of statements, and that statements will be able to reasonably anticipate the resumption of capacity crowds at and normal use of public transport to and from football matches, although we are still awaiting further information from the council with respect to the period of time which the council will require to prepare its statement including any proposed modifications.

At present, all planning for hearings is undertaken on the basis of using a virtual process. We recognise that the situation may have changed by the time the hearing process for the order recommences, and that an in-person hearing may be possible (with some remaining health and safety requirements). This is entirely dependent upon the continuing relaxation of the Covid-19 restrictions.

The site inspections part of the process remains the most challenging element. We cannot yet be sure that full capacity crowds will be allowed by April or May 2022. This period is also towards the end of the football season, and it may be difficult to

arrange site inspections to cover full-capacity matches at both Celtic Park and Ibrox stadium, which we consider to be an essential part of the site inspection process.

In overall terms, whilst the prospect of completing the process timeously has improved, meeting the timeline referred to above remains very challenging, and there is no guarantee that the process can be completed within the time period for making the order (with extensions) allowed under the Regulations.

The above revised timeline has been prepared to enable parties participating in the hearing to think about when they may need to prepare statements and attend the hearing, and whether there would be any difficulties in this respect.

Anyone who wishes to comment on the revised timeline may do so by writing to or emailing the programme officers until the end of June 2021, when will confirm or otherwise the default position of suspending the hearing process to the end of August 2021. In the event that the hearing process recommences in September 2021, we will then contact all parties to confirm the arrangements for the hearing.

We will publish the dates for the submission of statements and the date of the hearing on the web page in due course. Any changes to the process set out in the note of the pre-hearing meeting will be advised.

We have asked the council to respond to the outstanding request for information on:

- the period required for the submission of its statement and any proposed modifications
- whether or not any Covid-19 type relaxation of the Regulations has been agreed with the Scottish Government
- the periods of extension allowed under the Regulations

by the end of June 2021, so that we can take this into account in confirming or otherwise the suspension of the hearing process to the end of August 2021.