

Update on Our Legal Action

On 29th May 2015, Croydon Property Forum Ltd (CPF), a company limited by guarantee was formed, on the advice of our barristers, as it was the only means by which the complainants could remain anonymous. English law treats a limited company as a separate legal person in its own right, whereas had we simply formed an association, the identities of the private individuals involved who are all landlords of Croydon property could not have been concealed.

The same day, CPF's solicitor sent a letter before action to Croydon Council, advising them that unless they had a response within 14 days, legal action would be taken, significantly, the letter also included a request for an additional document not available on their website - no response was received, not even an acknowledgement. CPF's solicitor therefore filed a claim for judicial review as the 3 month time limit set by law to bring a judicial review was about to run out.

However, at this stage, CPF had not yet abandoned hopes of some sort of compromise. A liaison invited representatives from the Council to mediate with CPF representatives, but when it was made clear to the Council that CPF hoped to discuss an alternative to licensing, or at very least, to reach a compromise over the terms, the Council cancelled the meeting, stating that the consultation had been run, the decision made and the matter was not up for negotiation.

Therefore, the CPF has reluctantly resolved to press ahead with legal action, particularly as CPF'S barristers, Justin Bates and Jonathan Manning of Arden Chambers, who represented Constantinos Regas in December 2014 when he successfully had the Enfield licensing scheme quashed, have advised that the CPF has a very strong case. Some have questioned the basis of the case being put forward by our legal team and suggested other approaches that seem more obvious. All of these were thoroughly discussed with our barristers who are specialist in this field with a good track record and they were very clear that the approach being adopted gives the best chance of success.

We would also point out that the fact that the Council ignored CPF's letter before action, then cancelled the mediation meeting late on the day before it was due to take place, refusing to negotiate, will not help their case.

The legal campaign has received tremendous support from the people of Croydon, with some 1000 of you signing our petition against licensing - many thanks to you all!

The Council's legal team have made an order that we must lodge £40,000 with the court as security for to cover their costs for the case to go ahead (although we have been advised that they may settle for £35,000). On top of this, we have to pay our own legal costs. Donations can be made via our site: <http://www.croydonpropertyforumltd.com/>

Hearing Announced

The Queen (on the application of Croydon Property Forum Ltd) v LB Croydon

Our hearing has been set for **Tuesday 4 August 2015**.

The hearing will take place at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, WC2A 2LL. The presiding judge will be His Honour Justice Ouseley. This will be to determine whether we have permission to take a judicial review, and if that permission is granted, the actual hearing will be the same day. I will forward more specific details of which court room etc, and timings when I get them, although I understand that there is no precise time for hearings.

A good turnout will be helpful in showing that there is public interest in the case and that our legal arguments should be heard.

You should arrive at the main entrance to the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, WC2A 2LL. You will be required to pass through security. Double check the court number on the Cause List, either by asking at the enquiry desk or by checking on the lists behind the desk.

The case name is: The Queen (on the application of Croydon Property Forum Ltd) v London Borough of Croydon.

The nearest tube stations are: Holborn (Piccadilly and Central lines), Chancery Lane (Central line), Temple (District line). Access information is at: <https://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/rcj-rolls-building/rcj/faqs> with further information for disabled visitors at:

<https://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/courts/rcj/facilities-and-access/facilities-services-disabilities.pdf>

If you're travelling from Croydon, Temple is the most direct station; simply take the District Circle line eastbound from Victoria. From Temple tube station, go straight up Arundel Street, at the end turn right into the Strand, passing St Clement Danes Church (on an island in the middle of the Strand), once past Clement Danes, you will see the Royal Courts of Justice on the opposite side of the street.

Airport-style security is in operation, although water is allowed. You will need to allow plenty of time to pass through security and to find the court room - it is a large complex of buildings. If you arrive very early, Cafe 26 is at the far end of the main hall and there are various free exhibitions off the main hall.

Please remember to switch off your phone and to respect the protocols of the Court, such as standing up when a judge enters the court room, the maintenance of quiet in the public gallery, and following the directions of ushers.

Dress code: formal (suit and equivalent for ladies).

Could you pass the word around about our hearing, as we need as many people there as possible to show support?