

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR PLANNING COMMITTEE SITE VISITS

Procedure On Site:

The following procedural rules will be observed in the holding of all Planning Committee Site Visits:

- (a) Officers will arrange the Site Visit in advance with relevant parties. There is no right to enter on private land without permission of the land owner. Where appropriate, officers will obtain permission from the land owner or his/her agent for those invited to attend the Site Visit to enter the land. If permission is not given for Members and Officers and other interested parties to enter, the site will have to be viewed from the public highway/areas.
- (b) The Chair (or Vice Chair) will control proceedings throughout.
- (c) The Chair will explain that the purpose of the Site Visit is to obtain information relevant to the determination of the application. He/She will summarise the proceedings and the constraints as set out below.
- (d) The Chair will introduce the Planning Officer who will describe the proposals to Members with reference to features on the ground and the submitted plans and summarise the relevant issues and material considerations.
- (e) Other officers may be present to provide other specialist/expert advice/information where relevant/required (e.g. Highways Engineers or Environmental Health/Protection Officers).
- (f) The applicant or his/her agent will be asked to confirm they are satisfied with the Planning Officers presentation and summary of the proposals outlined.
- (g) Representatives of Objectors and/or supporters may be invited to attend the Site Visit as interested parties. However, the right of a representative to address the Planning Committee does not arise until this item is reached on the agenda during the relevant meeting of the Planning Committee. Presentations from interested parties should on no account be made. However, occasionally it may be appropriate for interested parties to be asked, through the Chair, to point out important or relevant site features. At no point during the site visit will debate or comment on the planning merits or otherwise of the proposal be permitted, as the proper time for such debate/comment is at the relevant meeting of the Planning Committee.
- (h) Ward Councillors may make a brief statement on matters relevant to and pertinent to the Site Visit i.e. relevant site features. Ward Councillors will refrain from debating or commenting on the planning merits or otherwise of the proposal. Ward Councillors will be permitted to make representations at the relevant meeting of the Planning Committee.

- (i) During the Site Visit, no separate discussions regarding the application must take place with officers or Members and either applicants, objectors or supporters.
- (j) No hospitality will be accepted by Officers and Members from the applicant or any other interested party present at the Site Visit.
- (k) The Planning Officer(s) present at the Site Visit will make a note of those attending. Planning Committee Members failing to attend the Site Visit will need to consider whether they have sufficient knowledge of the site and the issues arising from the Site Visit to enable them to take part in determining the application when it comes back to the relevant meeting of the Planning Committee for consideration.
- (l) The Chair (or Vice Chair) will conclude the Site Visit. No indication of the views of Members or the likely outcome of the Planning Committee's deliberations on the application will be given. To do so might imply that a Member's mind is already made up.
- (m) If Members require further information or clarification of any aspect of the development, the officer(s) attending the Site Visit will be asked to ensure that such information is available by the time the application is considered by Members at the relevant meeting of the Planning Committee.

nb. A copy of this Code of Conduct will be issued to all those invited to attend the Site Visit.