

DRAFT SITE VISIT PROTOCOL - PROPOSED Part 8 – Section 3 – Planning  
Protocol Planning Committee  
Committee Site Visit Protocol

Paragraphs 13.1 to 13.5 to remain unchanged as in the Constitution

### **13.0 COMMITTEE SITE VISITS**

13.1 Committee site visits do not constitute formal meetings of the Council but rather their purpose is to enable members to observe the site and to gain a better understanding of the issues. Non-attendance of a site visit will not preclude a member from discussing and voting on the relevant matter at the Planning Committee meeting. Notwithstanding this, members should make every effort to attend where it is considered that a site visit is necessary and appropriate. In addition, any relevant information which members have gained from the site visit will if necessary, be reported back to the Committee so that all members have the same information.

13.2 Site visits should only be conducted where the benefit is clear and substantial. Officers will have visited the site and assessed the scheme against policies and material considerations already. A site visit should not take place unless:

- (i) There are particular site factors which are significant in terms of the weight attached to them relative to other factors if they would be difficult to assess in the absence of a site inspection; or
- (ii) There are specific site factors and/or significant policy or precedent implications that need to be carefully addressed; or
- (iii) The impact of the proposed development is difficult to visualise; or
- (iv) The comments of the applicant and/or objectors cannot be expressed adequately in writing; or
- (v) The proposal is particularly contentious

13.3 A record should be kept of the reasons why a site visit is called.

13.4 Members of the Planning Committee, one representative from the appropriate Town or Parish Council and the local ward member(s) and officers should participate in site meetings. A member who is not the local ward member but is able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Group Head Planning in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee prior to the site meeting taking place that the application will have a significant impact on their ward may be permitted to attend the site meeting.

Paragraphs 13.5 to 13.8 to be removed and replaced with:  
Procedure On Site:

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

1. Officers will arrange the Site Visit in accordance 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 their agent for those invited to attend the Site Visit to enter the land. If permission is not given the Members and Officers and other interested parties to enter, the site will have to be viewed from the public highway/areas. **The applicant may be present on site but should be kept a discreet distance away from the Planning**

Committee Members and officers so that they cannot be a party to any comments or questions raised.

2. The Chair (or Vice Chair) will control proceedings throughout.
3. The Chair will explain the purpose of the Site Visit is to obtain information relevant to the determination of the application. They will summarise the proceedings and the constraints as set out below.
4. 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.
5. Other officers may be present to provide other specialist/expert advice/information where relevant (eg Highways Engineers or Environmental Health Officers).
6. One representative from the relevant Town/Parish Council will be invited to attend. However, their attendance is merely in an observing role. No statements or representations shall be made.
7. 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 Committee. **Members should not express opinions or views at the site meeting but may ask officers present questions or seek clarification from them on matters which are relevant to the site investigation.**
8. Ward Councillors will be permitted to make representations at the relevant meeting of the Committee.
9. During the Site Visit no separate discussions regarding the application must take place with officers or Members and either applicants, objectors or supporters.
10. No hospitality will be accepted by officers and Members from the applicant or any other interested party present at the Site Visit.
11. The Chair (or Vice Chair) will conclude the Site Visit. No indication of the views of Members or the likely outcome of the Committee's deliberations will be given. To do so might imply that a Member's mind is already made up.
12. 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 Committee.

**A copy of this Protocol will be issued to all those Members attending the Site Visit**