



Members of the Planning Working Group (WG) may wish to visit the site of a planning application they will be determining so that they have a better understanding of the effects an application may have on an area. Visiting will enable them to inspect a site to gain a greater understanding of its location, physical characteristics and relationship to neighbouring properties or land use. This helps them when making a formal decision on a development management (planning) application.

This protocol sets out the normal practice for the arrangement and conduct of formal site visits by the Planning WG.

**Requests for site visits**

A site inspection will occur when the Planning WG agree to request a site visit either in anticipation of a planning meeting or following a deferral of a decision.

**Conduct of site visits**

- Site visits are solely for the purpose of viewing the site, understanding its location and immediate environs to be able to put the development proposal into context, and discussing the facts of the application.
- Site visits will be held at a time convenient to members and as far as we are able to access the site. They will commence promptly at the time provided by Clerk.
- Site visits will be led by the Planning WG Chairman or in the absence of the chair the Vice-Chairman.
- Third parties (such as applicants/agents) are welcome to attend the site visit but must **not** engage with members of the Planning WG. The opportunity to address members of the Planning WG will be given at the actual meeting. Members of the WG will therefore not directly engage any third-party person present at the site visit and will address any questions through the Chairman.
- Third parties (such as applicants/agents) will only be asked a question where officers are either unable to answer the point raised e.g. where a factual query about the process/company is not directly related to planning, or the applicant/agent is best placed to answer it owing to specialist knowledge etc.
- No decisions will be made at the site visit by the WG and the Chairman will make this clear at the beginning of the visit within the opening speech.
- Officers will give a brief presentation on the site, setting out the proposed development and the specific reasons why they requested a site visit. They will also advise whether the applicant or objectors have requested that the WG view the site from other locations and how that is to be dealt with.
- Councillors will ask their questions through the Chairman including any requests for specific information from the applicant/agent or any other third party.
- The Chairman will seek confirmation that members are satisfied they have seen everything they need to make a decision and will draw the site inspection to a close.
- Members of the WG should politely avoid engaging in private conversations with applicants, agents or any other third parties including objectors as this can give the wrong impression to others present or anyone observing the site visit.
- For the purposes of factual record, attendance at a site visit will be recorded by the Clerk including the locations visited.
- As the purpose of the visit is not to debate but simply to establish facts about the site and its surroundings, no formal notes of a site visit will be recorded, other than the attendance and locations visited as noted above.

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Minute ref</b>
Adopted	14 November 2022	14n)