

## Agenda



# Epping Forest District Council

## ***Meeting of Development Control Chairmen and Vice Chairmen Monday, 25th February, 2013***

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Meeting of Development Control Chairmen and Vice Chairmen**, which will be held at:

**Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping  
on Monday, 25th February, 2013  
at 5.00 pm .**

**Glenn Chipp  
Chief Executive**

**Democratic Services  
Officer**

Simon Hill - Tel 01992 564249  
email: [shill@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:shill@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

### **Members:**

Councillors A Boyce, R Bassett, J Hart, Mrs S Jones, Ms Y Knight, B Sandler, Mrs P Smith and Ms S Watson

### **Also Invited:**

Councillors J Philip and D Stallan

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### **1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING**

To elect a chairman for the meeting.

### **2. PLANNING SITE VISITS (Pages 3 - 6)**

The attached request to review the protocol for planning site visits was referred to this meeting.

An extract from the Planning Protocol regarding site visits is also attached.

### **3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Members to raise any other matter of business

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## **REQUEST FOR A TASK AND FINISH PANEL – from Cllr. Stellan**

I would like to formally submit a request for a Task & Finish Panel to be set up to agree a protocol for planning site visits. I have used the PICK system for this request.

I wish my name to go forward as the Councillor proposing this panel, and I have 2 supporting councillors, Councillor A Boyce and Councillor J Phillip

### **Summary of issue:**

To set up a protocol for site visits to ensure that site visits are managed to ensure that planning application visits are done fairly and that both applicants and opponents of applications are assured that a fair decision is made.

### **Public Interest Justification:**

No known public demand for such a protocol

### **Impact on social economic and environmental well being of the area:**

Planning applications are not challenged on the basis that the site visit was not properly undertaken.

### **Council Performance in the area:**

Not known

### **Keep in Context:**

No known reviews taken place.

It is our view that this should only require 2 meetings to be held with a maximum of 3.

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## Extract from Planning Protocol

### 20. Site Visits

20.1 Formal site visits may be requested by any Planning Committee. However, these consume resources and could delay determination of an application. It is good practice to:

- (a) consider site visits only where there is a substantial benefit to the decision-making process, e.g. when the impact of the proposed development is difficult to visualise from prior inspection from a public place, or from the plans and the supporting material; or it is particularly contentious;
- (b) encourage members of the Committee, plus the Chairman or Vice-Chairman, to attend the site visit, together with a senior planning officer, if they have not already done so;
- (c) ensure that the visit is managed by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or senior officer and that it is made clear to other parties at the outset that the purpose is to gather factual information first hand – **not** to hear arguments for and against, or to enter into a debate about the merits of the case;
- (d) ensure that the application will not be determined at that site visit;
- (e) in the interests of fairness to all parties, consider the desirability of viewing an application site from more than one property when the site visit is arranged.

20.2 Any response to questions or statements by interested parties at site visits should follow the good practice summarised above. Councillors should refrain from making comments on the merits or otherwise of the application to any interested party.

20.3 All formal site visits should be conducted in a single group.

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