

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.