

Planning Site Visits

Guidance for Applicants, Agents and interested parties



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Formal site visits may be requested by any Planning Committee. These can be requested either before a planning meeting or resolved at the meeting concerned. However, these consume resources and delay determination of an application. Site visits will only normally be considered 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.

It is recognised that Councillors are subject to lobbying on specific applications by Applicants, agents and other interested parties. Our Councillors follow guidance when undertaking planning site visits so as to avoid the perception of pre-determination.

- Site visits will be undertaken at an agreed predetermined time and conducted in a single group with a planning officer present at all times.
- You will not be allowed to use the site visit as an opportunity of lobbying Councillors who are members of the committee. It will be made clear to other parties at the outset that the purpose of the site visit is to gather information and to view the site only.
- The site visit is managed by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or planning officer present. Councillors will not enter into discussions with interested parties during the visit.
- Councillors concerned are encouraged to attend site visits.
- Councillors may ask questions of fact which will be directed, in the first instance, to the planning officer present and not directly to interested parties present.
- In the interests of fairness to all parties, Councillors will consider the desirability of viewing an application site from more than one property when the site visit is arranged if this is appropriate.
- The planning application is not determined at the site visit.
- Councillors will not normally accept any hospitality at a site visit as these could be misinterpreted by third parties.

Further Information:

Email: democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Tel: 01992 564249 and ask for the Committee Officer for the relevant Subcommittee which is shown on the front sheet of the agenda.