

Why do Members visit the site?

The decision to undertake a site visit will only be made by the Planning Committee, after an initial consideration of the relevant issues. Site visits will normally take place on the morning of the next scheduled meeting of the Planning Committee; although more complex cases may take place on a separate day.

The sole purpose of the site visit is for Members to gain information relating to the land or buildings relative to the proposed development; thus allowing them to gain a greater understanding of the site and its surroundings.

No discussion on the merits of a proposal shall take place, or decision on the application be made, whilst at the site.

Who can attend?

Anyone with an interest in the application is welcome to attend the site visit to view the proceedings, but only the Planning Committee Members, in the presence of a Planning Officer and the Proper Officer/Committee Clerk, may participate in the visit. A record of Members attending the visit will be kept by the Committee Clerk, as only those Members who have attended the visit are eligible to determine the application.

Prior notification of the visit will be given to the applicant and anyone who has submitted comments in writing. Members of the Committee must be aware that they have no legal powers of entry and can only enter land, or a building at the agreement of the owner/occupier. Members of the public similarly have no rights to accompany Members visiting a site, and likewise may only enter with the permission of the owner/occupant.

What will happen at the site visit?

The Chair (or Committee Member chairing the visit) shall explain the purpose of the site visit and the procedures to be followed. The Planning Officer dealing with the case or the Planning Manager will conduct the site visit, pointing out the relevant aspects of the site, the proposed development and the surrounding land.

Occasionally it may be of benefit for the applicant, their agent or an objector to point out a factual matter relating to features of the site or its surroundings. Discretion in this respect shall remain with the Chair.

Special provisions may need to be made by the applicant prior to the visit, such as pegging out the footprint of a proposed building or structure. Such arrangements will be made by the Planning Officer dealing with the case.

Whilst on site visits, Members shall keep together as a group at all times and shall **not** engage in any discussions regarding the proposal with either applicants or objectors.

No lobbying by applicants or objectors will be permitted. If anyone attempts to lobby Members, or to disrupt the proceedings in any way, the Chair has the authority to request that the parties leave the site visit. The Chair shall also be entitled to instruct the site visit to be abandoned.