

Report to District Development Control Committee/Standards Committee

Date of meeting(s): 27 and 28 March 2013

Subject: Planning Protocol – Site Visits



**Epping Forest
District Council**

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Committee Secretary: S Hill Ext 4249**

Recommendation(s):

- (1) To consider prepared guidance on undertaking planning site visits for inclusion as supplementary information in the Council's Planning Protocol;
- (2) That the Planning Subcommittees be asked to note this guidance in undertaking future site visits and an item placed on their forthcoming agenda on the matter;
- (3) That this guidance be published on the Council's website, sent to members, applicants and objector (if known) when a site visit is organised

Report Detail

1. At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny held on 29 January 2013 consideration was given to a request of Councillor Stellan to establish a task and finish panel to review procedures at planning site visits. It was agreed at that meeting that it was appropriate for the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council's planning committees to meet to discuss the matter and bring forward any recommendations for procedural changes felt necessary.
2. This meeting was held on 25 February 2013. It was felt that further guidance should be drafted for both members and public attending such visits to avoid the perception of pre-determination and to ensure that there is a consistent approach during each visit.
3. This guidance is attached as Appendices 1 and 2 to this report. It has been split into two documents, one aimed at members and the second at other interested parties. It is proposed that these documents form supplementary guidance to the council's Planning Protocol. The guidance brings together information from the protocol.
4. It is further proposed that an item be placed on each planning committee to reiterate the process for future visits. It will also be sent to members, applicants and objectors (if known) when a site visit is organised.
5. It was agreed by the Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Development that officers would also meet to ensure a consistent approach by officers.