

Proposed Guidance for Applicants, Agents and interested parties at Site Visits

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 members 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 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. Members of the committee or subcommittee will not enter into discussions with interested parties during the visit.
- Members of the committee concerned are encouraged to attend site visits.
- Members 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, members 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 application is not determined at the site visit.
- Councillors will not normally accept any hospitality at a site visit, (apart from routine courtesies), 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.