

## **Planning Committee Site Inspections**

A Members site inspection can be carried out where an application is to be determined by an Area Planning Committee. The Committee Chairman, in consultation with the Head of Planning, will normally identify the need for any site inspections in advance of meetings of the Committee. Otherwise, only exceptionally should an item be deferred for a site inspection and it should only take place if voted for by a majority of the Area Planning Committee.

A Councillor who believes a site inspection is necessary in a particular case, having careful regard to the criteria below, is encouraged to contact the Head of Planning as soon as possible. A Councillor making such a request should state under which of the four criteria below the Inspection is requested and also provide supporting justification. The Head of Planning will then consult with the Chairman of the Area Planning Committee regarding the request for the site inspection. The same justification is required should the Head of Planning believe a site inspection is necessary.

A Members' Site inspection should only be used where the benefit of doing so is clear and substantial. The decision to hold a site inspection must fit at least one of the following criteria:

- i. Particular site factors are so significant in terms of weight attached to them, relative to other factors, and that a site inspection would be the only way to assess those factors.
- ii. It is essential in order to reach a view on an application that the specific and particular characteristics of the site need to be viewed on the ground in order to assess the broader material impact of the proposal
- iii. The proposal raises specific matters in respect of site characteristics, the importance of which can only be established by means of a site inspection
- iv. The proposal is of such a major or strategic scale that a site inspection is essential to enable members to be fully familiar with all site-related matters of fact

The purpose of a site inspection is solely for Planning Committee Members to view the site and its surroundings and to relate the application proposals to the site. Officers will explain the submitted drawings. Neither the applicant, their agent nor any supporters or objectors should take part. Where an applicant or land owner and/or their agent have to be present to allow access to the site, the visiting Members should stand away from him or her (or if necessary, politely ask the applicant or owner to stand away) and should not engage in any discussions.

One representative from the Parish Council, in whose area the site is located, may attend the site inspection. The Parish Council representative may observe proceedings, but should not take part or engage in any discussions. The relevant Parish Council will be notified in advance of the date and time the site inspection is

scheduled to take place and should advise Committee Services if they wish a representative to be present. Access to the site by the Parish Council representative is at the discretion of the landowner.

Members should avoid any discussion of the merits of the case on site, on the journey to/from the site, or anywhere other than the subsequent Committee meeting when the application is reported for determination. No decision will be taken on site. The application will normally be considered at the next ordinary meeting of the Area Planning Committee.