

PLANNING COMMITTEE2nd APRIL 2015**REPORT OF HEAD OF REGULATORY SERVICES****ARRANGEMENTS FOR SITE INSPECTIONS FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS****1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report is intended to complete the Committee's discussions on the current arrangements for the site inspection of planning applications.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Committee recommends amendments to section 5 of the existing arrangements (reproduced as Appendix A to this report).

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Members will recall discussing the arrangements for site inspections at the meeting of 16th February 2015. The conclusion of that debate is recorded in the minutes as: "DETERMINATION: A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed that Officers will look at part 5 of the existing procedure and bring it back to Committee.
- 3.2 The proposed revised wording of item 5 with the proposed amendments underlined to allow ease of identification.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 It is necessary to submit this recommendation to the governance Committee and subsequently to Full Council for consideration as part of the next available review of the Council's constitution.

APPENDIX A: PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SITE INSPECTIONS (CONSTITUTION PART 5, APPENDIX 3)

CONDUCT OF THE SITE INSPECTION

1. Site visits will be carried out prior to the Committee Meeting and will not constitute a part of the meeting.
2. The site visit will consist of an inspection by Members of the Planning Committee and the Ward Member(s) only, accompanied by the Head of Regulatory Services (or their representative). The inspection should be uninterrupted ~~unaccompanied~~ (ie. without participation of the applicant/agent and or objectors/supporters or any representatives of the local community) although they may be present.
3. The Chairman will invite the Head of Regulatory Services (or his representative) to describe the proposal. She/he will explain:
 - What is proposed
 - Where it will be positioned on the site (including details of access, windows)
 - What physical features that will be affected by the proposal (e.g. any trees or hedges requiring removal, any demolition etc.)
4. Members of the Committee will be invited to ask any questions of clarification of the Head of Regulatory Services (or their representative) or any other party, but should not express their opinion on the merits of the application, nor enter into any debate on the merits of the application with other Members.
5. For particularly contentious applications objectors/supporters may be at the site (or gathered on public land nearby) and will be looking to make representations verbally to Members or to hand out material to support their case. In these instances Members (supported as necessary by officers) should explain that the purpose of their visit is to view the site and its surroundings and that they cannot enter into any discussion in respect of the merits of the application, and cannot accept any written or other material. However Members may wish to receive suggestions of further vantage points from the persons present
6. If the applicant/agent needs to be present to provide access to the site they should be requested to allow Members to view unaccompanied. An exception to this would be where the applicant/agent is required to show the Members around – for instance for security purposes or where the inspection involves looking inside an occupied building. In such cases the applicant/agent will be asked not to speak on any issues concerning the merits of the application.
7. The Chairman will ask the Committee if they wish to view the site from any other vantage points.