

Committee(s):	Dated:
Planning & Transportation Committee	8 October 2018
Subject: Site visits for Members in relation to planning applications	Public
Report of: Chief Planning Officer	For Decision

Summary

Members have expressed a wish to have site visits in relation to planning applications on the Committee Agenda. This report seeks your views as to whether they are to be in relation to all planning applications or certain classes of applications and how these are to be organised.

Recommendation

It is recommended that a site visit is offered for Major Applications and other applications where the impact can only be considered from a non-public place. That this is trialled for three months to assess its popularity and to see whether alterations need to be made to the proposed system for organising the visits.

Main Report

Background

1. Over the last year Members have expressed the wish for site visits to be arranged, either accompanied by officers only or in some cases with the applicant. Before this, Members visited sites unaccompanied if they considered a site visit was useful.

Current Position

2. The planning applications that come before Committee are very varied in scale from large redevelopment proposals to rear extensions or to alterations to buildings which impact on the amenity of residential or commercial occupiers leading to objections and thereby a need for Committee consideration.
3. Some of the schemes can be reviewed from the adjoining streets whilst others need access to the site and/or adjoining premises to see the impact of the proposals.

Variables for consideration

4. There are a number of matters to be considered
 - a. Both Members' and officers' availability.
 - b. Should a visit be offered for all application sites?
 - c. Should a visit be arranged only for major developments?

- d. Should a visit be arranged where objectors have sighted particular concerns which cannot be viewed from public places?
 - e. Should the applicant be asked to attend and if so, in what circumstances?
 - f. Should the objectors be asked to attend and if so, in what circumstances?
5. If there were a number of sites spread across the City on a Committee agenda, this would necessitate Members and officers being available and Members getting from one to the other. This could take considerable time. How should this be facilitated?
- 6.

Recommendations

7. Subject to how Members respond to paragraphs 4 and 5, it is recommended:
- a) A site visit is offered for Major Applications and
 - b) Other applications where the impact can only be considered from a non-public place.
 - c) The visit(s) would take place in a fixed slot starting at 9am four working days before Committee, this is typically a Thursday when the Committee is on the following Tuesday.
 - d) If there is more than one site to visit time slots will be provided.
 - e) The appropriate officers will be available to answer questions.
 - f) These visits would not normally be accompanied by the applicant or objectors except for the purpose of gaining access.
 - g) Members should advise by 2pm on the day before the proposed site visit if they wish to attend, (if more than one, which ones) using a dedicated inbox.
 - h) This is trialled for three months to test its popularity and to see whether alterations need to be made to the arrangements.

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