

Committee: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Agenda Item

Date: 23RD NOVEMBER, 2005

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Title: **SITE VISITS – AMENDMENTS TO THE
SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

Author: John Mitchell, 01799 510450

Item for decision

Summary

Following a resolution by this Committee at its meeting of 2nd November 2005 under Chairman's urgent business, authority is sought to delegate the to the Executive Manager, Development Services, the power to organise formal site visits by Members of the Development Control Committee in advance of meetings of that Committee.

Recommendations

1. That the scheme of delegation be amended to allow the Executive Manager, development Services, to organise site visits by the Development Control Committee in advance of meetings of that Committee.

Background Papers

The following papers are referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection in the Members' Room.

1. Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Members, applicants and objectors will need to be notified of the proposed site visit no later than 5 working days before the Committee Meeting
Community Safety	None.
Equalities	It is important to ensure that all parties are aware of the site visit.
Finance	None.
Human Rights	None.
Legal Implications	None.

Ward-specific impacts	All.
Workforce/Workplace	None significant

Situation

1. Under urgent business at its 2nd November meeting, the Committee, expressed concern that deferring consideration of a planning application for a site visit can cause an application to go “out of time” with a consequent adverse affect on the Council’s performance targets. The Executive Manager, Development Services, was instructed to bring a report to the next meeting to formalise a change to the scheme of delegation which would allow Officers to arrange Member site visits in advance of a meeting.
2. At present such site visits, other than those forming part of the advance reporting procedure, can only be arranged by resolution of the Committee. It has been suggested that, in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the services, authority to organise site visits should also be delegated to the Executive Manager, Development Services. It is considered that this authority should be exercised in addition to resolutions by committee, thus retaining the safeguard, but it would allow Members to give advance warning of a site visit so this could be organised for the day of the Committee, rather than the following meeting.
3. Officers suggest that, in the interest of equity and probity, at least 6 working days notice be given so that the site visit can appear on the relevant agenda and to enable staff to make timely contact with the applicant, Parish/Town Council and any other interested party. The Executive Manager should also retain the authority to organise a site visit without the stimulus of a request from a Member

Risk Analysis

10. The following have been assessed as the potential risks associated with this issue.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Members may not be aware of the proposed site visit	Low	Low	Members will be notified by email and in writing

Applicants and interested parties may be unaware of the site visit	Low	Medium	6 working days notice is required to ensure that proposed site visits appear on a published agenda. Applicants and interested will be notified in a timely manner. Notes accompanying application forms will draw attention to the possibility of a Member site visit prior to the Committee meeting
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