

Frodsham Town Council
Protocol for Councillors' Site Visits
For Planning Applications



- 1 **Introduction:** This document defines Frodsham Town Council's protocol for Councillors' site visits in relation to planning applications.
- 2 **Scope:** The protocol covers those occasions when Councillors inspect a site to obtain factual understanding of its location, physical characteristics & relationship to neighbouring properties/land use to enable them to determine the impact of the proposed development.
- 3 **The Objective of a Site Visit** is to enable a Councillor to gain familiarity with the planning application and its impact before he/she recommends how FTC should respond to the Planning Authority in respect of that application.
- 4 **Procedure for Site Visits**
 - 4.1. On receipt of an invitation from an applicant for a site visit to a substantial development, the Office Manager will notify all committee members.
 - 4.2. The Councillors conduct the site visit and, if the due date follows FTC's next scheduled Ordinary Meeting, the respective Councillors report their findings at the meeting to enable FTC to formulate its submission to the Planning Authority. FTC may, in exceptional circumstances, allow additional time for a Councillor to consider the proposal further, in which case action proceeds as per para 4.3.
 - 4.3. If the due date precedes FTC's next Ordinary Meeting, and where FTC has allowed extra time, the respective Councillors report (verbally or in writing) their site visit findings to a specially convened meeting of the Planning Committee to enable it to formulate the submission to the Planning Authority on behalf of FTC.
- 5 **Rules for Site Visits**
 - 5.1. *The Application & associated documents* (inc facsimiles) may not be removed from the Office.
 - 5.2. *Conduct of the Visit*
 - Councillors have no right of entry to private property or land except by permission of the owner.
 - A Councillor who has a personal or prejudicial interest in the site must declare such interest and decline the assignment.
 - Councillors should avoid discussions about the merits/demerits of the proposal with the applicant or his/her representative and confine themselves to gathering factual details, which are relevant to the Planning Authority's understanding of the site & its surroundings.
 - Councillors may exchange factual information with the 'interviewee' but must not express their own view of the planning application. They should commit only to conveying the 'interviewee's' views to FTC.
 - Councillors should avoid becoming involved in discussions with applicants, prospective applicants, their agents, landowners or other interested parties regarding benefits, which may be offered to the Planning Authority or benefits, which the Planning Authority wishes to obtain.
 - 5.3. *Health & Safety:* The Office Manager will identify possible hazards pertaining to the site. Councillors must follow any instructions issued by the Office Manager and/or the site owner.
 - 5.4. *Records:* The Office Manager will maintain a record of all site visits.
- 6 **Planning Authority's Site Visits:** "The Town Clerk, Chair of the Town Council or Chair of the Planning Committee will be allowed to attend Cheshire West & Chester planning site visits but for the purpose of asking questions only and only under strict guidance. For this purpose only the Town Clerk will be notified." (*CWaC's Members' Planning Protocol, Para 7.9 - Site Visits*).
