

## **COVID-19 Site Visit Protocol January 2021**

The following sets out the approach for Site Visits to be undertaken in relation to planning applications submitted to the council. Where relevant the terms by which site visits are to be undertaken will need written agreement from the applicant/agent of the application. This has been prepared taking account of current Government advice.

- 1- If possible a site visit will be carried out from the public realm only. The agent/applicant will be contacted to make them aware of the time of the visit to minimise the likelihood of applicants coming out to enquire what the officer is doing. It will be for the case officer to determine whether this provides sufficient information to assess the application.
- 2- If unable to view the site sufficiently from the public realm then the case officer will contact the applicant/agent to establish that they are able to accommodate a site visit with the following conditions:
  - The case officer will arrange a date and time for the site visit – the officer will email you to ask you to confirm that the site can be made open with an identified access point.
  - Neither the applicant/agent will attempt to communicate with the officer during the site visit, remaining within the property at all times.
  - Before the arranged site visit time you will need to arrange for the identified access point to be unlocked before the officer arrives on site to allow them unimpeded access into the site.
  - Prior to entering the property Case Officer will confirm with the occupier no change in circumstances since arranging visit.
  - Upon completing their site visit the case officer will text or email the applicant/agent to say the site visit was completed and the access points can then be locked again as necessary.
  - Upon completing their site visit the case officer to hand sanitise and dispose of mask if disposal mask worn.
  - If the officer arrives on site and is unable to access the site in a safe manner or attempts to engage with the officer are made during the site visit then the officer will end the site visit and leave the site.

**NOTE 1:** This will require written agreement from the applicant/agent as to the terms above along with confirmation that no one at the site either has a confirmed case of Covid-19, is isolating due to displaying symptoms of Covid-19 and/or are shielding.

**NOTE 2:** In a small number of cases it may be possible for the site visit to be satisfied by the submission of dated photographs and or/video of the site. In such circumstances it will be a matter of judgement as to whether the site visit requirements have been satisfied by the submission of photographs and/or videos taking account of the nature of the site, significance of the proposals, whether there is any other form of verification required and the level of interest in the application.

- 3- In all cases where internal access to a building is required no site visits will be undertaken at the present time. In such circumstances the case officer may seek to agree an extension of time with the applicant/agent until such time as a site visit can be undertaken.