

**The information in this leaflet is relevant to those appeals that are to be decided by exchange of written evidence and an accompanied site visit.**



Before the site visit a Commissioner will study the application documents and background papers, together with the statements of case and rebuttal evidence presented by or on behalf of the appellant, the planning authority and any interested third parties. The Commissioner will then inspect the appeal site and surrounding area at the appointed time, accompanied by representatives of all parties. People who have not previously registered an interest in the appeal may participate in the site visit only if they are associated with one of the parties to the appeal.

By law, Commissioners have the right to enter any land in the exercise of their statutory functions. However, the Commissioner will not enter any land or building in the company of one party unless representatives of all other parties are also allowed to enter. The landowner is responsible for ensuring that all the parties can gain access to the site or building safely.

The appeal decision will be based on what the Commissioner reads in the written submissions and sees during the site visit. It is essential that your written evidence contains **all** the points you wish to rely on and **all** the material to support your case. The accompanied site visit is **not** an opportunity to amend the appeal proposal or the planning authority's reasons for refusal or to present further arguments or information. It is **not** an open-air hearing.

Please make sure you allow yourself enough time to get to the appeal site. If you do not show up on time, the Commissioner may start the site visit without you. Please dress sensibly, taking account of the weather and the terrain. You would be well advised to bring protective clothing and boots.



At the outset, the Commissioner will introduce himself or herself and note the names of those who wish to take part in the accompanied site visit. It is important to stay together in a group with all other participants so that everyone is aware of everything that is going on. You should not attempt to engage the Commissioner in a private conversation.

**In the course of the site visit, the Commissioner will normally ask for various things to be pointed out. These may include:**

- Existing buildings and physical features, whether on the site or elsewhere
- The position of any proposed new building or structure, with an indication of its height in relation to existing features
- The position of any proposed new road access or hard surfaced area
- The extent of any existing vegetation to be removed and the location of any new planting to be carried out
- The locations of the critical vantage points from which any new building would be seen.

## The Commissioner MAY

- Lead the participants on to the appeal site
- Ask to look inside any existing building, whether on the site or elsewhere
- View the appeal site from neighbouring land or buildings
- Invite the participants to travel by car to a critical viewpoint if it is beyond reasonable walking distance.

An accompanied site visit generally lasts no longer than 30 minutes. At the end, the Commissioner will ask the representatives of each party to confirm that everything they wish him or her to see has been pointed out. The Commissioner will then close the site visit and prepare the appeal decision.

## The Commissioner WILL NOT

- Accept plans, photographs or other documents from anyone
- Permit discussion of legal or policy issues
- Permit debate about points made in the participants' written evidence
- Entertain any new reasoning or evidence.

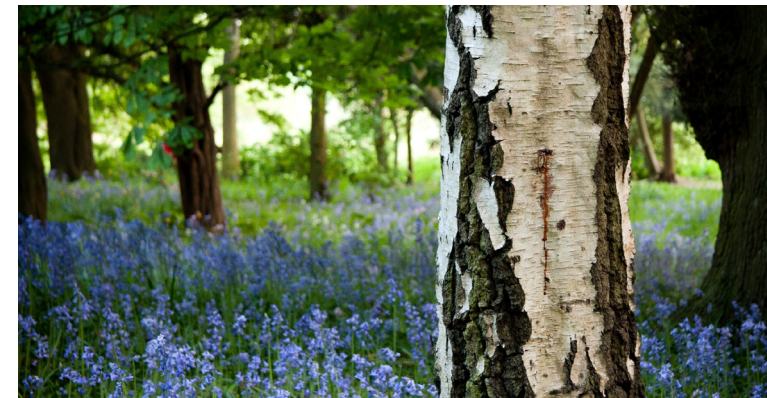
## The Commissioner MAY

- Abandon the site visit if the weather is so bad that it would be impossible to inspect the appeal site and its surroundings properly – in that case, alternative arrangements will be made
- Seek clarification of straightforward matters of fact arising from the appeal papers or written evidence.



Please note that at any stage in the process the Commission may write out seeking further information from the parties or may arrange a hearing to explore a gap in the written evidence which appears to be critical to the outcome of the appeal.

## What to expect at an Accompanied Site Visit



Planning Appeals Commission

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