

Summary

The NPPF /PPG states that an applicant must demonstrate why a proposed development is not able to comply with the policies adopted in the current Local Plan, and the LPA as the decision maker, consider how much weight to attach to such an application.

Following the deferment of the original application Acorn Blue decided to update their viability submission, and instructed JLL to present a viability report, which was produced in November 2018. PCC had been engaged to carry out an independent review of the original viability report submitted and asked to comment on this updated appraisal from the deferred application.

The results from the JLL appraisal demonstrate that the application for a 23 unit scheme provides an acceptable profit level and is therefore viable. Whilst considering alternative inputs PCC also reach the same conclusion, and therefore there is 'no case' to consider on viability terms.

The Applicant also requested JLL to consider the hypothetical case of 18 units (through the removal of one of the 5 unit blocks) and concluded that the profit level would not be sufficient, and therefore not viable.

Obviously an 18 unit scheme will produce a lower total sales income (GDV) but PCC believe that the removal of one of the blocks will show additional savings in build cost, and still result in a profitable development in accord with the NPPF.

In order to reach an agreement on the predicted build cost for a reduced unit development, PCC proposed that an independent local QS be engaged to review the cost plan, but this has yet to be undertaken.

PCC understand that the applicant is considering a further reduction in the impact of the structure by introducing an alternative 21 unit scheme. Perhaps this proposal will be more acceptable from a landscape and heritage point of view, and provide the profit levels required.

However planning policy requires that the viability review is to consider the application as submitted, and the only validated application at this date is the 23 unit scheme, which both JLL acting for Acorn Blue, and PCC as the independent consultant concur is viable.

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