

SUBJECT	Viability and Planning Applications
REPORT OF	Cllr John Read
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WARD/S AFFECTED	All Wards

1. Purpose of Report

To update Committee on current and future arrangements on this matter.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- That Committee notes the report.**

2. Reasons for Recommendations

The report sets out current arrangements on viability assessments. It also anticipates future arrangements as the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is introduced later this year.

3. Content of Report

- 3.1. Viability is an important part of the planning system. The existing NPPF identifies that development proposals should be capable of implementation and that local planning authorities should not impose significant burdens that would cause the proposal to become unviable.
- 3.2. Several larger developments in recent years have been accompanied by viability assessments. In their different ways these assessments have identified unusual site or development costs and how these costs impact on the ability of the scheme concerned to meet the usual developer contributions.
- 3.3. Where appropriate, the Council engages specialist consultants to assess and verify the viability assessments submitted by the developer. The District Valuer has traditionally been the Council's consultant on such matters. In certain specialist cases other consultants have been used.
- 3.4. The emerging updates to the NPPF highlight the importance of viability in the planning process. The emerging updates to the NPPF bring a sharp focus to delivery in general and to the delivery of housing in particular. This has been compounded by the recent High Court judgment on the Parkhurst Road Limited

case (London Borough of Islington) which provides greater comfort for local planning authorities on the importance of developers pursuing policy-compliant schemes.

3.5. Once the updated NPPF has been published, a further report will be submitted to this Committee.

4. Consultation

Not Applicable

5. Options (*if any*)

Additional options may become clear once the emerging NPPF has been published.

6. Corporate Implications

Reports must include specific comments addressing the following implications:

6.1 Financial – None

6.2 Legal – None

7. Links to Council Policy Objectives

The application of a viability assessment approach is critical to ensuring that the Council properly delivers its objectively assessed need for housing in the emerging local plan period. The correct application of national policy is likely to be a significant factor in the efficient and high quality delivery of the key housing sites in the emerging local plan.

8. Next Steps

As set out above, a further report will be submitted to the Committee once the emerging NPPF has been published.