

Examination of the Worthing Local Plan 2020 - 2036

Inspector: Steven Lee BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

Programme Officer: Chris Banks

Email: bankssolutionsuk@gmail.com Telephone: 01903 783722

Ian Moody
Planning Policy Manager
Worthing Borough Council
Portland House
44 Richmond Road
Worthing
West Sussex
BN11 1HS

25 February 2022

Dear Mr Moody,

Policy DM3

1. Thank you for your letter and note¹ of 21 February 2022 regarding Policy DM3 (Affordable Housing) and the issue of Optional Wheelchair Accessible Standard M4(3).
2. As you will recall, this issue was discussed under Matter 3: Housing on 4 November 2021. I also commented on the policy in the final hearing session on 17 November 2021, where I explained that I did not consider the policy as submitted to be sound. This is primarily because the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)² states that Local Plans should clearly state what proportion of new dwellings should comply with the requirements.
3. Policy DM3 does not do this. Rather, it suggests that any provision would be based on negotiation, taking account of viability and suitability. At the hearing, I suggested that if the Council were minded to include a proportion figure within the policy, then it should provide me with a suggested Main Modification (MM) and any necessary justification. Although the hearing has closed, I am happy to accept the evidence at this stage, given that I requested further information from the Council in this respect. In the interests of fairness, however, the evidence note should be made available alongside the other MM consultation material. This will assist anybody wishing to make comments on the MMs.
4. Having considered the information provided, I am satisfied that the suggested MM would address my concerns. However, the PPG also makes it clear that there may be circumstances where site specific factors may make a site less suitable for M4(3) compliant dwellings. In drafting the final MM, the Council should therefore reconsider whether issues relating to site suitability and viability should be completely removed from the policy.

¹ Document reference: WBC-E-21

² Reference ID: 56-008-20160519

5. The Council should add the revised MM to the schedule currently being prepared, which will then be subject to full public consultation. If you have any queries about any of the advice in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me through the Programme Officer.
6. The Council and participants should note that these comments do not represent my full findings on this matter, which shall be set out in the final report having considered comments made during consultation on the MMs.
7. I have asked the Programme Officer to upload a copy of this letter to the website for those following the examination, but I am not seeking any comments from participants at this stage.

Yours sincerely,

Steven Lee

INSPECTOR