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Responded 3/1/2020

Request/Response

In the past five years, please indicate when faced with a planning application for housing containing a viability assessment produced by the applicant, how many times has the Council in making its decision, accepted the implications of the viability assessment to either reduce or eliminate any affordable housing requirement in any permission granted? **Please see applications below.**

How many times has the Council challenged the viability assessment – **Viability Assessments are always assessed by an Independent Assessor [this has usually been undertaken by the District Valuation Service (DVS), but due to heavy workloads the current ones are going to an independent assessor].**

and if so, what was the ultimate effect on the application, whether to refuse the application or to modify the affordable housing element? - **Some Applications have been modified and sometimes accepted but with variation of the S106 – to include an overage clause or review mechanism. Independent Assessment has resulted in values being changed but there has not been a case where refusal was a realistic or justified Option.**

The following applications have been received in the preceding 5 years:

2014 – Woodlands Way – removed affordable housing and inserted overage clause in S106 (RR/2010/2187/P)

2018 – Strand Meadow – removed affordable housing and proposed S106 to include a 2 stage review mechanism. [Full PP was subsequently refused on design grounds only following a previous grant of outline which had included affordable housing] (RR/2018/1787/P)

2018 – Rock Lane – request to remove affordable but this was amended as RDC Housing Officer negotiated and got an RP (registered provider) to take the affordable units so they were kept but S106 was modified in relation to occupation rates of market units. (RR/2018/618/P)

2018 – Rainbow Trout – there are issues with viability and getting an RP to be party to the development – S106 negotiations have faltered but it is still proposed to include affordable units/a review mechanism. Remains undetermined.

2019 – Thomas Peacock School – no affordable – Committee resolved to approve subject to S106. As per the report and committee discussion there is nothing in the proposed S106 as nothing is likely to be left over to aid affordable contributions. (RR/2017/1778/P)

2019 – Bridge Point – the proposals for affordable on this site are questionable, negotiations are on-going and the application remains undetermined. (RR/2019/789/P).

2019 – Hillbury Field – to reduce numbers of affordable units down from 12 to 3 – viability was assessed by an independent assessor. Reported to the December Committee – deferred as Committee want it reassessed again. (RR/2019/1384/P)

2019 – Foundry Close – new application but no affordable proposed – under review by independent assessor. (RR/2019/2194/P)