

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

Southern Area Committee 20TH MARCH 2014

Item 7a - 13/04728/out Longhedge cottages

Officer comments

Members will note that the officers report requests two financial payments, one of which relates to an off site financial contribution in relation to policy CP3 of the adopted South Wiltshire Core Strategy.

However, the Wiltshire Core Strategy which will replace the South Wiltshire Core Strategy is currently in preparation and as originally drafted proposed a similar affordable housing policy to CP3. This draft Strategy is still being considered by the Inspector, and he has advised that the document as a whole requires a number of changes or adjustments and clarifications.

In particular, the Strategy Inspector has expressed concern that the draft affordable housing policy may no longer be appropriate due to different circumstances now, and that the Council should therefore look at alternatives to fulfilling its affordable housing objectives. With this in mind the Council has gathered further evidence for the Inspector, and this demonstrates that on sites proposing four units or less, there should no longer be an affordable housing contribution.

On the back of this evidence a revised affordable housing policy has been prepared for the Wiltshire Core Strategy and presented to the Strategy Inspector. On sites of four units or less the revised policy requires no affordable housing contribution. Although this policy has not yet been adopted or been subjected to scrutiny through the Strategy process, it does define the Council's intended direction of travel on affordable housing based on up to date evidence. In view of this, it is the Council's intention to now apply the revised policy to all relevant planning applications and pre-app enquiries received after the date of publication of the strategy report (that is, 28 February 2014) and in relation to all other planning applications which remain outstanding after this date. This will remain the Council's position unless the revised policy is latterly found by the Strategy Inspector to be un-sound. In these circumstances the Council will review its position again.

As a result of the above, the affordable housing contribution required by the officer report is no longer required in relation to this application proposal. Other S106 matters remain as advised.