

Stefan Galyas

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 September 2026 18:27
To: Stefan Galyas
Cc: planninginfo
Subject: DM/26/0596 Former Royal British Legion, Woodsland Road: viability assessment and determination status

[REDACTED]

Dear Mr Galyas,

I write further to my representations of 23 March, 5 May and 1 June 2026 on the above application, all of which I maintain.

I note that the extended determination deadline of 20 August 2026 has passed. Could you please confirm whether the application is to be determined under delegated authority or referred to the Planning Committee and, if the latter, the expected meeting date? I would also ask that this email be placed on the public file and included in any late representations provided to members.

I support the Parish Council's further comments of 1 July regarding the ground-floor unit sizes, heat-pump access through Unit C and the continued absence of EV charging. I would add that the applicant's August Appendix B now shows Flat D at 49.4 square metres, meaning three units rather than two fall below the DP27 minimum, while paragraphs 1.12 and 3.23 of the FVA still refer to two. The revised document therefore does not appear to have been reconciled with its own appendix.

My main concern, however, is the latest Financial Viability Assessment. It describes the scheme as financially viable “subject to review of developer contributions”, and the alternative rental appraisal included in earlier versions has been removed. It is clear the assessment is being used to seek a reduction in Section 106 obligations.

Having reviewed all three versions, I would ask the Council to address three points before relying on the latest conclusions.

1. £390,000 benchmark land value

All three FVAs include a £390,000 “Residualised Price”, which appears to correspond to the applicant's acquisition price.

National viability guidance requires Benchmark Land Value to be established using Existing Use Value plus an appropriate landowner premium; the price paid for a site is not itself justification for reducing policy requirements.

Could the Council therefore confirm the Existing Use Value and premium used to establish the £390,000 Benchmark Land Value?

2. Construction costs and the additional 25% allowance

FVA 1 assessed residential construction at £652,390.

FVA 2 and FVA 3 changed the methodology to £542,435 base construction, £27,122 contingency and a further £135,609 (25%) for “management costs, site establishment and site supervision”, producing total construction-related costs of £705,166.

The FVA also states that the base construction costs assume a main contractor including preliminaries, overheads and profit. This raises an obvious question as to what the additional £135,609 covers and whether there is any overlap.

I cannot find an itemised residential cost plan supporting this figure; the detailed contractor estimate included in the FVA appears to relate to the earlier co-working scheme.

Could the applicant therefore provide the residential QS/cost-plan evidence supporting the £705,166 figure and explain the change from the methodology used in FVA 1?

3. Significant changes between the three appraisals

The reported residential return has fallen from:

- 17.29% of GDV in FVA 1
- 16.95% in FVA 2
- 14.84% in FVA 3

despite GDV and the £390,000 land figure remaining broadly unchanged.

Other assumptions have moved significantly at the same time. For example, professional fees fell from £97,859 to £65,092 and total finance costs fell from £116,316 to £64,535 between FVA 1 and FVA 2. Land finance alone fell from £56,296 to £16,084.

Indeed, despite introducing £36,495 of West Sussex County Council contributions in FVA 2, total development costs increased by only £5,473 compared with FVA 1.

I would therefore ask the Council to satisfy itself that the changing assumptions are supported by evidence and reflect the applicant's actual cost position before placing weight on the latest 14.84% return.

For clarity, I recognise that the approximately £36,500 West Sussex County Council contribution and £26,795 Mid Sussex District Council contribution are separate obligations and I am not questioning their inclusion.

Given the importance being placed on viability, could you also confirm whether the Council has commissioned, or intends to commission, an independent review of the FVA? I would ask that no reduction in planning obligations is accepted on the basis of the assessment as currently submitted without appropriate scrutiny.

National policy is clear that policy-compliant development should normally be assumed viable and that it is for an applicant to demonstrate the particular circumstances justifying a viability assessment at application stage.

More broadly, if viability is relied upon to justify either the intensity of this six-unit development or any relaxation of planning requirements, the robustness of that viability evidence is directly relevant. My earlier representations and the concerns raised by the Parish Council otherwise remain.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

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