



**Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government**

**Jake Berry MP**

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Dear Antoinette,

Thank you for your letter of 27 February to Kit Malthouse MP on behalf of your constituent Carol Jones of Fairview Mill Lane, Audlem, Crewe, CW3 0AY, about affordable housing and viability assessment. Due to the role of Ministers in the planning system, I am unable to comment on individual cases. However, I hope you find the following general comments useful.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework requires local authorities to set clearer policy requirements for infrastructure and affordable housing through development plans. These policies should be informed by appropriate and proportionate evidence including infrastructure needs and costs.

It is up to local authorities to determine their policies for affordable housing, and planning applications must be determined in accordance with the local development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is for the decision maker to decide the weight to give to material considerations in each case. Viability is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application.

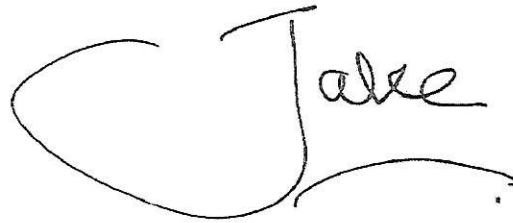
The use of viability assessment can delay the planning process, causing complexity, uncertainty and increased risk for developers. It can also result in fewer contributions for infrastructure and affordable housing than required by local policies.

Last summer, we introduced a new approach to viability assessment in the revised National Planning Policy Framework. This will:

- reduce delays by frontloading viability assessment to the plan making stage;
- enable accountability by standardising how and when viability assessment is carried out; and
- increase transparency by making viability assessments publicly available.

These changes will ensure that developers know what contributions they are expected to make towards affordable housing and essential infrastructure, that local communities are clear about the infrastructure and affordable housing they will get, and that local authorities can hold developers to account.

I would encourage you to speak to your local authority to discuss the details of this specific case.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jake". The signature is stylized, with a large, rounded "J" and a cursive "ake".

**JAKE BERRY MP**