Information
Viability Guidance Note 4: Vacant Building Credit

This Guidance Note sets out how Vacant Building Credit will be applied in East Devon

Vacant Building Credit (VBC) was introduced via a Written Ministerial Statement in November 2014. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that “national policy provides an incentive for brownfield development on sites containing vacant buildings. Where a vacant building is brought back into any lawful use, or is demolished to be replaced by a new building, the developer should be offered a financial credit equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of relevant vacant buildings when the local planning authority calculates any affordable housing contribution which will be sought. Affordable housing contributions may be required for any increase in floorspace.”

The PPG also states that “the policy is intended to incentivise brownfield development, including the reuse or redevelopment of empty and redundant buildings. In considering how the vacant building credit should apply to a particular development, local planning authorities should have regard to the intention of national policy. In doing so, it may be appropriate for authorities to consider:

- Whether the building has been made vacant for the sole purposes of re-development.
- Whether the building is covered by an extant or recently expired planning permission for the same or substantially the same development.”

At a meeting of Strategic Planning Committee on 20th Feb 2017 Members resolved that Vacant Building Credit should not automatically be applied in all cases, but instead considered on a case by case basis. Therefore, other than in exceptional circumstances, the following criteria shall be applied:
- VBC will only be granted where it would help to secure the redevelopment of vacant brownfield land or buildings
- VBC will not be granted where land has been purchased for redevelopment and a 'vacant' period of time is a normal part of the development process
- VBC will not be applied when the 'vacant' period is a policy requirement for demonstrating the land is no longer required for its current use

Applicants wishing to claim Vacant Building Credit need to explicitly state this as part of their planning application and set out on what basis they think it is justified. If claiming VBC as part of a submitted Viability Appraisal, the appraisal should clearly set out the amount of VBC being applied, and how this has been calculated. It is anticipated that the consideration of any requests by applicants for VBC will to be included in the Planning Committee report or the officer's delegated report.

Last updated 8 June 2017
Contact this service

Opening hours:
Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 5pm

Phone:
01395 516551

Post:
East Devon District Council
Knowle
Sidmouth
EX10 8HL

© 2017 East Devon District Council