

Vacant Building Credit Guidance Note Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

NPPF states that

“To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of the existing buildings. This does not apply to vacant buildings which have been abandoned”

Vacant Building Credit applies to brownfield sites where existing vacant buildings are proposed to be brought back into lawful use or demolished and redeveloped. The credit will not apply where;

- The building has been abandoned
- The building has been made vacant for the sole purposes of redevelopment
- The building is covered by an extant or recently expired planning permission for the same or substantially the same development.
- The buildings are such where people do not normally go; into which people go only intermittently for the purpose of maintaining or inspecting machinery; or for which planning permission was granted for a limited period

The CIL regulations apply a credit for in-use buildings and define an in-use building as:

“contains a part that has been in lawful use for a continuous period of at least six months within the period of three years ending on the day planning permission first permits the chargeable development”.

Therefore, in line with the CIL regulation requirements, a building can be regarded as vacant if it has not been in use for a continuous period of at least six months within the past 3 years.

If applicants wish for the Vacant Building Credit to be applied to their proposals, a Vacant Building Credit Statement must be submitted with the planning application containing details of existing relevant vacant floorspace and proposed floorspace (GIA). The statement must include evidence the building has not been abandoned or vacated solely for the purpose of redevelopment and evidence that the building is vacant. Evidence such as Council Tax, Business Rates or Electoral Register records may be required to determine whether or not the building is vacant. A credit won't be applied without the relevant supporting evidence.

Where the vacant building credit is applicable it will be calculated in the following way;

- The affordable housing requirement will be as per policy CS09 and if applicable as per the amended national policy.

- The existing vacant gross internal area (GIA) of any buildings proposed to be brought back into lawful use or demolished and redeveloped, will be deducted from the proposed residential GIA leaving the total increase in floorspace. (**Note:** for wholly residential schemes this will be the total GIA of all dwellings, for mixed use schemes the GIA of the proposed residential elements only will be used. Where flatted development is proposed the GIA will include all communal and circulation areas).
- The average floorspace of the residential scheme will be calculated by dividing the total residential GIA by the total number of units proposed.
- The increase in total floorspace will then be divided by the average residential floorspace to calculate how many dwellings could be provided on the increase in floorspace.
- The required percentage of affordable housing will then be applied to the dwellings which are to be provided *only* on the increase in floorspace.

Worked examples of calculating the vacant building credit

Example A

- On a scheme of 20 dwellings a 20% affordable provision is required as per policy CS09 of the adopted Core Strategy 2011.
- In this example the existing GIA of the vacant floorspace is 500m² and the combined GIA of the 20 dwellings is 2000m² this results in a net increase in floorspace of 1500m²
- The average floor space GIA of the proposed residential scheme is 100m². Therefore 15 dwellings can be provided on the net increase floorspace.
- Therefore 3 affordable dwellings are to be provided ie 20% of 15 is equal to 3.

Example B

- On a scheme of 6 dwellings in a designated rural area with a site area of 0.3ha (i.e. less than 0.5ha) a 20% affordable housing provision applies as per policy CS09. However with the national policy amendment a financial contribution of £72,000 is required.
- In this example the existing GIA of the vacant floorspace is 200m² and the combined GIA of the 6 dwellings proposed is 600m². This results in a net increase 400m².
- The average floorspace space GIA of the proposed residential scheme is 100m². Therefore 4 units can be provided on the net increase floorspace.

- Therefore 20% of 4 units equals 0.8 which equals a financial contribution of £48,000(0.8 of £60,000)

Example C

- On a scheme of 8 dwellings in a designated rural area with a site area of 0.6ha (ie over 0.5haa 20% affordable housing provision applies as per policy CS09 resulting in 1 dwelling plus a financial contribution of £36k for the 0.6 fraction
- In this example the existing GIA of the vacant floorspace is 300m². This results in a net increase 900m².
- The average floorspace space GIA of the proposed residential scheme is 150m². Therefore 6 units can be provided on the net increase floorspace.
- Therefore 20% of 6 units equals 1.2 which equates to 1 dwelling and a financial sum of £12,000.