# Southend council again rejects Bellway’s reduced affordable homes bid in Shoebury



A developer’s recent proposal to reduce the number of affordable homes at a contentious development in Shoebury has been rejected once again by Southend City Council. The case highlights ongoing tensions between developers, local authorities, and community housing needs.

Bellway Homes, the developer behind the 210-property project on Barge Pier Road, has repeatedly sought to modify its affordable housing commitments. Initially aiming to decrease the percentage from 30% to a mere 10%, the company saw this request denied. Now, councillors have thwarted its latest attempt to reduce the share of affordable units to 15%, maintaining the pressure on developers to fulfil community housing needs.

The development site presents significant challenges, particularly its requirement for substantial ground elevation of up to six metres to mitigate flooding risks. This condition has exacerbated the developer's claims that maintaining a 30% affordable housing requirement renders the project financially unviable. Speaking at the council meeting, Carole Mulroney, the Liberal Democrat councillor for Leigh Ward, expressed concern over the implications of a five-year legal agreement between the council and Bellway that limits the developer's ability to appeal. She emphasised the necessity of affordable housing but also acknowledged the precariousness of the situation.

Her sentiments were met with resistance from other councillors. Martin Berry, a non-aligned councillor for St Luke’s Ward, argued strongly for adherence to the established policy of 30% affordable housing. “What’s the point of having a policy if we don’t stick to it?” he asked, emphasising that the developer's miscalculations should not necessitate significant policy alterations.

The response reflects a broader trend observed in various regions where Bellway Homes has attempted to negotiate down affordable housing provisions. In Great Lumley, for instance, Durham County Council rejected a similar request from the developer, citing strong local opposition and concerns over the appropriateness of the site for development. Such rejections underscore the critical need for transparency and community inclusion in planning processes.

Moreover, as Bellway grapples with market realities, it faces challenges beyond Shoebury. Reports from Enfield reveal that the company has struggled to sell affordable homes due to limited interest from housing associations, raising questions about the sustainability of affordable housing initiatives amidst financial constraints faced by providers. In Salford and Wirral, the firm has also encountered setbacks over flooding and environmental concerns, illustrating a pattern where local councils increasingly prioritise compliance with established policies and community needs over developer interests.

The situation in Shoebury has a palpable sense of urgency. Councillor Steven Wakefield, also from Shoebury, aptly articulated the community's desperation for affordable housing, stating, “If you propose you are going to build 30% affordable housing, you should stick to your plan.” The insistence from city councillors reflects a growing recognition of housing scarcity in the region, where the demand for affordable units is ever-increasing.

With Bellway currently reviewing the decision, the path forward remains uncertain. However, the strong legislative and community support for maintaining the affordable housing commitment suggests that local authorities are steadfast in their resolve to uphold policies that directly address the community's pressing housing needs. The outcome of this ongoing saga will undoubtedly shape future development strategies in Shoebury and beyond.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/bid-to-slash-affordable-homes-on-shoebury-site-refused-again/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=bid-to-slash-affordable-homes-on-shoebury-site-refused-again), [[2]](https://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/24642006.bellway-homes-considering-position-shoebury-scheme/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/bid-to-slash-affordable-homes-on-shoebury-site-refused-again/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=bid-to-slash-affordable-homes-on-shoebury-site-refused-again), [[2]](https://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/24642006.bellway-homes-considering-position-shoebury-scheme/), [[5]](https://www.placenorthwest.co.uk/bellway-refused-in-salford/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/23570383.148-bellway-homes-plan-great-lumley-refused-durham-council/), [[4]](https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/developer-says-it-cannot-sell-19-new-affordable-homes-in-enfield/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.placenorthwest.co.uk/bellways-71-homes-rejected-in-wirral/), [[7]](https://www.stratford-herald.com/news/bordon-hill-housing-plan-rejected-9136327/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/bid-to-slash-affordable-homes-on-shoebury-site-refused-again/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=bid-to-slash-affordable-homes-on-shoebury-site-refused-again), [[4]](https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/developer-says-it-cannot-sell-19-new-affordable-homes-in-enfield/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.yellowad.co.uk/bid-to-slash-affordable-homes-on-shoebury-site-refused-again/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=bid-to-slash-affordable-homes-on-shoebury-site-refused-again> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/24642006.bellway-homes-considering-position-shoebury-scheme/> - Bellway Homes is evaluating its stance on a contentious 214-home project in Shoebury after Southend Council denied a request to reduce the affordable housing requirement from 30% to 10%. The developer cited increased costs due to flood mitigation measures but was unsuccessful in persuading the council to alter the terms. Councillor Ron Woodley expressed concerns about potential future attempts to modify affordable housing commitments, emphasizing the importance of adhering to established policies. Bellway has yet to submit a formal revised affordable housing proposal, and the original legal agreement remains in effect.
3. <https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/23570383.148-bellway-homes-plan-great-lumley-refused-durham-council/> - Durham County Council rejected Bellway Homes' proposal to build 148 homes in Great Lumley, citing significant opposition from residents and concerns about the site's suitability for development. Local councillor Alan Bell highlighted the community's strong objections, with hundreds of residents expressing their disapproval. The council's planning committee emphasized the importance of considering local sentiment and the potential impact on the village's character when making development decisions.
4. <https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/developer-says-it-cannot-sell-19-new-affordable-homes-in-enfield/> - Bellway Homes has reported difficulties in selling 19 affordable homes in Enfield, as housing associations have shown limited interest in purchasing them. The developer is now seeking permission to sell these units privately at discounted rates. This situation underscores broader challenges in the affordable housing sector, where many new units remain unoccupied due to financial constraints faced by housing providers. Local campaigners have expressed concern over the underutilization of affordable housing in areas with high demand.
5. <https://www.placenorthwest.co.uk/bellway-refused-in-salford/> - Salford City Council denied Bellway Homes' application to build 135 homes on the former British Vita factory site, citing flooding concerns. Planning officers determined that the development could increase flood risks to 50 neighbouring properties along Blandford Road and Welford Street. The council emphasized the need for developers to demonstrate that their projects would not exacerbate existing flooding issues, particularly in areas adjacent to the River Irwell.
6. <https://www.placenorthwest.co.uk/bellways-71-homes-rejected-in-wirral/> - Bellway Homes' proposal for 71 homes in Bromborough, Wirral, was rejected due to conflicts with local development plans. The development would have resulted in the loss of protected trees and was deemed unsustainable for residential purposes. Planning officers highlighted the site's designation as an employment area of strategic importance and the potential negative impact on the environment and local infrastructure.
7. <https://www.stratford-herald.com/news/bordon-hill-housing-plan-rejected-9136327/> - Stratford District Council rejected Bellway Homes' plan to build 99 homes on farmland off Bordon Hill, citing concerns over landscape impact and the potential for increased traffic problems. The council emphasized that the development would encroach upon open countryside and negatively affect the visual amenities of the area. Residents also raised issues regarding the proposed access to the site and its proximity to existing dwellings.