
From: Mark Turner [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 March 2019 15:13
To: NewLocalPlan
Subject: Amendments to Protect Public Houses

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing in the hope that further protection for public houses can be made in the WDC Local Plan 2019 Policy DM29 Ref 6.85 to 6.90

6.87 "In rural areas, pubs serve a unique, and pre-eminent, role as community facilities. In all cases the onus is on the developer to evidence that their removal will not reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs for social, recreational or cultural facilities or services. The Council will therefore normally resist the loss of community facilities and land."

While it is highly commendable that the local plan includes policy to protect community facilities such as Public Houses from development and recognises the importance of such facilities to recreational and cultural activity, the policy does not go far enough.

The need for residential housing has encouraged a raft of voracious developers. I accept that planners mostly reject opportunists trying to change use of a community Public House into residential development, however, many of these speculative developers will have overpaid for the site and it then becomes impossible for a community to purchase back the site through an 'Assets of Community Value' (ACV) registration as it is not compulsory for the seller to accept the community bid and may therefore accept a bid from another developer wishing to chance their luck or leave the pub to rot in the hope that permission for residential development will eventually be granted. As it stands the Local Plan does not assist a community to buy back its pub nor does it totally deter a developer from buying a community asset site in the first place.

Ideally, the Local Plan should signal a local authority's intention to safeguard pubs in its area against change of use. Typically clauses within a pub protection policy should include that permission for change of use will not be granted unless the pub has been marketed as a pub, at a fair price agreed by an independent or council industry expert, for a period of at least 12 or 24 months. This would protect against developers with deep pockets offering the pub at an inflated sum and pricing out a community buyout or pub operator.

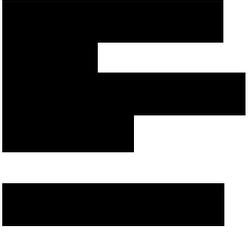
I would also suggest that WDC maintains a 'Local List' of community assets and amenities supplied by each local Parish Council and Parish Meeting that are protected from residential development. Not just of historic or architecturally important sites but community registered sites of importance.

Furthermore, instigating a compulsory 'pre-application' to planning for community registered sites such as pubs may further deter a developer from actually purchasing a site, before getting an indication of the likelihood of planning consent.

I hope you will consider these points.

Your faithfully

Mark Turner



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