

Submissions in support of an application to convert the pub floor space and grounds into a single C3 dwellinghouse

Pre application dialogue with [REDACTED] included his commentary in May 2021 about proposed policy RE5, which still remains to be adopted. The explanatory draft text to that policy argues that existing core strategy CS10 supports retention of existing facilities such as pubs. That is directed to existing facilities, which the application site is not and planning decisions since closure have undermined viable resumption.

Where there is a threat of loss of existing social infrastructure, consideration can be given to viability and whether there is sufficient alternative provision available. The council wants to see existing public houses retained where they serve a local need and are viable. Draft RE5 requires not less than 12 months continuous effective marketing in lettable condition on reasonable terms with no reasonable offer refused.

This pub has not been marketed but:

- 1 RE5 is not an adopted policy, very limited if any weight can be given;
- 2 The pub has been shut for several years, so it is not an “existing” public house, it serves no local need, so no alternative is required;
- 3 The attached material explains what the problems were - the accountant shows the bottom line, proving that it was only the B&B which was (and remains) viable, which is a separate planning unit, which would not be ‘marketed’;
- 4 There is an existing separate residence, also not available for marketing, a separate planning unit. A viable pub one reasonably expects to be marketed with living accommodation on site.

Marketing would be pointless without residential accommodation, or the B&B units.

The LPA has on published data only a 2.9 yr HLS, as at March 2023. Consequently, the tilted balance applies.

The applicant contends the proposal is in accordance with the Plan, thus permission should be granted. Even if it is considered policies pull in different directions, a balance must be struck. Here, given the wasted built-form/unused floorspace is readily capable of conversion to merge with the existing C3 unit, the B&B remaining separate, there are no harmful impacts, it is considered significant weight tips in favour. It is common sense that permission should be granted, it's the right stuff, in the right place, at the right time (as the government's chief planner once put it).