



Planning Statement Addendum – Loss of Public House (Community Facility Justification)

Site: Former Public House, Littleborough (The Ox and Plough, 178 New Road, OL15 8NL)

This addendum has been prepared in response to the Local Planning Authority's request for further information regarding the proposed loss of the public house as a community facility, in accordance with relevant policies of the Rochdale Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

1. Policy Context

Policy DM1 (General Development Requirements) and relevant community facility protection policies within the Rochdale Local Plan seek to resist the loss of valued community facilities unless it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- The use is no longer financially viable;
- There is no reasonable prospect of the property being used for its existing or an alternative community use; and
- Adequate alternative provision exists within an accessible location.

Paragraphs within the NPPF similarly support the retention of community facilities but allow for their loss where robust evidence demonstrates that the use is no longer viable or needed.

2. Financial Viability

The lawful use of the property as a public house has been demonstrated to be financially unsustainable. The previous operators were forced to cease trading due to declining customer demand and continued lack of profitability.

The closure was not a matter of choice but necessity, reflecting wider changes in the local market and the reduced viability of such premises in this specific location. This provides clear and compelling evidence that the use is no longer economically viable.

3. Marketing and Lack of Demand

The property was actively marketed for sale and/or to let for a sustained period following its closure. Despite these efforts, there was little to no interest from prospective occupiers seeking to retain the premises as a public house or alternative community use.

The absence of meaningful market interest strongly indicates that there is no realistic demand for the continuation of this use. This satisfies the policy requirement to demonstrate that there is no reasonable prospect of the building being brought back into viable community use.

4. Vacancy and Building Condition

The site has remained vacant for a period exceeding six months. During this time, the building has begun to deteriorate, which further undermines its viability and attractiveness for commercial or community reuse.

Long-term vacancy is also detrimental to the character and vitality of the surrounding area and is contrary to the objectives of sustainable development.

5. Alternative Provision

There is no material deficiency in the provision of public houses or similar community facilities within the locality. A number of such establishments remain operational within Littleborough town centre, as well as in Smallbridge, approximately 600 metres from the application site.

These venues are accessible to local residents and continue to serve the community's needs. As such, the loss of this particular facility would not result in a harmful reduction in local service provision.

6. Conclusion

The proposal accords with both local and national planning policy in that:

- The public house use has been proven to be financially unviable;
- Appropriate marketing has demonstrated a lack of demand for its continued use;
- The property has been vacant and is deteriorating; and
- Sufficient alternative facilities exist within close proximity.

In light of the above, the loss of the public house as a community facility is fully justified, and the proposed residential redevelopment represents a sustainable and appropriate alternative use of the site.