

Model Planning Policy

A robust model planning policy developed by CAMRA which we encourage Local Planning Authorities to adopt.

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Any proposal which would result in the loss of a community facility will not be permitted unless:

- an alternative community facility which meets similar local needs to at least the same extent is already available; and
- it can be shown that the proposal does not constitute the loss of a service of particular value to the local community nor detrimentally affect the character and vitality of the area; and
- in the case of commercial community facilities, it has been demonstrated that it is no longer economically viable and cannot be made so.

“Community facility” in this context has the same meaning as in paragraph 92 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Reasoned Justifications

Regarding alternative community facilities, the Council will require evidence not only that an alternative facility or facilities can be found within easy walking distance but that there is at least one such facility which offers services and an environment comparable to that of the facility subject to the proposal.

This policy applies equally to community facilities which are currently open or have been closed within the past five years.

Regarding local needs, the Council will require evidence that there has been public consultation to ascertain the value of the facility to the local community.

If the facility is registered as an Asset of Community Value then the Council will regard this as a material consideration in the determination of any planning application affecting the facility. The Council will also expect to see evidence of discussion with the local community of the potential for a community enterprise.

Development proposals involving a community facility should not have a detrimental effect on the design, character, significance and setting of buildings or areas of acknowledged heritage value.

On viability, the Council will require evidence demonstrating that:

- the existing or recent business is not financially viable, as evidenced by trading accounts for the last three years in which the business was operating as a full-time business;
- a range of measures were tried during this time to increase trade and diversify use;
- the potential for the property to extend the range of facilities offered at the site has been fully explored;
- for public houses, the CAMRA Public House Viability Test, or a similar objective evaluation method, has been employed to assess the viability of the business and the outcomes show that the public house is no longer economically viable.



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Also on viability, the Council will require evidence that all reasonable measures have been taken to market the facility to other potential operators. The facility must have been marketed for at least 24 months either as the current type of facility or as an alternative community facility, at a price agreed with the Council following an independent professional assessment of the property's value as a community facility (paid for by the developer). In turn there must have been no interest in purchasing either the freehold or leasehold as a community facility. The business must have been offered for sale locally, and in the region, in appropriate publications and through relevant specialised agents.

In the case of public houses, any proposal that includes significant diminution of floorspace or cellage or the loss of upper floors or ancillary uses such as function rooms and staff accommodation or the loss of any other features within the curtilage of the public house must demonstrate that the loss will not compromise the operation or viability of the pub.

This policy applies to lawful public houses and sites previously in lawful pub use, whether currently in use as a pub or vacant. The Council will have regard to the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) definition of a public house when applying this policy.

