



## DECISION NOTICE – COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BID

**Reference: 2017.003**

4 September 2017

<b>Proposed Asset of Community Value</b> – Viking Public House, Grangeway, Rushden
<b>Nominated By:</b> Rushden Town Council – 11/7/17
<b>Deadline for listing decision:</b> 5/9/17
<b>Current Owner</b> – Charles Wells Ltd
<b>Action Taken Prior to Decision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consideration of Nomination Papers</li><li>• Notification to current owner of nomination and consideration of the response</li><li>• Consultation with Vice Chair of Policy and Resources Committee (Cllr G Greenwood Smith) and Ward Members (Cllrs G Mercer, Cllr J Pinnock and Cllr C Wright) as required under Council's Community Right to Bid Policy. (Please note that Cllr R Lewis as Chair of Policy and Resources declared a conflict of interest)</li><li>• Response to letter from MP in relation to nomination</li><li>• Discussion with Mr N Godby, organiser of petition to save building as pub, re scope of Asset of Community Value legislation and requirements for listing.</li></ul>
<b>Considerations</b> <p><i>Does the proposed asset meet the definition of an asset of community value specified in Section 88 (1) paragraphs (a) and (b) of the Localism Act 2011, i.e. the main (i.e. non-ancillary) use furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, or has recently done so, and is likely to do so in the future (during the next five years)?</i></p> <p><b>History of the Site</b> The Viking public house was built in 1976, to serve the new Grangeway and Home Farm estate. In 2008 the pub was refurbished and re-opened after a serious fire. The Viking is the only public house on the estate and serves a population of approximately 3000 residents. However information supplied by the owners implies a fall-off in beer sales over the last few years and councillors have noted that it is now in need of a major refresh.</p> <p>A planning application has been received seeking to turn the pub into a Co-op Supermarket. That application will be determined separately from this nomination.</p> <p><i>Evidence of recent community use that furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community provided by the nominators:</i></p> <p>The Viking has two bars, plus a games area providing darts (and previously skittles). The local community regard the Viking as the social hub for residents living on the</p>

Grangeway and Home Farm estate. The Town Council notes that there are no other social meeting places adjacent to the Grangeway area and councillors confirm this view. The nomination notes that the pub provides the following social activities: Men's and Ladies Darts evenings, Pool competitions, Motorbike Club Nights, Family evenings and a Sunday Quiz night. It is also noted that the car-park has been used for charitable events in the past. This is evidence of social activity over and above that of a drinking establishment.

I am therefore satisfied that the Viking Pub has, in the recent past, furthered the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community.

#### *Evidence of Future Community Use*

In its nomination, the Town Council believes that the pub could continue with its current uses and expresses a desire to augment these by the re-introduction of skittles. Whilst this could be possible, the question to be asked in the case of a community asset is whether or not it is realistic.

The current owners clearly do not feel that this is the case due to declining sales and are seeking an alternative use for the site via a planning application for change of use. It would appear that any continuing use as a public house may also require a significant injection of capital for refurbishment.

It should however be noted that what may indeed not be viable as a commercial public house might be viable as a community public house, sometime in conjunction with other community facilities such as a post office or shop, as appears to be the case in other communities. In this case there is already a post office and other shops nearby.

There does appear to be a shortage of other community facilities, with only the Whitefriars Church and Infant School in the vicinity to offer alternative social interaction. It is therefore possible there is a gap which the pub could fulfil in terms of future community use.

However, no evidence of any intention to this end has been provided to support such a community bid, and although the suggestion has been made that there would be commercial buyers interested in preserving use as a pub, again no evidence has been provided.

I therefore have to conclude that there is no realistic prospect of its future community use as a pub and that this part of the criteria has not been met.

#### *Does the proposed asset meet any of the criteria for exemption specified in Section 88 (3) and associated regulations?*

There is no evidence that the asset meets any of the criteria for exemption.

#### *The views of the Chair of Policy and Resources Committee and Ward Member*

- Cllr G Greenwood Smith (Vice Chair of Policy and Resources Committee) was supportive of listing although did not feel able to comment on future viability.



- Cllr J Pinnock was supportive of listing and noted that people will have to use car/taxi to access similar facilities.

### **Decision**

**Having considered all the factors above, it is my view that the nominated asset does not meet the criteria falls within the category of an asset of community value as defined by the Localism Act and associated regulations and that it should not be listed as such by this council.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Matthews', written over a horizontal line.

**Sharn Matthews**  
**Executive Director**  
**4/9/17**