

FOI Ref
7545

Response sent
27 July 2020

(CCC) Viability issues for public houses and change of use

Can you please confirm if your department currently has a written viability checklist or test, to use when pub companies request change of use through lack of viability on a public house, in order to validate or reject their claim of lack of viability.

If you do use a check list or test can you, please tell me if it is an internal document or if it was obtained from another source and if it was where it came from.

Finally, would you be interested in an up to date viability test which has been updated to take into account the current market conditions and the new Covid-19 world the hospitality sector is operating under. The checklist/test would be completely free and is endorsed by both the forum of British pubs and CAMRA.

We feel that in the current market circumstances, many viable pubs which are owned by the major pub companies will be placed in this situation, more as a result of a desire to maximize the value of the property by the landlord rather than the pubs value as a community asset and its value as a pub, which may be far less than the other commercial opportunities open to the landlord. Many small pubs may find their ownership by a large regulated pub company as the reason they are being made unviable and they would be able to trade quite viably if owned by a small regional brewer or as a free house.

Response:

Can you please confirm if your department currently has a written viability checklist or test, to use when pub companies request change of use through lack of viability on a public house, in order to validate or reject their claim of lack of viability.

Answer: Yes. The checklist/test is contained within Local Plan Policy 76: Protection of public houses & Appendix K:Marketing, Local Needs Assessment and Viability Appraisal of the Local Plan.

If you do use a check list or test can you, please tell me if it is an internal document or if it was obtained from another source and if it was where it came from.

Answer: The checklist/test is contained within the Council's Local Plan which is a public document produced by Cambridge City Council.

Finally, would you be interested in an up to date viability test which has been updated to take into account the current market conditions and the new Covid-19 world the hospitality sector is operating under. The checklist/test would be completely free and is endorsed by both the forum of British pubs and CAMRA.

Answer: Yes please send to bruce.waller@greatercambridgeplanning.org
Principal Planning Policy Officer.

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Further queries on this matter should be directed to foi@cambridge.gov.uk