

Nicole Barrett

From: Katharine Stuart [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 February 2021 12:47
To: Graeme Felstead
Cc: Tim Slaney
Subject: 20/04118/FUL - Queen's Inn, Selborne - policy comments

Hi Graeme,

Further to our discussion, please find policy comments on the above application. The matter I have been asked to comment on is whether the proposed uses of the Queen's Inn are of 'equivalent use' and marketing requirements. If you have any queries on the comments below or if there is anything further I can add, please do let me know.

Current permitted use for The Queens is a public house and it is noted that the first floor of the property was previously used to provide visitor accommodation in the form of 4no. ensuite letting bedrooms.

There are two relevant policies:

- Strategic Policy SD23: Sustainable Tourism
- Development Management Policy SD43: New and Existing Community Uses

SD23: Sustainable Tourism

- Regarding the current permitted use which includes the 4no. ensuite letting bedrooms, Policy SD23(2) is relevant. This states, in summary, that development proposals resulting in loss of visitor accommodation will not be permitted unless evidence is provided the current use is financially unviable, plus a robust marketing campaign of 12months demonstrating no market demands for existing or equivalent use.
- In this case there is a proposed change from 4no. letting rooms to be replaced with 5no. 'Aparthotel Suites' which provide a hybrid hotel room and self-catering style visitor accommodation. The policy and supporting text do not specify precise parameters for 'loss of visitor accommodation' but it would be reasonable and logical to consider the quantity and type of visitor accommodation.
 - Quantity – this application proposes an overall gain of 1no. unit.
 - Type – When considering type of visitor accommodation, I would note that there are a variety of types of visitor accommodation, some of which may be a combination or on a continuum of different types. The Visitor Accommodation Study of 2014 lists type of accommodation. Whilst Hotels, Inns and self-catering are listed separately this proposal of a hybrid 'Apart-Hotel' type does mean that there are clear similarities, and indeed overlap, in the nature of the tourism accommodation offer.

SD43: New and Existing Community Uses

- A public house is identified in paragraph 7.227 as a community infrastructure facility. SD43(2) applies and, in summary, requires development that would result in the loss or have an adverse impact on an existing community facility will not be permitted unless, for commercial facilities a robust marketing campaign of 24 months is undertaken demonstrating no market demand for existing or equivalent community use, or alternative community facilities of an equivalent or better quality without causing unreasonable reduction in local service provision.
- I understand the focus of the approach by the applicant is in regards part (c) of this policy – the applicant puts forward that the development proposals are of equivalent or better community facilities. The policy and supporting text do not specify precise parameters for equivalent or better community facilities, and this is therefore a matter for case by case judgement.

- I draw your attention to paragraph 7.227 which identifies a list of types of community infrastructure facilities for the purposes of SD43 – it is important to note the word ‘include’, and that list is not exhaustive.
- In practice ‘community facilities’ may be a combination of different types and on a continuum between community and private functions e.g. pubs or village halls being hired out for private functions. The Tap Room may be considered on this continuum.
- The proposals include uses which could be considered as providing community facilities either direct or a variation of those listed in 7.227. I also note that the Ecosystem Services Statement states that the proposed Field Studies Centre, as well as for education of school age children, will also be ‘*available for hire outside of traditional school/operating hours for the use of the local community*’, providing cultural and education facilities.

Given that both policies are quite broad, and do not specify precise parameters for defining ‘loss’ or ‘equivalence’ of these uses, the proposals would not appear to be a loss but rather a variation or reconfiguration of tourism accommodation and community facility provision.

However if, when considering other information or matters as part of the DM process, you feel that this does present a loss of visitor accommodation and/or community facilities, a robust marketing exercise will be required following the requirements set out in Appendix 3 of the SDLP.

Best wishes

Katharine

Katharine Stuart

Planning Policy Lead

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