

Dear Samantha Summers,

**Ref: DC/20/05586 | Full Planning Application - Erection of 1 No single storey dwelling (C3) to the rear of public house (Sui Generis), with associated access, parking and landscaping (amended scheme to DC/20/02269). | Cock Inn The Street Bramford Ipswich Suffolk IP8 4DU**

I am writing on behalf of CARE Suffolk regarding the application above in order to set out our **OBJECTION** to the proposal on the grounds of harm and potential loss to a community asset.

CARE Suffolk aims to protect and enhance the local rural environment and lifestyle for the benefit and enjoyment of local residents and tourists that are attracted to the area. This includes the village of Bramford, and some of its neighbouring villages.

### Potential Restrictions to Existing Business

The planning application proposes to site the dwelling within the grounds of the existing Cock Inn public house in Bramford.

According to the proposed site plan the buildings would be approximately 4m from each other at the closest point. The outdoor areas would be even closer at around 2m, once the proposed hedging has grown which would take around 3-5 years. The current opening hours of The Cock Inn are from 12pm to 11pm Monday to Saturday, and 12pm to 10:30pm on Sundays. Whilst the pub itself closes at 11pm most nights, many customers will still be outside in the car park after closing and continuing to make noise. The proposed screening and proximity of the dwelling to the car park will not be sufficient to mitigate the late night noise.

Furthermore in 2015 the applicant applied for, and was granted, permission to install new intake and extract ducts for the kitchen. The extract duct of this is on top of an existing flat roof area of The Cock Inn and is both above the height of and in the direction of the proposed dwelling.

The NPPF, p.182 states *"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities (such as places of worship, pubs, music venues and sports clubs). Existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established."*

With the proximity of the site to the existing pub facilities, the long opening hours of the public house into the night, and the orientation of the existing kitchen extract fan towards the new dwelling, we find that this situation is unsustainable in the medium to long term for owners of the new dwelling, and likely that this would give rise to complaints against the pub for adverse noise and odour, resulting in restrictions being placed on the existing business and therefore in contrary to planning policy.

### Reduced Public Amenity and Accessibility

The Cock Inn has an onsite car park to the rear of the pub, with access on the right hand side. This onsite car park contributes to the accessibility to the pub for customers. The car park is also used by parents of the nearby school, as a way of safely alleviating the number of cars parked along the busy roadside during school drop off and pick up times.



Bramford itself is a growing village. Three recent large scale housing applications, which were granted, have increased the size of the village by 65%. These three applications cited The Cock Inn as a community asset that would contribute to the support of these applications.

The Cock Inn also finds itself serving customers from further afield than just the village of Bramford. The Bramford Village Plan 2012 recognises the village as a *"Key Service Centre (a hub for outlying villages)."* With closures of all other pubs in Bramford it is now the last remaining pub in the village. But pubs further afield have closed too. For example, The Wild Man in Sproughton currently lies empty, The Red Lion in Great Bricett has a pending application for a change of use to residential purposes, and the other neighbouring villages of Flowton and Little Blakenham have no pub at all.

Furthermore the rural countryside here in Suffolk is a popular tourist destination, worth £2bn to the local economy. Places to stay such as Copenhagen Cottage Campsite in Bramford Tye, attracting a loyal customer base from across the UK, fully recommends the Cock Inn to their many loyal customers. Without the Cock Inn in Bramford, there is little beyond fast food for tourists to eat out at, therefore denying a large part of the enjoyable holiday experience.

The application proposes to reduce the number of car parking spaces. The number of disabled spaces is not proposed to change, but the applicant mentions a reduction in the total number of ordinary car parking spaces of 1 space (21 down to 20). However this is misleading as the proposed site plan shows that two of those spaces would be exclusive to the new residents. So the pub visitors would be losing 3 ordinary parking spaces.

The NPPF, p.83 states *"Planning policies and decisions should enable: ... c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship."*

The MSDC Core Strategy Development Plan, policy SO5 states it aims to *"reinforce the vitality and viability of local shops, schools, services, recreation and community facilities in towns and key service centres and primary villages"* and policy SO12 to *"promote high quality, sustainable tourism."*

The MSDC Core Strategy Focused Review 2012, p3.7 states *"The attractions of the countryside for tourism for the district, an important sector of the local economy, mean that maintaining its environmental qualities while promoting access is essential... The need to promote the rural economy, providing maximum opportunities to deliver rural affordable housing and safeguarding rural facilities and services."*

As customers to the pub are being drawn in from wider areas as the economic climate changes, not only from the expanding boundary of housing within the village of Bramford itself, but also neighbouring villages and tourists, the car park will be needed even more. Any loss of parking spaces for use by the pub visitors would reduce the accessibility of the pub and its ability to adapt to a growing area of service. This could either push people to park on an already busy roadside, or deter them from visiting entirely. National and local policy states that development should support tourism and retain the accessibility and viability of existing community assets, such as The Cock Inn public house. The planning application does not support those policies.

## Loss of a Community Asset

The Cock Inn has a large garden space, also to the rear of the building, which has a small paved area, picnic tables and chairs, and during 2020 part of this garden was also used to build an enclosed children's play area. This pub garden is also the last public green space available along The Street.

The ability for a village pub to have an outdoor pub garden space is a valuable asset to the business as a whole. The garden area is well used by the visiting public, and has been particularly vital to the ongoing business operations during the current pandemic. In times where we see pubs closing down left, right and centre a pub garden is an asset that attracts a greater range of customers, such as families who have kids that need a safe space to run around, and smokers who now need an outdoor space.

The application proposes to take over more than half of the current pub garden.

The MSDC Local Plan 1998, policy H16 states *"to protect the existing amenity and character of primarily residential areas, the District Planning Authority will refuse: the loss of open spaces which contribute to the character or appearance of an area and which are important for recreation or amenity purposes."*

The NPPF, p.92 states *"To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should: ... c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services,*



*particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs; d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community."*

With the potential of business restrictions described above, the reduction of accessibility for customers coming from wider areas, and the loss of more than half of the garden space, the cumulative impact of all of this brings into question the medium to long term viability of The Cock Inn to even continue running as a pub, and therefore as the community asset that it is.

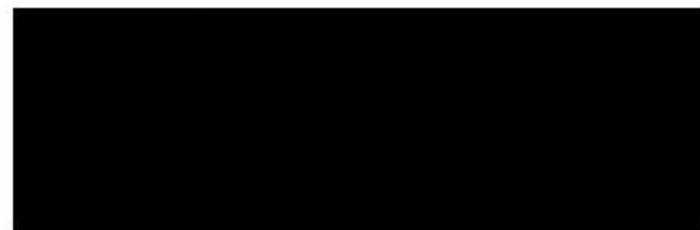
## Conclusion

We find that granting permission of application DC/20/05586, and the harm it would cause to the last remaining public house in Bramford, would be contrary to the overarching purpose of planning policy, which is to that of sustainable development.

Throughout the NPPF it emphasises "sustainable development", and after the opening introduction the very next policy is p.7 which states *"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."*

Whilst CARE Suffolk recognises the need of using infill spaces to help contribute to housing needs, the siting of this proposal appears more like an intrusion into the existing site and business of The Cock Inn public house. The benefit of one dwelling pales in comparison to the detrimental loss of space (parking and garden) to this community assets ability to cater for future generations, and the potential loss of the community asset in its entirety.

Yours sincerely,



Samantha Main

Director