
Submission for the Planning and Infrastructure Bill

Subject: Proposal for Amendment to Include Pubs in Community Hubs

To the Public Bill Committee,

The British Beer & Pub Association

The British Beer & Pub Association is the leading trade body representing companies across the UK, which between them own around 20,000 pubs and brew over 90 percent of beer sold in the UK.

Our members include international companies, national and local brewers and pub businesses operating managed and tenanted pubs in cities, towns and villages across the country.

These businesses are at the heart of communities and local economies and include family businesses who have been brewing beer and running pubs for hundreds of years alongside emerging brewers and pub operators.

Economic and Social Contributions

Pubs significantly contribute to the local economy and social wellbeing, generating approximately £34.3 billion in Gross Value Added (GVA) annually and providing over one million jobs. Integrating pubs into community hubs aligns with the Bill's objectives of enhancing community infrastructure and supporting local economies.

Community Integration

Pubs are vital in combating the "loneliness epidemic". The Campaign to End Loneliness has shown that 50% of adults totalling some 26 million people reported feeling lonely ranging from occasionally to always. Our Inn-Valuable report in conjunction with think tank Localis found that pubs have consistently played a pivotal role in knitting communities together and promoting social cohesion to combat this loneliness epidemic:

- 68% of British adults think pubs help combat loneliness in their local area¹
- 75% feel that pubs have a positive effect in communities
- A third of the UK population prefer to socialise in pubs over their homes and regard the pub as a safe place to meet²

¹ [Inn-Valuable: Unlocking the Socio-Economic Potential Of Our Nation's Pubs](#)

² [Friends on Tap \(2019\)](#)

- Pubs correlate positively with social engagement regardless of economic context³
- Pubs cater for far more than alcohol consumption, as one in three pub visits in the UK are alcohol free

The undeniable reality is that people who go to community pubs have more close friends and feel that their communities are better integrated. This in turn leads to improved overall wellbeing, with the effect being especially pronounced in local community pubs. Pubs provide some of the last remaining spaces that encourage community social interaction.

Requiring the inclusion of pubs in an integral part of new community hubs, such as high streets, will enhance social cohesion and community engagement. Pubs are a vital component of vibrant and well-connected communities and would directly contribute to the health and well-being development goals stated on page 19 of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill Amendment Paper.

Successful New Towns

We support the Government's New Towns Task Force and its commendable mission to deliver thousands of new homes by 2050 that are "attractive places where people want to live"⁴ including one and a half million new homes in the next five years. The success of these new homes and towns will depend on communal places. As already mentioned the pub is almost uniquely suited to create successful communal places but other conditions are equally important. As stated in our Brewing Communities report, avoiding sprawling areas with large distances between homes' amenities New Towns should instead focus on a density of 50 to 75 homes per hectare.⁵ This has the double benefit of encouraging walking which improves health and stimulates local economies such as shops and pubs. New Towns also need to have a variety of commercial activities from restaurants to shops to increase the richness of land uses and establish new successful living areas.

Design Principles

Pubs built in industrial areas, car parks, off motorways, although functional are less popular usually unable to take up the role of a neighbourhood hub. Generic buildings that look like care homes or leisure centres fail to communicate their role as a casual community hub for socialising. This is why principles for designing

³ [Mount & Cabras \(2016\) Community cohesion and village pubs in Northern England: An econometric study](#)

⁴ [Create Streets BBPA \(2025\) Brewing Communities](#)

⁵ Ibid.

appealing neighbourhood centres and pub hubs should be incorporated into the Bill.

Flexibility in Building Use

Creating flexible buildings that could be used as pubs ensures that new developments can adapt to community needs over time. This flexibility supports sustainable development and allows for the dynamic growth of community hubs. Pubs and shops that are isolated and apart from other daily activities have much less passing trade. People cannot 'pop in' while out shopping or after work or sport. Pubs should sit within hubs, alongside other local shops

Wider points on planning

We support the Government's core focus on economic growth. In recent years pubs have experienced significant delays in approvals for planning applications. We believe that one of the best ways to achieve economic growth is by addressing shortcomings in the present planning regime and improving the timeliness and effectiveness of the planning application process. We are particularly supportive of the proposal to streamline planning committees by limiting the size of the committees and requiring committee members to possess greater specialised knowledge in order to enhance efficiency and reduce delays.

Tens of millions of pounds of growth investment in pubs that would create hundreds of new jobs, are delayed awaiting planning decisions, some for several years. Simple, no cost changes should require that 100% of pub investment applications must be completed within current statutory guidelines.

Summary

Including pubs in New Town community hubs will significantly enhance the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of those new local communities. We urge the committee to consider the below amendments to include in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill that necessitate the inclusion of pubs with the aims of creating vibrant and cohesive communities.

Potential wording for the amendment

1. In exercising any functions under the Planning and Infrastructure Bill relating to local and strategic planning, infrastructure provision, or new town development, relevant authorities must have due regard to the role of public houses as community assets.

2. Local plans and development frameworks must make provision for the inclusion of public houses within new residential and mixed-use developments where appropriate, as part of broader efforts to promote social cohesion and local economic growth.
3. When considering planning applications or strategic development proposals, authorities must assess—
 - (a) the potential for public houses to support social interaction, reduce loneliness, and contribute to wellbeing,
 - (b) the importance of integrating pubs into walkable, mixed-use community hubs (including town centres, village greens and neighbourhood squares), and
 - (c) the value of design principles that enable pubs to serve as active, inclusive, and accessible spaces for local residents.

Submission needs to be emailed to scrutiny@parliament.uk by 5pm on Thursday 22 May.