



South Somerset District Council

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The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP
Secretary of State for Communities and Local
Government
2 Marsham Street
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Date : 17 August 2015
Your Ref :
Our Ref : rp.sn
Ask for : Ric Pallister
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Dear Mr Clark

Localism Act – Community Right to Bid

Since this provision went live in 2012 SSSDC have established a Register of Assets of Community Value and we review this on a quarterly basis to see the issues and trends that have arisen from this particular Community Right.

In recent times we have seen a lot of Registrations of public houses and similar institutions. This stems from community concern about the potential loss of these important local facilities. These are of course properties in private or Brewery ownership, with a trend towards closure and conversion to residential or other uses. We welcome the new regulation, April 2015 which remove permitted development rights from pubs on the Register to offer additional protection for these assets.

A number of communities have found it difficult and frustrating to hold meaningful discussions about community property acquisition with owners and agents when these are put onto the market. In some instances work has gone into developing a strong community business case and finance, but ultimately the community option has been unsuccessful. The pub chains and proprietors haven't really embraced the spirit of this legislation. We appreciate that this is a "Community Right to Bid" not a "Community Right to Buy", as enshrined in the legislation. The lack of teeth for the community ie no first right of refusal on the property concerned, seems to us to be a weakness in the legislation.

My Executive has concerns about the costs and benefits of this Right which currently appears not to be achieving the outcomes that the Government had intended. May we ask if there are any plans to assess its impact nationally including whether it has delivered its intended benefits? If this has taken place already, can we also ask if there are any plans to afford communities greater influence under this Right?

Yours sincerely

Ric Pallister
Leader of Council

If you need this information in large print, Braille, audio or another language, please contact me at the above address

