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From: Rose Freeman [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 January 2014 11:19
To: PlanningPolicy
Subject: Local Plan Pre Submission

Our Ref.: C/5531

Local Plan 2011-2026 Part 1 Pre Submission

Thank you for your email of 26 November consulting The Theatres Trust on the pre submission stage of the Local Plan Part 1.

The Theatres Trust is The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres, and was established by The Theatres Trust Act 1976 to 'promote the better protection of theatres'. The Trust delivers statutory planning advice on theatre buildings and theatre use in England through The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (DMPO) requires the Trust to be consulted on planning applications which include 'development involving any land on which there is a theatre.'

We are also a consultee for Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders, and encourage local authorities, parish councils and local groups to consult the Trust on Local and Neighbourhood Development Plans that concern local theatres.

Comments

We find the document sound, but to be far too long so that its clarity or succinctness is diluted by having the core policies with the development management policies in one document. Current practice seems to be for a Local Plan Part 1 to be for strategic policies, and a Local Plan Part 2 for site allocations and development management guidelines – two separate documents.

However, there is good cultural content here and we are pleased that the Vision (last bullet point) includes acknowledgement of the District's leisure and cultural facilities.

The first bullet point of Objective 6 states that facilities have to be viable. We have an issue with the use of the word 'viable' as often a community facility may not need to be viable to provide a service to the community, i.e. it may require financial subsidy to remain a valuable component of your social infrastructure. Museums, libraries, arts centres and all community and cultural facilities play a key role in encouraging knowledge, experience and quality of life in its broadest sense. The information and stimulation these facilities can offer promotes a wider understanding of the world and offers individuals the opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge to enjoy a rich and varied cultural life, but they do not be to be 'viable' in a commercial sense.

Policy 14 Social Infrastructure

We support this policy and thank you for including cultural facilities in para.7.67 – for clarity we would be grateful for the inclusion of 'performance arts' in the bracketed examples as both your arts centres provide performance spaces (para.7.98 states that theatre is provided in both centres) and you will shortly be having a new performance space in Blandford Forum (The Fording Point). Paragraph 7.100 also states that the larger village halls are used for theatre events. We suggest that the actual policy wording in item h should include the term 'performance spaces' for consistency.

Item k of the policy deals with Community Facilities rather than social infrastructure. This is not consistent with Policy 27. Social infrastructure is slightly different to community facilities and we suggest there is an uneasy overlap here which may cause confusion. We recommend for clarity that item k and l are not included in Policy 14 as these items are not social infrastructure in the leisure and recreational sense of the term.

If 'social infrastructure' and 'community facilities' refer to the same services then there should be an entry in the Glossary with their definition (see below). If they refer to different facilities for two separate policies then there should be two entries in the Glossary to provide clear guidelines.

Does Policy 27 include facilities defined as 'social infrastructure'?

Policy 27 Retention of Community Facilities

The document should define what constitutes a community facility in the context of Policy 27 for clarity and so that guidelines are clear and consistent. We strongly suggest that an entry is made for this term in the Glossary and in the relevant accompanying text to the policy so that guidelines are clear and consistent, and recommend this succinct all-inclusive description which would obviate the need to provide examples:

community facilities provide for the health and wellbeing, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community.

Social infrastructure specifically provides venues for museums, libraries, art galleries, theatres, cinema, sports and recreational halls, public art, snooker halls, nightclubs, concert venues, casinos, bingo halls, swimming pools, leisure centres and parks.

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