

From: localplan
To: planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk
Date: 05/01/2015 10:07
Subject: Fwd: Local Plan Part 1 – Submission version

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>>> Ross Anthony <ross.anthony@theatrestrust.org.uk> 19/12/2014 13:44 >>>

19 December 2014

The Vale Community
Vale of White Horse District Council
PO Box 127
Abbey House
Abingdon OX14 3BR

Our Ref.: O/6226

Thank you for consulting The Theatres Trust on a draft of the new Local Plan.

The Theatres Trust is The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres. The Theatres Trust Act 1976 states that '*The Theatres Trust exists to promote the better protection of theatres.* It currently delivers statutory planning advice on theatre buildings and theatre use through the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (DMP0), Articles 16 & 17, Schedule 5, para.(w) that requires the Trust to be consulted by local authorities on planning applications which include '*development involving any land on which there is a theatre.*'

Comment: The Trust considers the submission version of the local plan to be **not sound** because there are no policies in Part 1 to protect and enhance your community and cultural facilities. While social facilities is touched on in the accompanying text to Policy 7, they are not clearly included in the Policy itself.

The importance of protecting community and cultural facilities is stressed in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): The Core Planning Principles state planning should 'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs'. Item 70 states that to deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services that the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan for the use of shared space and guard against unnecessary loss of valued facilities. Also to ensure that established facilities and services are retained and able to develop for the benefit of the community. Item 156 states that Local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan. This should include strategic policies to deliver the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities.

The function of community and cultural facilities is to provide services and access to venues for residents and visitors regarding their health, educational and social requirements. For clarity and consistency we recommend use of 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.*

Although the NPPF doesn't specify what is meant by the term 'well-being', we suggest that well-being is having a sense of satisfaction with life. Social and cultural well-being includes the un-measurable personal experiences that make us happy and content. Such experiences are intangible, not financially rewarding, and can either be active (sports) or passive (theatre). The provision of a variety of community infrastructure for tourism (cultural heritage) and town centre vitality (cultural facilities) etc are vital for their contribution to residents' and visitors' life satisfaction. Your cultural facilities should be acknowledged and include theatres, cinema, concert halls, music venues (usually in pubs), museums, libraries and art galleries.

We recommend the Local Plan include a specific policy for Community Facilities. A suitable policy could include the following:

- The council will protect existing community, cultural and social facilities by resisting their loss or change of use unless replacement facilities are provided on site or within the vicinity which meets the need of the local population, or it

has been clearly demonstrated that there is no public need or demand for that facility.

- Developments that result in additional need for community facilities will be required to contribute towards enhancing existing facilities, or provide/contribute towards new facilities. This contribution will be addressed through CIL and/or section 106 obligations, as appropriate.

- The council will encourage the provision of new community, social and cultural facilities in town and district centres, and other appropriate locations which are convenient to the communities they serve and accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes, including walking, cycling and public transport, and buildings that are inclusive, accessible, flexible and sited to maximise shared use of the facility.

**** Please note that Rose Freeman has retired from The Theatres Trust. Please refer future planning correspondence to planning@theatrestrust.org.uk*

Regards,

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The Theatres Trust
Protecting Theatres for Everyone
National Advisory Public Body for Theatres