

From: Ross Anthony [REDACTED]
Sent: 30 November 2016 15:39
To: LDF
Subject: Warrington Local Plan Review - Scoping

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the review (Regulation 18 scoping) of the Warrington Local Plan.

Theatres Trust comments: Culture and the creative industries play a key role in developing vibrant town centres which are the economic and social heart of sustainable communities. Culture and cultural activity helps develop a sense of place and is what makes communities unique and special. They support the day to day needs of local communities and help promote well-being and improve quality of life. Participation in cultural events can contribute to social cohesion, reduce isolation and loneliness, skills development and learning, as well as providing the entertainment and stimulation needed to develop vibrant communities and grow the economy. There is also a growing awareness of the role that the arts and culture play in attracting and retaining residents and a skilled workforce.

Cultural facilities include your theatres, live music venues (inc. public houses), community spaces, museums, cinemas, libraries and other public and performance venues, and they are important in supporting the local and visitor economy by attracting people to these centres where other businesses then benefit from the flow on effects.

The local should therefore support arts and culture at all levels to support the local economy and ensure that all residents and visitors, and future generations, have access to cultural opportunities. Policies should protect, support and enhance cultural facilities and activities, particularly those which might otherwise be traded in for more commercially lucrative developments, and should promote cultural led development as a catalyst for regeneration in the town centre.

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012, which guides spatial planning and decision making in England, provides clear directions to local planning authorities about the importance of safeguarding and promoting culture activities and venues in their areas.

- One of the 12 core planning principles (paragraph 17) is the need to plan for culture to support social wellbeing and sustainable communities.
- Paragraph 23 recognises the important role town centres play in supporting communities and notes that cultural venues make a valuable contribution to the vibrancy and success of these centres.
- Paragraph 70 states that in 'promoting healthy communities', planning decisions should '*plan positively for cultural buildings*' and '*guard against the loss of cultural facilities and services.*'
- Paragraph 156 directs local planning authorities to ensure their local plan includes cultural policies that reflect the NPPF.

Recommended Policy

To address the NPPF, the Theatres Trust recommends existing Policy TC1 and/or SN6 and SN7 are strengthened, with wording along the lines of:

Cultural and Community Facilities

Development of new cultural and community facilities will be supported and should enhance the well-being of the local community, and the vitality and viability of centres.

The loss or change of use of existing cultural and community facilities will be resisted unless

- *replacement facilities are provided on site or within the vicinity which meet the need of the local population, or necessary services can be delivered from other facilities without leading to, or increasing, any shortfall in provision; or*
- *it has been demonstrated that there is no longer a community need for the facility or demand for another community use on site.*

The temporary and meanwhile use of vacant buildings and sites by creative, cultural and community organisations will also be supported, particularly where they help activate and revitalise town centre locations.

For clarity, and so that guidelines are clear and consistent, the accompanying text and the Glossary should contain an explanation for the term 'cultural and community facilities'. We recommend this succinct all inclusive description which would obviate the need to provide examples: *cultural and community facilities provide for the health and wellbeing, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community.*

Regards,

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