

Further statement from Theatre Trust

From: Ross Anthony

Sent: 27 January 2015 13:06

To: Tony Blackburn

Subject: RE: Bradford Core Strategy Examination - Inspectors Matters and Issues

27 January 2015

For the Attention of Inspector Stephen Pratt

Our Ref.: O/6392

Core Strategy Examination – Inspector’s Matters and Issues

I’m writing regarding the Bradford Core Strategy Examination Matters and Issues issued by the Planning Inspector.

Remit: 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 (DMPO), 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.’

Comments: Matter 1.1 and 1.3

The Theatres trust does not consider this document to be sound as it is not consistent with national policy for cultural infrastructure as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework item 156, due to its failure to set out strategic priorities to protect, enhance and develop the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities across the district.

Nor does the document adequately reflect item 70 in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which 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.

The Trust would have therefore expected a policy along the lines of: 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 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, and it has been demonstrated that there is no demand for another similar use on site.

Also to include a description for the term 'community facilities' in the Glossary - community facilities provide for the health and wellbeing, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community.

The Planning Practice Guidance also recommends that a range of issues could be considered through the plan-making and decision-making processes including social and cultural wellbeing. 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. The word 'wellbeing' is used throughout the document, but not in any policy, nor in the Glossary to explain its practical application in Bradford.

Matter 2.2

Objective 10 notes the role of community and cultural facilities, but this objective is not reflected in any policy and does not address the NPPF's guidance in items 70 and 156 with regard to retention and enhancement of existing facilities. Paragraph 5.1.36 states that leisure and cultural facilities will be promoted and enhanced, particularly to improve the evening economy, but there is no policy that provides specific guidance for this aspiration.

As noted above, The Trust would have therefore expected a policy along the lines of: 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 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, and it has been demonstrated that there is no demand for another similar use on site.

The policies for towns all contain the same phrase associated community facilities without explaining what these might be. It would be helpful if a description for the term 'community facilities' was added to the Glossary of Terms and we suggest, so that guidelines are clear and consistent, 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.

Regards,

Ross Anthony
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The Theatres Trust