

Protecting theatres
for **everyone**



10 September 2021

Enfield Local Plan 2019 - 2039

Thank you for consulting the Theatres Trust on the above document. Our comments are set out below.

Strategic Policy CL1: Promoting culture and creativity

The Trust supports and welcomes this strategic policy as it provides strong and robust protection for the borough's valued facilities including its theatres as well as supporting and facilitating new provision and upgrades. It can be considered to accord with related NPPF and London Plan policy. There are a number of theatre facilities within the borough, including the Intimate Theatre which is on the Trust's priority Theatres at Risk register. Together these are of different scales and have varied programmes meeting different needs, ranging from professional and touring productions to specialist provision to local community and amateur groups. Theatres and other cultural and performance venues contribute towards the social and cultural well-being of local people, providing opportunities for people to meet and come together and participate in the arts. They contribute to the vitality of town centres and benefit nearby businesses. There is great merit in supporting these facilities, not just for the facilities directly but because of the other plan objectives they contribute towards.

We would however suggest minor amendment to part 2a. to remove reference to "economically viable", as this could inadvertently cause unnecessary loss. This is because some facilities may not be economically viable in a commercial sense but could successfully operate under alternative operating models such as charitable or community/co-operative.

We suggest one of the following approaches:

a. the use is identified as surplus to requirements ~~and is no longer economically viable~~; or

a. the use is identified as surplus to requirements and is no longer economically viable <<or capable of being operated on a community or not-for-profit basis>>

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Policy DM CL2: Leisure and tourism

This policy similarly strongly protects valued facilities.

Again as with our comments for Strategic Policy CL1 we urge caution with use of “unviable”. We would suggest “demonstrably surplus to the needs of the community” as alternative wording which would improve effectiveness.

b. the existing use is unviable and its retention has been fully explored, including active and comprehensive marketing (for a period of at least 18 months) the facility for its existing and alternative leisure or visitor use prior to the submission of a planning application.

As a national advisory public body and statutory consultee within the planning system we are open to working objectively with the Council on wording and development of policies relating to culture. We hope this representation will prove beneficial and we look forward to further engagement as the plan progresses.