Formby & Little Altcar Neighbourhood Development Plan 2012 to 2030

Thank you for consulting Theatres Trust on the above document. The Neighbourhood Plan boundary includes Formby Little Theatre, therefore we have interest in this area. Our comments on the document are set out below.

Remit:
The Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. We were established through the Theatres Trust Act 1976 ‘to promote the better protection of theatres’ and provide statutory planning advice on theatre buildings and theatre use in England through The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, requiring the Trust to be consulted by local authorities on planning applications which include ‘development involving any land on which there is a theatre’.

Comments:
Paragraph 3.4.11 seeks suggestions for additional community assets within Formby and Little Altcar. Formby Little Theatre is an important community and cultural asset for Formby, but is not mentioned within the document. As a local member/volunteer-led organisation and facility the theatre contributes to social and cultural wellbeing within the local area. As well as providing opportunities for access and participation in the arts, facilities such as the Little Theatre help bring people together and reduce isolation. Therefore we would recommend that the plan makes reference to the theatre and its role as a potential Asset of Community Value.

We would also suggest that the plan includes an additional policy which protects its existing community, cultural and social facilities. Presently, these types of facilities are only referenced in the context of securing contributions for funding. We recommend that existing facilities such as the theatre, pubs, community halls and social clubs are identified and given robust protection from change of use or loss where there remains a need for the facility within the local community. This would further add to Policy HC6 within the Sefton Local Plan, which in any case only covers...
facilities which have been formally designated as Assets of Community Value. Such a policy should set out the criteria by which loss of a facility will be assessed, such as robust evidence of marketing at a rent/sale price appropriate to the existing use and condition of the site without development potential.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or should you wish to discuss this representation in greater detail.

National Planning Adviser