

caods Chairman Statement

Last night (4 May), members of the **caods** Committee attended a meeting held at the HQ along with members of the Young Gen Committee and members of the other societies/clubs that are based on Meteor Way (e.g. Gun Club, Scouts, Chelmsford Ballet Company, Weston School of Dance, Chelmer Cycling Club to name a few). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Chelmsford City Council Housing Plan Consultation.

You may well have heard of the new plans that are currently in process by the Council across the Chelmsford area. They have issued a number of possible sites for new housing for development over the next 10 years, and have reduced the possible sites from a list of 40 down to 10. The Meteor Way Car Park and the land adjacent up to the Council's park land at the rear of the HQ is included in this shortlist. This would mean, if accepted and according to leases, that the Council would re site all organisations elsewhere in Chelmsford, including the HQ.

The purpose of last night's meeting was to discuss the impact of these proposals on our individual societies, so that we could lodge a joint comment about the plans back to the Council. The last date for comment is 11 May 2017. Please note, the Council have not held any consultation with any of the societies - indeed, it was only found out about when read about in the Essex Chronicle!

The proposal is to build 380 new homes on the site. The final decision regarding the sites will be made in October 2017.

Having discussed the proposal around the table last night and with members of both the CAODS and Young Gen Committee, our view is that we DO NOT want to be relocated and will object to the plans. Other societies may have their own pro's and con's of objecting the plans and their own circumstances may be different to that of CAODS and Young Gen, but we are going to collectively make some 'noise' in the media about the proposal and the impact it will have on us all. Indeed, these are some of the main issues that we have identified for our society specifically:

- the impact on the local community with these societies / clubs being affected (some may even have to close down); location and access is important;
- the impact on services for the younger generation in Chelmsford;
- the disruption it will cause to the societies if having to be relocated, and the cost implications of potentially not being able to have shows running at the same time;
- the cost and ongoing costs of relocation;
- the uniqueness of our buildings (e.g. the HQ needs a workshop big enough to build scenery, have costume storage, props storage, rehearsal space, changing rooms etc.);
- the importance of a car park;
- the importance of the green space in the City Centre;
- the importance to us personally of being close to the theatres;
- the importance of being close to the train station for our members

As a society we are going to respond with our comments, but we really need you to help us! All the societies/clubs are asking their members to complete the questionnaire with their comments (hopefully agreeing with us that we do not want to move) so that we have a large volume response to the Council.

Therefore, we would be most grateful if you would take the time to complete the online questionnaire about the proposals and submit them to the Council - particularly commenting on the Meteor Way site. It is a bit of a pain as you have to register online and set up a password, but it is easy to do and then you can complete it.

The more responses that are sent in, the more chance we have that the Council will decide it is not a good idea for our site! The closing date for comments is 11 May 2017.

This is the link to the 'Local Plan' website:

<https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-new-local-plan/new-local-plan/developing-the-new-local-plan/>

To comment on the proposals, please click on the Consultation Portal link on the site or go to:

<http://consult.chelmsford.gov.uk/portal>

The actual Consultation document (Local Plan Consultation Document) is over 296 pages long but the Meteor Way proposal is on pages 106-108.

Please, please help us to do everything possible to save our HQ!

Should you have any questions or would like to discuss this issue, please do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the Committee (Claire's Mobile 07899 998077 or clairecarr@sky.com)

Thank you for your support as ever.