

**LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT**

**EXECUTIVE MEETING 21<sup>st</sup> July 2003**

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ARTS & LIBRARIES

NAME OF WARD(S)  
ALL

**REPORT TITLE: Festivals Programme**

**1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1** This report outlines the options for future management arrangements of the festivals programme, and specifically the Diwali event.
- 1.2** Diwali is one of a number of cultural festivals that have had financial support from the Council. This report seeks to rationalise the Council's overall strategy towards festivals and their management. It proposes that the Council does not directly manage event operations, but that its involvement is ensured through commissioning specialist event firms or other appropriate organisations to manage individual festivals on its behalf.

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1** The Executive is asked to agree that the management of the Diwali event be contracted to a fully qualified event management company, fully covering the legal risks and securing better long term opportunities for sponsorship.
- 2.2** The Executive is asked to agree that an annual competitive bidding process be developed for suitable smaller festivals, and that an equitable selection system applied. (See 6.1.9)
- 2.3** The Executive is asked to consider and choose one of the following options, as set out in section 3.6, in respect of the £60K shortfall in the 2003/4 Festivals budget:
- a) to reduce expenditure on the Festivals Programme
  - b) to transfer £60, 000 from the budget identified for setting up the Cultural Services Unit and developing the Cultural Strategy.
  - c) a combination of (a) and (b).
- 2.4** The Executive is asked to agree that options for the content and scope of the Festivals programme for 2004/5 onwards be developed for its future consideration; and in particular that these options address the Navratri festival, currently funded via the Main Grants Programme, Respect Week, those festivals currently supported by the Council in

other ways, and the proposals for extension of the programme made by members of the community.

- 2.5** The Executive is asked to note that growth of £200K in the Festivals base budget will be required from the financial year 2004/5; and to agree that the budget for festivals be reviewed as part of the budget-setting process for 2004/5.

### **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1** The existing festivals budget and staff costs inherited from the Community Development Directorate and subsequently held by Environmental Services were transferred to Education Arts and Libraries in April 2003. It has not been possible to identify the real and complete costs of the programme, or the details of sponsorship income. £68,000 was transferred, comprising the festivals budget of £15,000 plus £53,000 estimated management / staff costs.
- 3.2** A further contribution of £12,000 has been made from the new cultural budget towards the arts elements of the festivals programme, making a total budget of £80,000 in 2003/4.
- 3.3** Full costs for the 2003 Diwali event are estimated to be £122,000 as set out below. These cover more rigorous health and safety operations in order to meet the requirements of the Police, other emergency services, and Health, Safety and Licensing.

Stewards	£2,000		
Security Stewards (Stage)	£2,000		
Stage	£12,000		
Management Fee	£10,000		
Artistes	£8,000		
Fireworks	£10,000		
Diwali Lights	£15,000		
		Lights Installation	£4,000
Track way	£2,500		
Parks Recharge	£6,000		
Barriers	£4,000		
Power/Lights	£6,000		
Toilets	£2,500		
VIP launch	£1,500		
Signage	£1,500		
Health and Safety	£2,000		
1 <sup>st</sup> Aid	£3,500		
Advertising	£2,500		
Marketing	£5,000		
Insurance	£6,000		
Licences	£1,000		
Carnival Floats	£10,000		
Miscellaneous	£5,000		

## **Total Expenditure**

**£122,000**

£12K has, however, been negotiated in savings, making projected net expenditure of £110,000 on Diwali in 2003/4.

- 3.4** Given that it has not proved possible to assess accurately the level and sources of sponsorship received in previous years, the 2003/4 budget assumes nil sponsorship.
- 3.5** Assuming an average expenditure on each of the other five festivals of £6,000, this means that the total amount required to deliver the Festivals Programme in 2003/4 is £140,000. Given that the overall budget available is £80,000, this leaves a shortfall of £60,000.
- 3.6** The options for meeting this shortfall are as follows:
- a) to reduce expenditure on the Festivals Programme (this would probably entail cutting out all festivals other than Diwali, and cutting out either the Diwali fireworks display and artistes or the parade)
  - b) to transfer £60, 000 from the budget identified for setting up the Cultural Services Unit and developing the Cultural Strategy (this would mean that the unit would consist of one officer whose time would be spent primarily in commissioning the festivals programme. It would mean that there would be no further progress on development of the Cultural Strategy, that the progress made on the implementation of the Public Art Strategy would be halted, and that the work required to take forward the cultural offer within the regeneration of Wembley would not take place)
  - c) a combination of (a) and (b). This would probably mean either cutting all festivals other than Diwali OR cutting elements of the Diwali event, and making up the remainder of the shortfall by using the Cultural services budget, probably resulting in one of the two new posts within the unit not being filled.

## **4 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

**4.1** The new arts team will include a staff member, an element of whose duties will include developing arts organisations and commissioning the events programme. This post is due to be appointed in autumn 2003.

## **5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** The event management contract is a low value contract for the purposes of Contract Standing Orders and therefore it is a requirement that 3 competitive quotes are sought. Chief Officers (and any officers authorised by them) have delegated authority for low value contracts to invite expressions of interest, agree shortlists, invite tenders and award contracts.
- 5.2** This contract is below the threshold for the application of the EU Procurement Regulations.
- 5.3** The Council has a general power under section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972 to do, or arrange for the doing of, or contribute towards the expenses of the doing of the provision of an entertainment of any nature and the development and improvement of the knowledge, understanding and practise of the arts and the crafts which serve the arts.

**5.4** If members agree recommendation 2.3(b), officers have authority under the Scheme of Transfers and Virements to make the virement from the Cultural Services Unit budget.

## **6 DETAIL**

### **6.1 Background and key issues**

6.1.1 The Brent festivals programme has consisted of a number of annual events over recent years:

- Diwali
  - St Patrick's Day
  - Eid
  - Hanukkah
  - Christmas
- In addition, funds are provided through the Main Grants Programme to the Hindu Council to organise Navratri.

6.1.2 At the Executive meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> July 2002, members agreed to dissolve the Community Development Directorate with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October that year. It was also decided to transfer responsibility for Festivals "to Education, Arts and Libraries once the new Cultural Strategy Team was established". Responsibility for the festivals programme and a budget of £68,000 transferred from Environmental Services to EAL on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003.

6.1.3 In addition to the existing Festivals programme the Council has provided funding and other support in recent years to a number of events including Navratri, the Kilburn Festival, Kingsbury Multicultural Festival, the Gladstonbury Festival, and the Council's own Fireworks event. The Council has also invested in other festivals through different means and service areas. The varying levels of funding and other support are generally dependent on source rather than an agreed framework, quality standards, a risk analysis process and specified outcomes.

6.1.4 The Brent Diwali event has been extremely popular, attracting slowly increasing attendances since 1994. Although numbers were lower in 2002 (7,000) due to bad weather, a crowd of up to 15,000 was expected with the potential for 20,000 from 2004.

6.1.5 Over the past years the Police and the other emergency services have experienced difficulties with the event's organisation, in particular with the number of Stewards and the barriering of side roads etc. Additional problems with Diwali and other events have included crowd behaviours, the provision of information before and after events, marketing and communications, and a lack of public association with, and recognition of, the Council's support.

6.1.6 Many local authorities have addressed the growing range of pressures of event planning in recent years. The current legislative atmosphere substantially increases the financial and legal risks for the Council in directly managing events. It is therefore

essential that the arrangements put in place meet accepted professional standards of events management as well as Health, Safety & Licensing requirements.

- 6.1.7 The beneficial community partnerships and the involvement of local organisations and businesses have been a particular strength of the festivals programme. A number of new unsolicited proposals have been received since February 2003, including suggestions for Portuguese, Socca, urban music, Asian film and community festivals. Many of these proposals include wider partnerships across other boroughs. In 2003 the Council is planning a one day community festival on the 13<sup>th</sup> July to mark RESPECT week. The event has the characteristics of a Civic Show, incorporating all sections of the local community and Council services.
- 6.1.8 Due to the time restraints leading into the 2003 Diwali event, officers are already in the process of seeking quotes from relevant event management companies. However, if members do not agree recommendation 2.1 this process can be halted.
- 6.1.9 The new framework and selection process for smaller events would enable the Council to set a series of quality standards for health and safety, marketing, and additional leverage. A single evaluation system and consistent information will aid longer term planning for both the Council and event organisers. In addition positive steps towards fuller access and equalities issues could be made.

## **6.2 Future programme – Principles and Objectives**

- 6.2.1 The range of festivals funded and supported by the Council will assist the borough to deliver its priorities within the following corporate strategy themes.
- Promoting quality of life and the green agenda.
    - Ensure a diverse range of cultural activities is available to all sections of the community.
    - Work with the cultural voluntary and community sectors to assist and improve the quality of life of Brent's most disadvantaged individuals and groups.
    - Civic pride - Provide a positive and unique cultural profile for the borough.
  - Tackling crime and community safety
    - Through cultural activities, work actively with individuals at risk of offending to provide alternative life choices and to increase their access to training and employment.
- 6.2.2 The borough stands to gain from the positive profile supplied by the programme, and the broader understanding of the diverse cultures of the people of the borough, positively celebrating and sharing a range of cultures. However in order to fulfil this each event needs to positively seek new audiences.
- 6.2.3 In addition the programme could contribute towards inward investment and economic growth in the borough through its representation of a positive image of social cohesion within the borough, and increased levels of income through visitors and local spend. Analyses of large events in other places show increased local income through spend at local outlets and hotels.

6.2.4 Further objectives for the future programme include increasing the overall quality of the events, providing improved public safety, community involvement, professional standards and building sustainable partnerships with the Police other emergency agencies and long term investment from sponsors and other funders.

6.2.5 The Local Cultural Strategy, presently in development allows the authority the opportunity to address the festivals programme within a wider context, and make adaptations that allow future growth flexibility and sustainability.

### **6.3 Future programme: proposals**

6.3.1 In April 2003 an independent specialist consultancy was appointed to research the Diwali event and provide key information to allow the Council to review its management arrangements and bring improvements to the event in response to the concerns of the local emergency services. The key recommendation is that the management of the Diwali festival be contracted for a one year period to a specialist event management firm. This can be done in 2003-4 under existing standing orders.

#### **6.3.2 Proposals for 2004/5 onwards**

i) Once realistic costs and the new management methods have been assessed, the management of the festival should be tendered for a 3 year, plus 2 year extension period to secure ongoing cost savings, event management improvements, and a positive partnership with the event managers.

ii) A competitive Small Festivals programme would also be initiated from 2004/5. Criteria for selection could include the following, although the final criteria would be drawn up in liaison with the Council's Health and safety team and the local emergency services.

- Operational agreements (e.g. Minimum number of trained stewards etc)
- Planning timetable.
- Emergency plans and risk assessment process.
- Insurance arrangements.
- Traffic plan (if required)
- Police and emergency services agreement.
- Entertainments license secured (if required)
  
- Financial planning and systems in place.
- Event budget details.
- Income from other non council systems. Minimum of 1:1 match.
- Open budget book arrangements.
  
- Marketing plans, previous examples.
- Use of an agreed corporate image.
  
- Access and equalities plans.

- Methods to attract new and mixed audiences.
  - Analysis of level of interest.
  - Assessment of previous events.
  - Evaluation processes. (Framework proposed by the Council)
- iii) For smaller events these elements would not be required to be extensive, but rather a check list to ensure that proper event planning and risk analysis had taken place.
- iv) This process will allow the Council to secure best value for its investment and achieve higher safety and planning standards, whilst ensuring that a wider range of local residents has the opportunity to develop new events and to participate in local festivals.

6.3.3 In the longer term, ongoing expenditure on Diwali should be reduced from 2003-4 as a structured sponsorship strategy is implemented. However it is anticipated that a successful and well managed event will result in a larger audience and therefore in some additional costs. It is anticipated that future expenditure would be in the realm of £90,000 per annum for Diwali.

6.3.4 The possibility of longer term investment from other public funders into the existing festivals programme is low, due to the particular nature of the programme. Most public funds will not cover events which can be classed as religious celebrations. Whilst alternative funding may be available for some elements, e.g. Diwali float production, there is little opportunity to cover core organisational costs.

6.3.5 The particular historic demand from Brent residents demonstrates that many residents see no distinction between their secular and religious cultural expression. If the Council is to reflect these local needs then the present external funding environment will cover few of the costs, and the inevitable cost per attendee from Council funds will be high in comparison to a more arts based events programme. If the programme is to be representative of the cultures and faiths in the Borough, of high quality, comply with Health & Safety standards, and incorporate new events such as Respect Week, an increase in funding will be required, and this has been estimated at £200,000.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The following papers were used in the compilation of this report:-

- i) Ubique report on Diwali in Brent

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact: Caroline Jenkinson, Cultural Strategy Officer, Education, Arts and Libraries, Chesterfield House, 9 Park Lane, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 7RW. [Caroline.jenkinson@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Caroline.jenkinson@brent.gov.uk)

**EXEC-21.07.03/0057R/CarolineJenkinson/Lead Officer J. CHRISTIE**