



**Cabinet  
24 April 2017**

**Report from the Strategic  
Director of  
Regeneration and Environment**

Wards affected: Kilburn

**Tricycle Theatre Renovation Project**

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 The Tricycle Theatre has recently embarked on a major renovation project due for completion in February 2018. Once completed the work will significantly increase capacity and allow the theatre to extend the range of activities that they run. As well as enhancing an iconic cultural venue it will also give a much needed major boost to the economic regeneration of one of the borough's priority high streets. The Tricycle has secured £5.6m of the £6.6m required to complete the renovation.
- 1.2 In recognition of the Tricycle Theatre's economic, social and cultural benefits to Brent this report recommends that Brent Council support the theatre with a grant of up to £1m to enable its ongoing capital renovation project to be completed in its entirety. The Tricycle's success has meant that while its productions have improved, the venue has not kept pace and no longer meets the needs of the community, producers or performers. This renovation work addresses problems related to insufficient seating capacity, accessibility and helps to mitigate social exclusion.
- 1.3 Alongside the renovation work within the Tricycle Theatre, Brent Council is considering developing a project to commission improvement works to be carried out on the Kilburn High Road pavement around the theatre. If funding is approved, the improvements will include levelling the footpath and adding street furniture to encourage footfall and dwell time in the area. This broader regeneration project can be seen as complimentary to the ongoing renovation work within the theatre.
- 1.4 The council is being asked for a grant of up to £1m because the Tricycle Theatre has aspirations of achieving some of the shortfall from elsewhere including through the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The theatre has passed HLF's Stage 1 but in order for it to progress and receive HLF funding (expected to be circa £450k) it needs to be recognised as a cultural heritage asset on Brent's 'Local List' of Heritage Assets. The building is deemed to meet the criteria for the List and this report recommends its inclusion.

## **2.0 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 To approve a grant to the Tricycle Theatre of up to £1m representing the difference between the existing and potential HLF funding sources secured for the renovation of the theatre and the amount required to complete the renovation.
- 2.2 To approve the grant detailed in 2.1 above on the basis that it is a one off grant that replaces any ongoing grant due to be awarded to the Tricycle Theatre by Brent Council from 1 April 2018.
- 2.3 To approve the appointment of the Tricycle Theatre on to the Local List as a cultural heritage asset thus enabling the theatre to progress with its application for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

## **3.0 Detail**

### **3.1 Background**

- 3.1.1 The Tricycle Theatre has acted as a cultural hub for Kilburn and the rest of Brent since 1980. It is also the only established theatre company with a permanent building in the borough. Located on Kilburn High Road it currently includes a 232-seat auditorium, a 300-seat modern cinema, and rehearsal room, three multi-function rooms, which are used for extensive community and education work, and a vibrant café-bar.
- 3.1.2 Brent Council has worked in partnership with the Tricycle Theatre for thirty years and owns the freehold to the building which has 103 years left on the lease. In 2016-17 the theatre were in receipt of a grant of £123k which has been reducing year on year. Allocation of this year's grant is under consideration. By supporting this renovation project Brent Council hopes to continue the important relationship which has been formed with the theatre over many years, as well as ensuring the sustainability of the theatre and protecting and maintaining its freehold asset.
- 3.1.3 The Tricycle provides opportunities for the Brent community to gain experience of the theatre with an emphasis on young people and the opportunity to participate actively in the arts. (See appendix 1).
- 3.1.4 Some of the key attendance targets for 2016-17 which are expected for achievement are listed below:
  - **20,000** attendances from across London at a Tricycle cinema screening or event.
  - **6,000** attendances from people living in Brent at a Tricycle cinema screening or event.
  - **12,000** experiences for young people living in Brent to be involved in Creative Learning programmes

Further information regarding targets and supporting information is found in appendices 2 and 3.

- 3.1.5 In funding this project the Tricycle have agreed to allow the theatre to be used for council run events, the extent and terms of use will depend on the level of funding agreed. Examples of such events are conferences, community events, a citizenship programme for school children, etc.

- 3.1.6 The Tricycle will also bring arts and culture to other parts of the borough to showcase their work and engage with wider Brent residents through their creative learning programme. This could be through working in partnership with Brent's culture service and utilising other cultural assets i.e. libraries, sports centres, day care centres, etc.
- 3.1.7 The theatre will also share good practice in the arts and culture sector with the council's Culture Service team and strengthen the partnership through collaborative working, sharing of resources, bidding for joint projects, etc. This will enhance the cultural offer and reach in the borough.

## **3.2 Capital Renovation Project**

- 3.2.1 The project's primary focus is the transformation of the theatre auditorium. Capacity will increase from 232 to 325 seats, transforming it from a small scale to a small to medium scale theatre. This gives the advantage of attracting more product and more revenue income. There will also be greatly improved accessibility, sightlines and audience experience. Improvements to the front façade will deliver a prominent café frontage onto Kilburn High Road, increasing visibility and street presence. Visibility of the façade will also be enhanced with an upgraded canopy, architectural feature lighting and new signage. To further enhance the vitality of Kilburn High Road, Brent Council will separately develop a project, with the aim to commission improvement works to be carried out on the Kilburn High Road pavement around the theatre to include the addition of street furniture and the levelling of uneven pavements. Collectively these projects will deliver a much needed boost to one of Brent's priority high streets.

## **3.3 Funding**

- 3.3.1 Fundraising has successfully secured £5.6m of the £6.6m required; £3.1m from Arts Council England and a further £2.5m from Trusts and Foundations. The council has recently added support to the theatre's application for £450K of Heritage Lottery Funding. The HLF funding, if agreed will have conditions stipulating the types of activities that can be delivered using these funds as well as the split between capital and revenue. The HLF application has passed stage 1 but in order to progress, the theatre needs to be recognised as a cultural heritage asset on Brent's 'Local List' of Heritage Assets. Should the theatre be unsuccessful in raising the £1m funding gap the façade improvements will be postponed, meaning only the internal works will be carried out, therefore reducing the potential regeneration benefits to Kilburn High Road.
- 3.3.2 In response to the HLF advice on progressing the HLF application, the council's Heritage Officer has assessed the asset and believes the Tricycle should be contained on the Local List due to its architectural significance.
- 3.3.3 In recognition of the Tricycle's economic, social and cultural benefits to Brent this paper recommends contributing up to £1m to fund the shortfall in the theatre's project budget. However, it expects that the theatre will keep striving for additional resources to ensure it is not overly reliant on the Arts Council or Brent Council.

## **3.4 What the project means for Brent**

- 3.4.1 From a town centre regeneration perspective the project will have a positive impact on the high street in terms of increased footfall and spend, particularly in food and drink establishments, and other night time economy businesses, in line with the

strategies of Mayor of London's 'London 2036 – an agenda for jobs and growth' and the council's 'Borough plan 2015-2019'.

3.4.2 With regards to its social value, the Tricycle Theatre epitomises the contribution that culture can make towards the council's three Borough Plan priorities: 'Better lives; Better place; Better locally'. Brent has recognised within its own Cultural Strategy (2010-2015) that the Tricycle Theatre is an important iconic cultural asset and meets the six headline principles articulated within the strategy relating to;

- Encouraging young people to take part (see appendix 1 for details of the theatre's work)
- Increasing participation
- Enhancing cultural vibrancy
- Supporting the cultural economy
- Raising the profile of culture
- Promoting health and well being

### **3.5 Participation**

3.5.1 The increased capacity in the auditorium will facilitate reductions in the price of tickets to local residents. The revenue from the extra seating will increase the amount of subsidised tickets the theatre can offer to the local community thereby removing financial barriers to participation.

3.5.2 The renovation of the Tricycle Theatre aims to keep accessibility at the heart of the building by creating facilities that enable all to feel welcome and catered for.

3.5.3 Improving accessibility for all will mean the Tricycle Theatre will be able to work with artists, crew and participants with mobility difficulties. As a local theatre, they always endeavour to hire some of their staff from within the borough. The improved accessibility of the stage area will create more job opportunities for those with mobility difficulties.

### **3.6 Development of cultural vibrancy**

3.6.1 By funding this project Brent will support the Tricycle Theatre to build resilience in the face of increased competition in the arts sector for limited funds. Furthermore, it will help to increase the profile for the social and economic value of theatre and the arts, all of which will have a positive impact not only for Kilburn High Road but for the entire borough of Brent.

3.6.2 Investing in Kilburn acts as a counterweight to the enormous investment in other parts of the borough and highlights that the council passionately believes in supporting all wards throughout Brent.

### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 The cost of the project is £6.6m. The service has obtained £5.6m from external sources. The council would need to fund the difference of between £0.5m and £1m, if it committed to the scheme. It is important to note that this is not an investment opportunity, although there are clear benefits for the wider community and economic development in the area. The Council is considering contributing £0.05m in Grant to the theatre in 2017/18.

- 4.2 This option would preclude alternative development on the site, which the council might have the opportunity to deliver because it owns the freehold.
- 4.3 The council will need to undertake due diligence to ensure the monies are well spent and therefore it will need to undertake site visits and have proper oversight over the scheme. If the council agrees to this scheme, the grant should take place on an invoiced basis to protect the council's resources and to ensure other sources of financing are used first.
- 4.4 There is no financial impact on including the Tricycle Theatre on the Local List of Heritage Assets as this is solely a list that recognises the building as architecturally important. The Local List brings no additional planning controls or stipulations.

## **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The council has powers under s137 Local Government Act 1972 and s1 Localism Act 2011 to make grants to voluntary organisations.
- 5.2 The decision to award a grant is discretionary. The council's discretion must not be fettered by previous commitments they may have given and it should make its decision in the light of present circumstances as outlined in the report.
- 5.3 The council is bound to act reasonably and must take into account relevant considerations and to ignore irrelevant considerations and should consider its fiduciary duty towards local taxpayers.
- 5.4 As a public authority the council is subject to a specific duty in relation to the Equality Act 2010. Further details regarding this duty are detailed in the Equality Implications section below.
- 5.5 There are no legal implications for the freehold interest as a property contained on the council's Local List of Heritage Assets does not affect owners' rights to demolish, alter or dispose of their property.

## **6.0 Equality Implications**

- 6.1 In exercising its functions, including a decision to award a discretionary grant, the council has a duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not.
- 6.2 The projects and programmes of the Tricycle Theatre and the work between them and the council encourages and provides for young people, breaks down barriers between communities and includes a rich and diverse programme of events reflecting the community it provides for. It fosters good relations across Brent's residents.
- 6.3 Currently many areas within the Tricycle Theatre are not accessible for individuals with mobility issues. Following the completion of the renovation work this will no longer be the case with the theatre becoming wheelchair friendly in both the auditorium and performance areas allowing for a wholly inclusive experience for all concerned.
- 6.4 In preparation of this report the authors have consulted widely across Council

departments including with colleagues from Culture, Legal, Finance, Children and Young People, Property, Youth Engagement and Community Protection.

### **Background Papers**

Appendix 1 - Highlights of the Tricycle Theatre's work with young people

Appendix 2 - SLA Q3 16-17 monitoring report

Appendix 3 - SLA Q3 16-17 narrative report

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