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Brent

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE Held on Wednesday 21 November 2018 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Ketan Sheth (Chair), Colwill (Vice-Chair), Afzal, Conneely, Hector, Knight, Shahzad and Thakkar

Also Present: Councillors Hirani, Hylton, McLennan and M Patel

Absent: Co-opted Members Ms Askwith, Mr Milani and Ms Yaqub, and Appointed observers Ms Michael and Ms Roberts

1. **Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members**

The following apologies for absence were received:

- Simon Goulden (Co-opted Member)
- Alloysius Frederick (Co-opted Member)
- Lesley Gouldbourne (Appointed observer)

2. **Declarations of interests**

There were no declarations of interests made.

3. **Deputations (if any)**

There were no deputations received.

4. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 8 October 2018, be approved as an accurate record.

5. **Matters arising (if any)**

None.

6. **London Borough of Culture 2020 Programme**

Councillor Hirani (Lead Member for Public Health, Culture and Leisure) introduced the report which provided an overview of the vision and the strategic objectives of the London Borough of Culture 2020 Programme. He highlighted that winning the bid for being the London Borough of Culture in 2020 had provided an opportunity to invest in the Brent's rich cultural heritage, arts and young people. He reminded Members that the world's attention would be focused on the Borough as games, part of the Euro 2020 Football Championship, would be taking place at Wembley National Stadium. Councillor Hirani stressed that young people had been at the heart of the bid which demonstrated the fact that the Council wanted to put focus on them despite the context of cuts to education budgets, raise in tuition fees and

Brexit. Furthermore, being the London Borough of Culture in 2020 provided an opportunity to improve the lives of residents in the Borough and engage the diverse communities living in Brent.

Councillor Hirani emphasised the importance of delivering the 2020 Programme and noted that Brent residents could participate in a project run by Vice¹ which would provide them with a global audience to discuss key issues. In addition, the possibility of national and international organisations investing in Brent was expected to increase.

Governance arrangements

In relation to questions on the governance arrangements and the delivery of the Programme, Members heard that Lois Stonock had been appointed Artistic Director, a wide range of posts had been advertised and 66 applications per role had been received on average. However, until the recruitment process had been completed, Council officers would continue to carry out preliminary work on the Programme in addition to their day-to-day jobs. Lois Stonock (Artistic Director, London Borough of Culture 2020) added that community engagement would be an important part of the seven projects to be delivered throughout 2020. Each project would be overseen by a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) accountable to the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive. SROs would build project groups which would be representative of the Borough and would consist of young ambassadors, community representatives and stakeholders.² Sophie Leer (National Management Trainee, Brent Council) added that 19 applications had been received for the 18 Community Advisor roles. However, the deadline had been extended in order to encourage more applications from across the Borough (the ones that had been received were focused on Wembley).

The Brent 2020 Culture Fund had been set up to develop high quality creative and cultural projects and events that would form part of Brent's London Borough of Culture Programme for 2020. The Fund would open in January 2019 and it would provide three rounds of funding to both individuals and organisations in the following periods – January to March 2019; July to September 2019; and January to March 2020. In addition, a new not-for-profit organisation (an independent cultural trust) would be established to oversee the Programme and ensure a continuing legacy for the celebratory year. Ms Stonock said that the Council's ambition for this organisation was that it should be able to raise sufficient voluntary income to support its future programme of activities, and become an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation within five years. It would be established in early 2019 and it would build capacity through the year to become fully operational by 2020. As the Trust developed, some responsibilities related to the delivery of the Programme would be transferred to it and special governance arrangements would be made to manage its relationship with the Council and ensure that the links with the goals of Brent's Borough of Culture bid were maintained.

Phil Porter (the Council's Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing) said that the Trust would have a Business Plan and officers would be recruited to deliver the

¹ Vice is a digital media and broadcasting company, particularly focused around youth and young-adult digital media.

² The structure of the project groups would be confirmed in December 2018 / early 2019 as it would evolve as the Programme develops.

objectives that had been outlined in it. He added that as delivering the London Borough of Culture 2020 Programme was a corporate priority for Brent, Council representatives would be appointed to the Trust. However, the trustees had not been confirmed yet and a report on the operation of the Trust would be presented at the Cabinet meeting in January 2019.

Ms Stonock pointed out that the parameters of the Programme would need to be confirmed to the Greater London Authority (GLA) by September 2019

Visit to Hull

Members enquired about lessons learned from a recent visit to Hull, the United Kingdom's City of Culture 2017, and it was highlighted that the Hull City Council had taken the initiative fully on board. Residents had been engaged throughout the design and delivery phases and the volunteer programme that had been set up by the Local Authority had addressed some of its public health priorities such as tackling isolation. The Council had encouraged various organisations to invest and work in Hull and it had continued to co-produce with residents beyond the timeframe of the Programme. Councillor Hirani pointed out that Hull had also developed a cultural trust early in the process which had facilitated fundraising. Local politicians had been willing to learn from cultural and arts organisations which had been trusted to deliver the objectives of the programme.

Engagement of young people and Young Ambassadors

Members heard that a specific focus would be placed on young people throughout the Programme, as they were at the heart of Brent's bid, with the aim to develop them and enable them to be part of decision-making structures. Brian Grady (the Council's Operational Director of Safeguarding Performance and Strategy) provided assurance that young people had been involved in all steps of the decision-making process. He also spoke about the Takeover Challenge, taking place on Friday 23 November, when young people would be put into real-life decision making positions in the Council. This would form part of the engagement process and would enable officers to identify gaps prior to the review of the engagement map in January 2019. Mr Grady added that engagement from primary and secondary schools had picked up which was important as schools had a key role in shaping the Borough of Culture Programme. Nevertheless, he acknowledged that there had been a few schools yet to confirm the details of their participation and this would be followed up with the respective head teachers and governors in a timely manner.

Mr Brady added that efforts had been made to maximise involvement from underrepresented segments such as special schools, Pupil Referral Units and additional resource provision educational establishments. In addition, an engagement statement had been drafted and a recent inspection of the Local Authority by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) had praised the Council's engagement with hard to reach groups.

Members referred to the fact that Hull had not engaged young people aged 18-21 in delivering its programme. Councillor Hirani stressed that Brent's bid was different as it had been centred on young people and led by them. Mr Grady added that it was important to point out that involving young people did not mean that all activities would be centred on them – instead, they would be engaged in designing activities for all residents. In addition, as part of the Young Ambassador programme

officers would work with young people so they received the necessary knowledge and expertise to develop themselves further.

The Chair invited Ismail Dahir (Young Ambassador) to comment on his involvement in the London Borough of Culture 2020 and Mr Dahir said that young ambassadors had participated in four meetings and he expected to get involved in a specific project shortly. He noted that he hoped to contribute to the Programme by sharing his ideas and making sure that young people were at the front of the planning and the delivery of the Programme. Furthermore, Ms Stonock informed Members that each young ambassador would be given £500 to contribute to the programme by taking ownership and creating their own event.

Content and location of events

Although Members commended the efforts that had been put in setting up the London Borough of Culture 2020 Programme, they questioned the location of the Thoroughfare event (a mile-long street party on Kilburn High Road) and enquired whether locations that were more central to the Borough, such as Harrow Road, had been considered. Councillor Hirani explained that the event had been one of the reasons why Brent's bid had been successful. Despite the fact that the Kilburn High Road bordered the London Borough of Camden, it was still part of Brent, and therefore, it was important to include it in the Programme. The date that had been chosen for the street party fell on the same weekend as the final of Euro 2020 which would attract a global audience. Councillor Hirani pointed out that not all of the 12 projects that had been included in the Programme would benefit all areas of the Local Authority. However, Kilburn was important for the heritage of Brent as it was an area where some of the first immigrants to Brent, who had come from Ireland, had settled in and noted that this would be reflected in the content of the event.

The Committee commented on the cultural diversity of the Borough and enquired whether events would be focused on a specific culture or there would be opportunities for cultural fusion, i.e. participation of performers from various backgrounds in the year-long project celebrating Brent's reggae heritage. Ms Stonock said that a series of walks, talks and events would take place in Harlesden in October 2020 and any artists who were interested in the genre would be able to contribute, with a particular focus being placed on contemporary elements so young people could be involved as well. Mr Porter noted that the team behind the London Borough of Culture 2020 Programme was keen to bring cultures together in order to make the events exciting for everyone and maximise their reach.

In relation to the event featuring Zadie Smith (project 11), Members heard that Ms Stonock had been communicating with Ms Smith who was interested in writing four pieces for the Programme related to the four questions associated with Brent's bid.³ She clarified that the budget for this project would be used to perform the four pieces throughout 2020.

Members expressed concerns that it might be difficult to balance the need for high numbers of attendees with making sure that all Brent residents had been given an opportunity to attend an event. Furthermore, the Committee noted that it would be

³ The four questions are 'Where have we come from?'; 'Where do we live?'; 'Where are we?'; and 'Where are we going?'

beneficial if it could be possible to encourage people from less affluent areas of the Borough to attend events. Councillor Hirani acknowledged that fair distribution of tickets could be challenging and said that ticketing arrangements had not been discussed in detail.

A Member of the Committee commented that One Hoe Street in the London Borough of Waltham Forest (London Borough of Culture 2019) provided a venue to hold events and drop-in sessions related to their programme and asked if a similar public space would be opened in Brent. Ms Stonock said that the team at Brent had been working on developing Spacebook – an all-year-round online calendar listing affordable spaces in the Borough which could be used by the community. The Committee challenged the fact of having a digital platform rather a physical space. Mr Porter pointed out that the concept had been developed in response to a consultation with the aim to provide multiple spaces across Brent. He added that the Museum of all Brent Life (project 2) would provide an opportunity for audiences to visit commissions at ten locations (six Council-run and four community libraries). Members reminded officers that accessibility of some locations could be affected as the opening hours of some libraries were under consultation. Councillor Hirani clarified that this would depend on the Council's decision on the budget and any potential changes would be implemented in April 2019 which would provide sufficient time to publicise the potential new arrangements.

In response to a question whether it could be possible to have variations in the Anthem (project 6) to reflect the diversity of the Borough, Ms Stonock said that the Anthem would be composed in partnership with the Brent Music Service. Ideas for lyrics would be collated and presented to a famous artist to refine them, following which composers would be approached to write the music in such a way so that the Anthem could be performed in various contexts.

In conclusion of this section of the discussion, Ms Stonock pointed out that not all projects had been developed to the same stage – for instance, locations for some events had not been chosen yet, which could explain why there was limited information available about them. A Producer would be appointed to work on the overall framework of the Programme and discussions were still taking place to ensure that Brent's diverse communities would be involved in all initiatives.

Engagement of local communities and key stakeholders

Members discussed the engagement of local communities in designing the Programme and the Committee heard that two cultural summits had taken place in early September 2018. The events had provided the team with a number of ideas, contacts and suggestions and had enabled it to start building databases of organisations that might be interested in getting involved in the delivery of the Programme. A Brent Cultural Network had been set up to provide a forum to discuss cultural activities, the Town Centre Managers had been heavily involved in engaging local businesses and efforts would be made to source goods and services locally where possible.

The overall level of interest had been very high and the team had visited a number of organisations and community groups, a meeting with residents had recently taken place at the Library in Willesden Green and updates would be provided on a quarterly basis. Officers had not been able to identify specific groups that had not engaged with the Programme. However, mapping out of all activities proposed by

all groups that had come forward was to be undertaken and gaps would be addressed accordingly. Mr Porter added that one of the posts that the team was recruiting for would focus on community engagement and would work with groups that had been perceived as difficult to engage such as Eastern European, Brazilian and Portuguese communities. A specific point that was raised related to the engagement of faith communities. Councillor Hirani emphasised that the GLA had been adamant that funding could not be used for faith and sporting activities, although it might be possible to use the Brent Community Fund to sponsor events open to all residents.

In relation to key stakeholder engagement, it was noted the Brent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) would support the London Borough of Culture 2020 Programme through the Brent Equality, Engagement and Self-Care Sub-Committee (BEES) and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health user groups, while the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) would contribute through the perspective of contextual safeguarding. Councillor Mili Patel (Lead Member for Children's Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care) added that she met with Mr Grady on a weekly basis to discuss the safeguarding arrangements for the programme and action would be taken to address gaps had been identified.

The Police and private security companies were also identified as stakeholders which had to be engaged especially in relation to their approach to young people gathering in public spaces. Moreover, the Planning Service and developers had to be involved in conversations about spatial planning as sometimes the way buildings and open spaces were designed did not provide space that would be fit for young people to use. Mr Porter informed Members that officers had already approached Quintain who were interested in working together with partners to improve the environment for young people. Mr Grady added that the LSCB provided a suitable forum to engage with the Police and develop their confidence in relation to recognising safeguarding issues.

A Member enquired whether it could be possible to select a run-down street and promote it throughout the year with the aim to revitalise it. Councillor Hirani acknowledged that this could be possible as long as an application was made to the Brent Community Fund. He encouraged Members to approach the Town Centre Managers who would be able to support any high streets wishing to submit a bid.

It was noted that the SROs would engage with various Council services to ensure that venues which had expressed interest in hosting events complied with The Licensing Act 2003; adequate transport arrangements had been put in place; and the logistics of events had been coordinated with stakeholders such as London Fire Brigade, the Police, Transport for London, etc.

Funding the Programme

Members referred to the £1.5 million to be underwritten by the Council if fundraising was unsuccessful. Members enquired how much had Hull contributed to their year of culture and what their return on investment had been. Councillor Hirani said that Hull had been under-ambitious and had been able to fundraise more than they had expected due to high interest from various organisations. Ms Stonock clarified that Hull had been able to generate funding of over £30 million. Work had been

undertaken with consultants on funding applications⁴ to maximise Brent's chances of being successful in the bids, with success rates estimated at 1:2. Ms Stonock reported that there had been tentative agreements for funding with the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation but these were to be confirmed. Councillor Hirani added that various ways of fundraising the £1.5 million had been considered. Minesh Patel (Head of Finance, Brent Council) explained that the current level of funding that had been secured from the Local Authority was £1.1 million.

The Committee challenged the fact that the Council had to contribute £1.1 million to the programme in times of budgetary constraints and questioned whether this constituted an efficient capital expenditure. Councillor Hirani said that a significant proportion of the budgeted expenditure had already been spent in the Borough and confirmed that culture was one of the areas the Council was keen to continue to invest in due to the impact it may have on young people.

There was an option to scale back on some of the projects or use part of the Council's reserves to fund the Programme if the £1.5 million fundraising target was not met. Mr Patel emphasised that both options would be considered should the need arise and pointed out that a 20% contingency had been incorporated in the budget which should prevent overspending. Councillor Hirani added that if the Cabinet had to make a decision on this, it would consider the social value that could be added by delivering the Programme in full as well as what would be missed if it had to be scaled down.

As far as value for money was concerned, it was expected that Brent's input would be multiplied four to eight times for the duration of the Programme. Referring to the visit to Hull, Councillor Hirani said that they had spent more than they had expected, but they had had a higher return on investment than predicted. Mr Porter reminded Members that being the London Borough of Culture in 2020 provided an unprecedented opportunity for Brent to attract investment to the Borough despite the small risk associated with fundraising. However, Members stated that as £4.6 million would be spent in a time where cuts worth £40 million would be made over a period of four years, officers should be able to provide a quantifiable benefit to the Borough, along with a clear message which could be sent to residents. Mr Porter ensured the Committee that every effort would be made to fundraise the Council's contribution and stressed that scaling the Programme back remained an option.

Concluding remarks

The Chair closed the discussion by asking Councillor McLennan (the Council's Deputy Leader), Ms Stonock and Mr Dahir to provide their views on the legacy of the London Borough of Culture 2020 Programme. Councillor McLennan said that as young people were at the centre of the Programme, it was important to engage them and prepare them for the next steps in their lives in order for them to become good citizens. She spoke about the importance of building community cohesion and pointed out that all residents she had met had been proud of Brent being the London Borough of Culture in 2020 and were looking forward to the year of culture. Therefore, she believed that if the energy that had been demonstrated so far, could

⁴ Ms Stonock clarified that using consultants had been a short-term option as the team had to submit applications to a number of funds in a short period of time. A fundraising officer would be appointed as the Programme developed.

be maintained, the programme would be a success. Ms Stonock added that in her view building the capacity of organisations was essential and, therefore, the Programme would be a success if it could lay solid foundations of a legacy that would extend beyond 2020. Mr Dahir reiterated the importance of engaging deprived communities and involving young people in the planning and the delivery of the Programme.

The Chair thanked Ms Stonock, Councillor Hirani and the Council officers for their time and contributions to the discussion.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The contents of the London Borough of Culture 2020 Programme report, be noted;
- (ii) The following recommendations be made to Cabinet:
 - a. The Structure of the Cultural Trust to involve senior officers representing the Children and Young People Department or an Elected Member to provide strategic steer to the Trust;
 - b. A request be made to the Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board to provide steer on contextual safeguarding to ensure young people's safety throughout the events, and enable it to input into the charter for public-private spaces;
 - c. Brent schools be engaged in every step of the project;
 - d. The pricing of tickets for paid events be structured in such a way that provides opportunities for residents living in less affluent areas of the borough to be included in the celebration of the London Borough of Culture;
 - e. The possibility of creating a London Borough of Culture hub in a town centre in a similar fashion to One Hoe Street in the London Borough of Waltham Forest be explored, to help engage the community;
 - f. Small and medium-sized enterprises, including micro-businesses, be engaged to enable them to benefit from the project and add social value to Brent's community; and
 - g. The same effort that has been put into year-long project celebrating Brent's reggae heritage be applied to cultural commodities from other communities, and ways of celebrating them be considered.

Councillor Hylton (in attendance) joined the meeting at 6:44 pm.

Councillor McLennan (in attendance) joined the meeting at 7:56 pm.

Councillor M Patel left the meeting at 7:13 pm.

7. **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 8:20 pm.

COUNCILLOR KETAN SHETH
Chair

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