

## **Appendix 2- Consultation Reports and Summary Notes**

This appendix contains the following summary notes and reports from the preliminary, formal and focus group consultation:

- **Archives Visitor Survey, Summary Report- 18 February - 6 April 2013**
- **Wembley History and Willesden Local History Societies – Summary notes from 16 October 2013 meeting**
- **Museum users, Partner Organisations and Schools- Summary notes from 7 November 2013 meeting**
- **Consultation with Pupils at Mount Stewart Junior School and St Mary’s Catholic Primary School – 11 December 2013**
- **Wembley History and Willesden Local History Societies- Summary notes from 7 April 2014 meeting**
- **Museum Stakeholders- Summary notes from 15 April 2014**
- **Draft Museum and Archives Strategy Public Consultation Report**
- **Targeted Focus Group Report**

# Brent Archives Visitor Survey 2013 – Summary Report

## Background

The survey was carried out for seven weeks from 18<sup>th</sup> February to 6<sup>th</sup> April 2013. Visitors were asked to complete a paper copy questionnaire on their first visit to Brent Archives during the survey period. The mandate of the survey was explained as below.

‘We would like to find out more about the people who visit Brent Archives and how they use the service. We will use what you tell us to inform the development of a Museum and Archives Strategy for Brent Council’

The scope of the survey was in person visitors and did not include phone and email enquiries. Thirty three questionnaires were completed, providing a snapshot of visitor profiles and usage patterns over a seven week period.

## Visitor Profiles

### Place of residence (88% response rate)

Almost two thirds of visitors were Brent residents from either the immediate postcode area of the Archives or from the southern part of the borough. Approximately a third of visitors came from other London boroughs, elsewhere in the UK and abroad.

The NW10 postcode area represented 34% of all respondents while NW2 represented 20% and NW6 represented 7%. Therefore 61% of all respondents were from the southern part of Brent and borough residents represented 65% of all individual visitors.

Of the 35% of non resident respondents: 14% were from the wider London area (Harrow, Wimbledon, Carshalton, and Dagenham); 14% from elsewhere in the UK (Aylesbury, Brighton, and Jarrow); and 7% from abroad (USA).

### Age (97% response rate)

57% of respondents were aged 44 and under with 25% from the 16 - 24 age group.

The remaining respondents were aged 25-34 (13%); 35-44 (19%); 45-54 (9%); 55-64 (19%); 65 and over (15%)

### Gender (97% response rate)

There were more female respondents (56%) than male (44%).

### Ethnicity (91% response rate)

77% of respondents who stated their ethnicity belonged to the White group, 10% to the Asian group and 7% to the Black Group. Mixed and Eastern European ethnicity accounted for the remaining 6% of respondents.

### Religion (82% response rate)

41% of respondents who stated their religion were Christian; 15% Jewish; 15% No Religious Belief; 7% Hindu; 7% Agnostic.

The remaining 15% of respondents comprised single representatives of Sikh, Muslim,

Humanist and Other faiths.

### **Disability** (91% response rate)

7% of respondents to this question considered themselves to be disabled.

Physical impairment, vision impairment, long-term illness and learning impairment were the disabilities named.

### **Sexual orientation** (70% response rate)

All respondents who provided details indicated that they were heterosexual.

### **Access to Brent Archives**

80% of respondents normally visited in person while 10% normally made contact by phone and 9% by letter or email.

58% of visitors used public transport (train 38% and bus 20%). A third of visitors walked to the Archives while 3% used cycled and 5% drove by car.

42% of visitors had visited the Brent Archives website during the last year.

### **Purpose of visit**

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of material they were most interested in on the day of their visit. 46% named local history; 18% house history and 15% family history.

21% of respondents indicated the other category and named school incidents, Ordnance Survey maps, local public art, pub history, Jewish History, the Metropolitan Line and greyhound racing.

42% of visits were made for the purpose of personal or leisure interests; 18% for work or business; 15% related to university studies and 6% for school projects. The other category represented 18% of responses.

### **Frequency and length of visit**

70% of respondents were visiting Brent Archives for the first time while 9% had been visiting for under a year, 3% for between 1-4 years, 12% for between 5-10 years and 6% for more than ten years.

The high proportion of first time visitors is reflected in the 82% of respondents who said that they visit less than once a month. 6% of respondents visited once a month; 9% more than once a month and 3% more than once a week.

56% of respondents said their visit lasted less than an hour, 22% one-two hours, 7% two-three hours, 7% three-five hours, and 7% more than five hours.

### **Market Segmentation**

Brent residents were heavily represented amongst the younger (16-34 years) and older (65 plus) age groups, whereas half of visitors from beyond Brent were in either the 35-

44 or 55-64 groups. Residents had higher levels of disability compared with non resident visitors.

The mix of female and male respondents was similar between Brent residents and non-residents; as was the case with indications of sexual orientation.

While sample sizes are too small for detailed analysis, the following trends were identified from the responses received:

- Residents mainly visit to access local history information (55%) rather than for family history (5%). In comparison, 38% of non residents visited for family history purposes and a further 38% for local history
- House history and other interests were significant reasons for visiting for all respondents
- School projects were more prevalent amongst residents while university studies were more prevalent amongst non residents
- Respondents who had been visiting the Archives for more than ten years and respondents who were repeat users were more likely to be Brent residents. This was most marked amongst respondents who visit more than once a month
- Visitors who are Brent residents tend to make visits of shorter duration
- Those travelling from further afield visit less frequently but are more likely to stay longer, for example, for half a day or a full day
- Non resident visitors are more likely to have used the Archives website or to have made contact by phone or email than are Brent residents

While respondents share some characteristics and requirements, the two markets can be broadly summarised as follows:

### **Brent residents**

Live locally and often near to the Archives search room; likely to walk to or use the bus to visit the Archives; tend to be of either younger (16 to 34) or older (65 or older) age groups; make short duration but repeat visits to the Archives; have a particular interest in Local History.

### **Visitors from beyond Brent**

Live elsewhere in London, the UK provinces or abroad; likely to travel by train or bus to reaching the Archives; often aged 35-64; tend to make one-off visits to but that visit may be for half a day or a full day; probably more likely to also use the Archives website or to phone; likely to have an interest in family history as much as local history.

### **Conclusions**

With the caveat that the survey results were based on a small sample gathered over a seven week period, it is reasonable to draw the following conclusions from the evidence gathered:

1. The ratio of resident visitors to non resident visitors is approximately 2:1. The vast majority of resident visitors live in the south of the borough, often in close proximity to the Archives search room. Only one visitor during the survey period lived in the north of the borough.
2. The demographic profile of resident visitors provided by the survey differs markedly from the borough profile as recorded in the 2011 census returns. There is clear evidence that residents of BAME background (64% of the population at the time of the census) are heavily underrepresented in terms of visitors to the Archives.

3. There are distinct patterns of usage and areas of interest for residents and non residents.
4. Webpage resources are underused by visitors who are Brent residents.

# **Brent Council Museum and Archives Strategy – Preliminary Consultation**

## **Wembley History and Willesden Local History Societies –**

**16<sup>th</sup> October 2013, 3-4.30pm**

### **Final version of Summary notes**

**Present:** Cllr Jim Moher, Philip Grant, Robin Midwinter, Dilwyn Chambers (all members of Wembley History Society), Margaret Pratt, Dave Unwin (both Willesden Local History Society), Sue McKenzie, Neil Davies, Antonia Grant (all Brent Council officers)

#### **Context**

Brent Council is developing a Museum and Archives Strategy which will set out a vision and set of objectives for the future delivery of the service. The scope of the strategy will include the collections policy, information technology, partnership working, learning activities, and event programming and dealing with customer enquiries.

One of the inputs will be a recently completed self assessment against a framework of organisational characteristics undertaken by Council officers including members of the Museum and Archives team. The “Survive and Thrive” framework is administered by the Museum of London to support local museums with organisational health in the challenging economic climate.

Council officers are undertaking a number of preliminary consultation meetings with key internal and external stakeholders to inform the development of a draft strategy.

Representatives from the Wembley History Society and Willesden Local History Society were invited to a stakeholder meeting held at Brent Civic Centre in Wembley on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October. The scope of the strategy and the purpose of the meeting were outlined in the letter of invite.

Feedback received both on the day and in any resulting correspondence will inform the draft strategy which is due to go out to full public consultation in the early part of 2014.

Sue McKenzie (Head of Libraries, Arts and Heritage) also provided a brief update on the redevelopment of the Willesden Green Centre. She introduced Antonia Grant, Brent Museum Project Development Freelancer, who will design the new museum displays, and asked for views on the design and layout of the new Museum space within the building. It was clarified that a public Archives search room and environmentally controlled storage space will be provided within the Centre. Additional storage space will be provided at Grange Road.

A number of stakeholders raised concerns regarding the proposed restructure of the Museum and Archives staffing establishment being carried out prior to the development of a new strategy for the service. Sue McKenzie said that the proposed restructure was an internal process which was being undertaken in accordance with Council policy and procedures. It was therefore not appropriate to discuss the proposed restructure with external stakeholders.

Philip Grant reiterated his view that it made no sense to restructure the staff prior to the production of the Museum and Archives Strategy and asked for this to be recorded in

the notes of the meeting. Margaret Pratt and Dave Unwin also strongly expressed the same view. Discussion then moved on to a number of key issues identified by stakeholders and officers for consideration in the development of a draft strategy.

### **Summary of key issues**

- 1) There was a general consensus amongst stakeholders that the lack of a staff presence in the public display areas at Brent Museum had a negative impact on the visitor experience. It was stressed that visitors should have the option of speaking to a member of staff on arrival at the museum, particularly in the case of first time visitors. This arrangement has been in place at the Grange Museum but had been discontinued at the time of the relocation to Willesden Green Library Centre. Visitor reception arrangements will be reviewed as part of the preparations for the new Centre.
- 2) Concerns were expressed about the level of consultation undertaken at the time of the relocation from the Grange to Willesden Green, and that this led to “gaps” in what the Museum covered. A comprehensive consultation process will be undertaken as part of the production of the Museum and Archives Strategy. Specific consultation will also be undertaken on the design and layout of the new museum space.
- 3) The lack of a comprehensive Acquisitions Policy for Brent Museum and Archives is a concern and needs to be addressed in the strategy.
- 4) All stakeholders felt strongly that display objects should be rotated more frequently and on a regular basis. Local historians should be consulted and could work with officers on developing a methodology and display schedule.
- 5) Stakeholders and officers were in agreement that greater use should be made of the Museum and Archives collections. A more innovative approach is needed in order to provide residents and visitors with the opportunity to view the collections in more depth. For example, temporary displays could be hosted at libraries and other Brent Council buildings across the borough. Dilwyn Chambers stated his belief that the Council was committed to searching for museum sites in Wembley. He went on to say that he has contacted the Council to clarify the current position on this matter.
- 6) The indexing protocol for the Museum and Archives collections needs to be reviewed in order to maximise potential usage. This should be considered as part of the strategy action plan.
- 7) A large amount of outreach work is already undertaken but a review of the service currently provided would enable the Council to provide a more comprehensive outreach programme. Venues at which outreach events, including temporary exhibitions, can be delivered should form part of that review.

- 8) Stakeholders recommended that the council should adopt a more proactive approach to the sourcing and acquisition of objects from industries, businesses, schools and churches in the local area. This approach could be adopted in preparation for the planned British Empire Exhibition. Dilwyn Chambers mentioned that several requests which he had made for the return of some Goss and crested china BEE items which he had loaned to the Museum had not been dealt with. This and Brent's failure to insure its historic collections material might deter potential donors.
- 9) Digitisation of Museum and Archives material, including oral history material, and the resulting widening of access to the rest of the UK and abroad should be a priority for the service. A cross London digitisation project is under way.
- 10) Future exhibitions could include a greater emphasis on national issues in a local context. For example, Brent Archives has a good collection of First World War documents and newspapers relating to the role of aircraft and munitions factories as part of the national war effort.
- 11) Capacity to deliver the suggested improvements to the service could be achieved by strengthening collaborative working with schools, local historians and volunteers. One example of where things could be improved was given by Dilwyn Chambers, who said that in the past Brent had opposed suggestions by several organisations that conducted local history walks could be provided as part of its heritage programme. There was general consensus amongst the stakeholders that they would welcome a more interactive working relationship with council officers. Boreham Wood and Bexley were cited as examples of best practice with regard to officers working with volunteers.
- 12) Consideration should be given to renaming and rebranding Brent Museum and Archives. For example, renaming the facility as Brent Museum and Local History Centre might generate more interest amongst non users of the service.
- 13) All stakeholders were in agreement that the forthcoming anniversary of the British Empire Exhibition presents an excellent opportunity to showcase the diversity of the borough while raising the profile of the Museum and Archives service and strengthening social cohesion in local communities. Dilwyn Chambers noted that the idea of guided walks around the Exhibition site had previously been rejected by the Council.



# **Brent Council Museum and Archives Strategy – Preliminary Consultation**

## **Museum users, Partner Organisations and Schools**

**7 November 2013, 4:30-6:00pm**

**Present:** Kajal Meghani (Museum user) Lisa Ehlers (Elders Voice), Sue McKenzie, Neil Davies, Antonia Grant, Aine Ryan (all Brent Council officers)

### **Context**

Brent Council is developing a Museum and Archives Strategy which will set out a vision and set of objectives for the future delivery of the service. The scope of the strategy will include the collections policy, information technology, partnership working, learning activities, and event programming and dealing with customer enquiries.

Council officers are undertaking a number of preliminary consultation meetings with key internal and external stakeholders to inform the development of a draft strategy. Museum users, partner organisations and schools were invited to a stakeholder meeting held at Brent Civic Centre in Wembley on Thursday, 7 November. 12 individuals had confirmed attendance by 1 November; unfortunately only 2 were able to attend on the day. It was agreed that draft notes would be sent to the 10 interested individuals to widen the discussion and include their feedback.

Feedback received both on the day and in any resulting correspondence will inform the draft strategy which is due to go out to full public consultation in the early part of 2014. Sue McKenzie (Head of Libraries, Arts and Heritage) also provided a brief update on the redevelopment of the Willesden Green Centre and asked for views on priorities for future service provision and development.

### **Summary of key issues**

- 1) The stakeholders felt that Museums should be seen as “hip” places which can host performance events. It should be seen as dynamic service, not just a static building. It was suggested that one way of achieving this could be by adopting a more creative approach to linking with the Arts. The Moving Museum <http://www.themovingmuseum.com/index.php/about> concept was listed as an example that could be used as a link between the Museum and contemporary art. As a follow on to this topic it was suggested that there should be greater collaboration with the smaller museums and galleries
- 2) Stakeholders and officers were in agreement that greater use should be made of the Museum and Archives collections. A more innovative approach is needed in order to provide residents and visitors with the opportunity to view the collections in more depth. For example, temporary displays could be hosted at libraries and other Brent Council buildings to attract more people in the North of the borough. The Moving Museum was again cited as an example of how this works successfully.
- 3) A large amount of outreach work is already undertaken but a review of the service currently provided would enable the Council to provide a more comprehensive outreach programme particularly for secondary schools. One stakeholder felt from her own experience that the Service should try and engage more with secondary schools as she had an interest in museums and volunteering but was never aware of what was available locally.

- 4) Both stakeholders felt that word of mouth and social media were the most effective forms of promotion and that the IT on offer should be similar to the Civic Centre but accessible to all abilities.
- 5) One of the stakeholders felt that interpretation panels needed to be informative, written in accessible language but in no way patronising. They felt that it was important to provide the correct level of information.
- 6) It was suggested by one stakeholder that we could improved offer to academics and this could tie in with the London wide Archives project and include high profile events.

**The following points were also raised in the first stakeholder meeting with the Wembley History and the Willesden Local History Societies.**

- 7) Stakeholders recommended that the council should adopt a more proactive approach to the sourcing and acquisition of objects from industries, businesses, schools and community organisations in the local area. There is scope for the service to work with a variety of institutions in and around Brent to develop the collection and the overall customer offer.
- 8) Digitisation of Museum and Archives material, including oral history material, and the resulting widening of access to the rest of the UK and abroad should be a priority for the service. A cross London digitisation project is under way.
- 9) Future exhibitions could include a greater emphasis on national issues in a local context. One stakeholder felt that the Council needed to engage with representative local organisations as often communities won't approach the service themselves.
- 10) Capacity to deliver the suggested improvements to the service could be achieved by strengthening collaborative working with schools, local historians and volunteers. There was general consensus amongst the two stakeholders that they would welcome a more interactive working relationship with council officers. Boreham Wood and Bexley were cited as examples of best practice with regard to officers working with volunteers. Again it was felt that if the service was promoted more extensively to secondary schools and College for Further Education they may get more young volunteers. It was suggested that Volunteers could also be involved in the meeting and greeting of visitors to the Museum
- 11) Consideration should be given to renaming and rebranding Brent Museum and Archives. For example, renaming the facility a Local History Centre might generate more interest amongst non users of the service particularly younger people. It was also perceived that a combination of some or all of the proposals suggested would boost the external image and reputation of the service.

**Consultation with Pupils at  
Mount Stewart Junior School and  
St Mary's Catholic Primary School  
on  
the Brent Museum and Archives Strategy  
For London Borough of Brent- 11 December 2013**

**Undertaken by Sharon Cohen, Outcome Focussed Solutions  
Limited**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The children were excited about the development and thought it was a really good idea.

They had a large number of ideas with some core things being important.

- It should be free or low cost
- Exhibits should be interactive
- Information should be in 'bite-size' chunks
- There should be things to do and make
- They liked creative ways of finding out information, exploring, touching things, interactive games, films, touch screens, listening to information, feely boxes, staff in costume and role, 3D pictures, arts and crafts activities, competitions, simulators and rides

The most favoured ideas were:-

- There should be a leaflet telling you what to look for with a plan of the museum and stamper machines to collect stamps as you go round or a passport and stickers to collect
- The museum should have a timeline so that they clearly feel they are going back in time. They suggested that there should be an exhibition for every 100 years which changes colour (from bright for current getting darker as they go back in time), so they can see the differentiation. One group suggested the last room should be pitch black with the exhibits made from glow in the dark material

They wanted the same things covered in each period so they could contrast them and understand the changes, and felt this should include:-

- Transport
- Clothing (with the option of dressing up)
- Education
- Artefacts
- Houses and buildings (miniature models like Beaconsfield and Legoland) and rooms they can go into and see/touch and the things they had in them – for example cutlery, crockery, washing boards, mangles etc
- Living conditions
- Religion

They thought it **very important** that the time periods were not mixed up

## **BACKGROUND**

Brent Council is developing a Museum and Archives Strategy which will set out a vision and set of objectives for the future delivery of the service. There are plans to build a new museum and library at Willesden. The museum will show the story of Brent from 3000 years ago until today. This consultation was to find out the views of children on the museum and enable them to contribute their ideas to the planning.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Year 5 and 6 children from Mount Stewart Junior and St Mary's Catholic Primary Schools were seen in small groups of 6 children for about half an hour per group. These two schools were chosen because of an established relationship with the London Borough of Brent through the outreach programme. The children seen in both schools were reflective of the borough's diversity. In total 54 children contributed to the sessions, of which 20 were boys and 34 girls.

They were asked:-

- What the word museum meant to them
- If they had to describe a museum in one word, what it would be
- If they visited museums, and if so which ones they had been to
- What they like in museums
- How they prefer learning
- If they had a history project to complete where they would go to find their information
- If they visit museums with their family, school or both
- What they think makes museums boring and what makes them exciting

The development of the new museum was then explained to them and they were asked:-

- If they would be interested in finding out more about Brent, their home and their family
- If they would like the museum to be colourful and exciting or would prefer it to be relaxing and dark
- Their ideas for what should be in the new museum (subsequent groups were then told the earlier ideas to see if they were supported by other children)

## **INFORMATION COLLECTED FROM CHILDREN**

### **What the word museum meant to them**

The responses were:-

- A place with artefacts
- Old stuff
- Interesting information and pictures
- See how it was in the past so can compare to now
- Place of history
- Place to learn about different times/cultures/people
- Place with exhibitions
- How things used to be in the olden days
- How streets were set out and how houses used to look
- Interactive things
- Place to see sculptures
- Prehistoric times/dinosaurs
- Valuable possessions kept on display for people to see
- A place to learn and find out things
- Things you haven't seen before
- Objects from the past

- Things that look old but actually are not
- Places of learning about things from caves
- Neolithic, Bronze Age, Roman, Tudor, Viking, Saxon and Victorian things
- Help others who don't know about the past
- Information stored from the past/history
- Place where information from the past is kept (not necessarily recent past)
- Things that happen in the world
- Historical facts and information
- Place to keep old things for others to see and learn
- Artefacts from different nations – history and learning
- Place for kids to learn something
- Preserving what's left behind so we can learn how they did things
- Archaeological artefacts
- History of past times
- Dinosaurs
- Old things from old times
- Interesting artefacts
- Keep old stuff to teach you morals and history
- Ancient artefacts
- Statues from the past
- Place to find out information ready for my future career (this child wants to be a vet and goes to museums to look at animals and their biology)
- Somewhere to go when you're bored

**If they had to describe a museum in one word, what it would be**

The responses were (in alphabetical order):-

- Amazing
- Artefacts
- Big
- Boring\*
- Cool
- Creative
- Dramatic
- Educational
- Exciting
- Experiential
- Fantastic
- Fossils
- Fun
- Geography
- History/historic
- Holiday (things to do in)
- Informational
- Interesting
- Knowledge
- Learning
- Mummies
- New
- Old
- Quiet
- Science

\* One child out of 54 said boring; all the others disagreed. Exciting, fun, artefacts and educational were the most repeated words. The child who said museums were boring said she had to go with her parents and older siblings for their schoolwork.

## **If they visited museums, and if so which ones they had been to**

All but one child had visited a museum, and she said she really would like to. All the other children had been to museums with both their school and their parents, and they all said it was exciting and they enjoyed visiting museums, except the one child who didn't like museums.

Museums they had visited (in alphabetical order):-

- Art Museums
- Brent Museum
- British Museum
- British Transport Museum
- Computer Museum
- Culture Museum
- Damien Hurst
- Dinosaur Museum (they said this was just dinosaurs, not the National History)
- Duxford RAF Museum
- Geffrye Museum
- Leicester Jewellery Museum
- Le Louvre
- London Transport Museum
- Museum of London
- Music Museum
- Natural History Museum
- People in the past
- RAF Museum
- Roman Museum
- Science Museum
- Tate Modern
- Toy Museum
- Tudor Museum
- Verulamium
- Victoria and Albert Museum
- Victorian School Life Museum – Mile End (only open to school parties)

The most frequent responses were the Natural History, Science, London Transport, RAF and Dinosaurs museums. Some children had been to museums abroad.

## **What they like in museums**

Every child (except the one who found museums boring) said they particularly liked interactive displays, and they wanted to learn more than they already know, see things they have never seen before and see things they wouldn't find elsewhere.

Equally popular were collecting stamps (like in the London Transport Museum) or stickers for passports that showed they had been all round the museum, and the idea of a quiz/treasure hunt with small prizes for completing it.

They liked finding out facts, looking at artefacts and reading pieces of information. The majority of children thought it important that these were short and several described what they liked as 'bite-sized'.

They liked creative ways of finding out information, exploring, touching things, interactive games, films, touch screens, listening to information, feely boxes, staff in costume and role, 3D pictures, arts and crafts activities, competitions, simulators and rides.

Most thought a café was important which should be themed to match the museum.

## **If they had a history project to complete where they would go to find their information**

All the children said to a museum and a library, and several gave examples of museums their family had taken them to, to support school projects.

## **If they visit museums with their family, school or both**

With the exception of the one child who would never want to go, the children wanted to go with their family and their school. Many went with extended family to visit museums either with, or instead of, their parents.

## **What they think makes museums boring and what makes them exciting**

### **Boring**

- Just looking at glass cabinets and writing
- Just looking, need to **feel** what it was like
- Large pages of small print
- No activity
- No learning
- No pictures
- Not being able to touch anything
- Nothing to do – only look
- One thing only
- “Walking and walking and walking and walking with lots and lots and lots of reading only”
- When you can't touch

### **Interesting**

- 3D pictures
- Artefacts
- Books
- Buttons – press and give information or press and see something move
- Clothes you can try on
- Computers
- Costumed re-enactment
- Earphones
- Exhibits with small facts, not lots of boring pages
- Facts (kept short)
- Games related to the museum
- Glass floor
- Going inside things
- Having a go (like driving the buses and trains at the Transport Museum)
- Interactive
- Leaflets telling you what you can see/where to go
- Listening to someone speaking
- Making some of the things they have on display
- Models (particularly working ones and ones they can move)
- My dad likes the café!
- Old exhibits (bones/mummies/dinosaurs)
- Passports
- Pictures (in colour whenever possible)
- Pressing buttons, especially soft rubbery ones
- Quizzes and competitions
- Rides
- Role play
- Simulators

- Sculptures
- Stamps/stickers to collect
- Statues
- Step into a hologram
- Touchable items
- Tour guides
- Trying it out yourself
- Videos
- Viewing screens and films
- Writing with old pens and using old tools

**If they would be interested in finding out more about Brent, their home and their family**

With the exception of the one child who would never want to go, they were all very interested in this.

**If they would like the museum to be colourful and exciting or would prefer it to be relaxing and dark**

They wanted a variety of both, and a well-supported idea was that the present should be bright and colourful and it should get darker and more relaxing as they went back in time.

**Their ideas for what should be in the new museum** (subsequent groups were then told the earlier ideas to see if they were supported by other children)

The children were really excited about the development and had a wide range of creative ideas. The notion of 3000 years really excited them and they wanted to find out more about the whole of Brent's history.

Their ideas (similar ideas have been grouped):-

**Most supported ideas:**

- There should be a leaflet telling you what to look for with a plan of the museum and stamper machines to collect stamps as you go round or a passport and stickers to collect
- The museum should have a timeline so that they clearly feel they are going back in time. They suggested that there should be an exhibition for every 100 years which changes colour (from bright for current getting darker as they go back in time), so they can see the differentiation. One group suggested the last room should be pitch black with the exhibits made from glow in the dark material

They wanted the same things covered in each period so they could contrast them and understand the changes, and felt this should include:-

- Artefacts
- Clothing (with the option of dressing up)
- Education
- Houses and buildings (miniature models like Beaconsfield and Lego-land) and rooms they can go into and see/touch and the things they had in them – for example cutlery, crockery, washing boards, mangles etc
- Living conditions
- Religion
- Transport

They thought it **very important** that the time periods were not mixed up

- The River Brent was thought to be very important and they wanted to know about its use throughout history. The most ambitious suggestions centred



around creating a 'real' river through the museum that they could take boats along and a river ride like in larger museums/theme parks. Accepting that this was unlikely to be possible the children suggested that there should be a wooden 'boat' with seats that they could sit in and be surrounded on three sides by screens upon which could be projected the river so that they felt they were floating down the river, and that the pictures should go back in time showing how the river was used in different historical periods. Some groups suggested the floor could be mirrored so it felt like water reflecting back at them

- All the children thought it was really important to have information on immigration into Brent so they could get a feel of when their family might have come, and that older people in Brent should be filmed/recorded so they could hear it directly from them
- How Brent was affected by World Wars I and II, and how the people of Brent managed
- Older people in Brent recording their memories of Brent so that they are not lost
- A miniature Brent model. (One group suggested that they should have a model of the street that contains Mount Stewart School through the ages)
- A display under the floor covered in glass that they walked on, so they could see earlier times below them
- 'Bite-sized' written information – preferably creatively displayed. For example, a model house where you can pull out bricks and written on them will be short facts, or a shelf of mock books and as you pull out each book it has one fact on the cover
- A themed café, either with food from the different periods/ethnic groups in Brent or cakes in the shapes of artefacts in the museum. One group suggested it could be called 'Brentilicious', with things like Brent Salad, Kilburn Station Ice Cream etc. Another suggested a café with costumed staff, and the food made to be part of the learning. Another suggestion was cakes with facts iced onto them.
- Staff organising quizzes, dressed in costumes and acting in role Computers with multiple choice questions
- Exhibits with buttons to press to make things happen, or give you information
- A detailed 3D map of Brent
- An arts and crafts room where they can make things they've seen and where their creations can be displayed
- Headphones with spoken guide

### **Popular ideas:-**

- How Brent developed. Why it is called Brent. What did the Romans call it? What was Brent like when their grandparents were children? What were the first buildings in Brent? What are the famous landmarks? Where do the names come from – for example why is Kilburn called Kilburn?
- Jobs in Brent through the ages, preferably with the ability for them to 'have a go'
- What Brent was like in the BC era
- An archaeological 'dig' where they could have a go and 'discover' things
- Weapons and tools used through the ages in Brent
- A ride through the ages of Brent
- A simulator to experience the history of Brent
- Viewings of films about Brent's history
- A transport through the ages ride
- Model cars showing the different cars used in Brent, and older forms of transport – should be able to play with them
- When things are too old to be touched replicas should be made so you can see the original and touch the replica
- Step into a hologram exhibit
- An outside area with a ride, and a picnic area
- A lift with glass walls that goes up through the ages

- A large section in the library of books about Brent – or a library section within the museum
- Maze of facts – have to find the answer to one question to be able to discover the next clue
- Gift shop – but not with boring things (pencils, pens), but with things that other places don't have, at pocket money prices of up to £5 with most items £2-£3. Have love heart sweets but with facts about Brent on them.
- Competitions
- Treasure/scavenger hunt
- 4D films about Brent
- A machine that stretches pennies and prints pictures of Brent onto them

**Ideas from one or two groups of children** (if the children who suggested these ideas were in the groups that were interviewed later in the day the earlier children would not have had a chance to hear their ideas and comment on them)

- Not to have two really interesting things next to each other as this builds up queues
- The children should have lessons so they know the information, then they should record it for the spoken guides
- Did the great fire of London affect Brent? If so, how? Were there other tragedies that affected Brent?
- Frames that look empty but when you get close you can see faces in them
- Statues/wax models of the Mayors of Brent through the ages showing their clothes
- Poor and rich Brent
- Needs to be the right temperature – not too hot or too cold
- Tokens that you use to 'pay' to get into each room with limited numbers allowed at a time to stop over-crowding
- Space for school trips – for eating, lunch box storage, coats etc
- Models of wildlife in Brent through the ages
- China models of the birds of Brent
- Hall of fame – famous Brent people
- Coins used in Brent through the ages – be able to hold them
- Sculptures of famous landmarks in Brent
- Make sure it is affordable – too expensive and people won't come. An alternative idea was for it to be free so that poor people in Brent could afford it, but with a donation box
- Have a charity box for donations for disabled people in Brent
- Phones through the ages
- Writing with old pens and using old tools
- An outside lake and picnic area
- Really old activities in Brent – for example was there chariot racing? If so could they have a go or could there be a simulator
- Sounds and smells of Brent through the ages
- Football in Brent
- A special day for disabled people to visit so they know they are special too
- Big piece floor jigsaw puzzle picture of Brent for small children
- Sell books about Brent, including pop-up books
- Timeline game – put things into the right order
- Beliefs and religions in Brent through the ages, including the development of the Hindu temple

## **Notes from the Draft Brent Museum and Archive Strategy History Society Meeting 7 April 2014**

**Present:** Philip Grant, Chris Coates, Dilwyn Chambers, Margaret Pratt, Dave Unwin, Malcolm Barres-Baker, Robin Midwinter (Members of Wembley History or Willesden Local History Societies and or both)

Sue McKenzie, Neil Davies, Aine Ryan, Stephanie Alder (all Brent Council officers)

### **Consultation to date and the Gunning Principles**

Neil Davies explained that “the development of the draft strategy was informed by a preliminary programme of consultation and a self assessment which included:

- Internal stakeholders - Regeneration and Major Projects, Children and Families, ITU, BACES and Legal and Democratic Services
- Wembley History Society and Willesden Local History Society
- External stakeholder focus group
- Museum of London
- National Archives
- Mount Stewart Junior School and St Mary’s Catholic Primary School
- Archives Visitor survey
- Best practice visits to other London boroughs

At the request of Philip Grant Neil went through the fundamental principles of a ‘proper’ consultation.

In a landmark case in 1985 (R v London Borough of Brent ex parte Gunning) Mr Stephen Sedley QC propounded a set of fundamental consultation principles that were adopted by the presiding judge. These Gunning (or Sedley) principles were confirmed as applicable to all consultations by the Court of Appeal in 2001 (Coughlan case).

The *Gunning* principles are that:

- (i) consultation must take place when the proposal is still at a formative stage;
- (ii) sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response;
- (iii) adequate time must be given for consideration and response; and
- (iv) the product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account.

The Civil Service Reform Plan published in 2012 outlined that the departments will follow a range of timescales rather than defaulting to a 12-week period, particularly where extensive engagement has occurred before. Brent has followed the best practice of 12 weeks. Findings from the consultation will be incorporated into the final version of the strategy. A consultation log will be produced and published on the council’s website logging all comments and queries.

**Comment:** Philip Grant said, with several other local history society members agreeing, that some decisions had already been taken, such as Sue McKenzie’s restructuring of museum and archives staff, which undermined proper consultation because that side of the proposals was no longer at a formative stage. In addition, the *Gunning* principles require that sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposals, to allow for intelligent consideration and response. It was felt that because of the lack of detail in the Draft Strategy this was not the case in this consultation.

## **Draft Museum and Archive Strategy**

Sue Mckenzie set out the background and need for the strategy. "Brent Museum and Archives exist to collect, preserve, and provide access to the borough's history, providing enjoyment, learning and inspiration for all.

Heritage services face unprecedented challenges in today's economic climate. Maximising the accessibility of collections to demonstrate the value of museums and archives, challenging traditional ways of delivering services, and finding sustainable funding sources are unavoidable priorities.

However, these challenges also present opportunities to re-evaluate and re-model services for the better. This strategy sets out a framework and action plan for evolving the service to meet the needs of a wider audience.

We have an amazing opportunity with the building of new museum and archive spaces in the new WG centre; we want to make the most of an opportunity that is unprecedented in today's economic climate and create an excellent service."

### **How we have consulted to date**

Sue reiterated that "the development of the draft strategy was informed by a preliminary programme of consultation and a self assessment.

Sue then outlined the main findings from the consultation:

- A more proactive approach can be adopted for the acquisition and display of materials and objects from industries, businesses, schools and community organisations
- Digitisation of Museum and Archives material, including oral history material, and the resulting widening of access to the rest of the UK and abroad should be a priority for the service. A cross London digitisation project is under way
- Capacity to deliver service improvements can be achieved by strengthening collaborative working with schools, local historians and volunteers. For example, volunteers could undertake a floor walking role in the museum
- Consideration should be given to renaming Brent Museum and Archives. For example, renaming the facility Brent Museum and Local History Centre may generate more interest amongst non users of the service particularly younger people
- Workforce development is a priority for the Heritage sector as a whole in order for authorities to deliver seamless services to a diverse audience
- Young people like creative and interactive ways of finding out information e.g. touch screens, arts and craft activities and competitions

### **Consultation Plan**

Sue went on to say that "A full consultation plan is an appendix to the draft strategy and incorporates the following elements

- Questionnaire and supporting documents to be available on the Consultation portal and key stakeholders notified of the consultation process as part of a communication campaign which will include the use of social media
- Hard copies of the consultation documentation available on request and from all Brent Libraries and Sports Centres
- Focus group meetings with Wembley History and Willesden Local History Societies and stakeholders- by invitation only.
- Attendance at three Brent Connects Forums (formerly Area Consultative Forums)
- BME and Multi-Faith Diversity groups notified of the consultation process at their February/March meetings and sent the strategy and supporting documents for

distribution via their electronic mailing lists. Documents will also be sent to the Voluntary Sector mailing list.

- Attendance at a Brent Youth Parliament meeting
- Two informal drop-in sessions at Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre, Stonebridge and BAR, Walm Lane, Willesden”

## **Vision and Objectives**

Sue outlined the vision of the strategy:

**To offer everyone a gateway to the people and places of the borough’s past and the chance to learn about, enjoy and celebrate Brent’s unique identity and heritage.**

She went on to talk about the key objectives that were identified in order to achieve the vision:

### **Objectives**

1. Ensure that everyone has access to the diverse history of Brent by improving the management and development of the heritage collections.
2. Increase participation through wider community engagement and working with a broader range of partners.
3. Provide a financially and environmentally sustainable service which meets the needs of current and future users.

### **Key Recommendations**

Sue went on to outline the key recommendations to deliver the objectives:

- Open the new museum space and archives search room at The Library at Willesden Green
- Develop a joint collections policy to cover the acquisition, loan and disposal of museum and archives materials: an audit of the Archives collection; an action plan to complete the indexing and cataloguing of existing collections
- Develop a protocol for the indexing and cataloguing of new materials
- Devise a schedule of fixed term off site displays e.g. Brent Civic Centre and libraries.
- Produce a volunteer policy and recruit and train five volunteers to improve the customer offer and develop links with community groups
- Establish a Friends of Brent Museum and Archives group to help inform the future development of services and act in an advocacy role
- Explore options for alternative governance arrangements
- Develop a schedule of collaborative projects with other authorities
- Implement recommendations of the London Archives project

Sue then posed the following questions and opened up to the room for further questions:

## Questions:

1. We want to build the museum and archive collections so that they tell the story of all Brent's people, places and activities through the centuries, including modern day. Do you have any views on how we should do this?
2. Do you think we should change the name of the museum and archives service? What do you think we should call it?
3. What kind of subjects would you like to see covered in the exhibition space?

The following questions were posed by individual members of the History Societies:

### **Question: Was there something wrong with the way things were catalogued?**

**Answer:** We are still awaiting the findings of the audit and acknowledge that there have been issues with Adlib. This is not a criticism of past work.

### **Question: Some of the comments in Sue McKenzie's introduction on funding and the current economic situation could be deemed negative. It would be useful to have some further detail on the funding issue?**

**Answer:** We are trying to find a positive response to a negative situation. We don't know what our funding situation will be in 3-4 years time like all other council services therefore it is an appropriate time to investigate the alternatives. We are currently in the middle of a pan-London Archives project where Chief Librarians, Heads of Services are looking at a wider digitisation project with the aim of creating a London wide portal. It is cost effective to pool resources and expertise and this approach may also attract funders.

### **Question/ Statement: It is concerning that a review of a charging policy for the archives service is in the action plan. You don't have an acquisition's policy it is therefore a cheek to charge.**

**Answer:** A review of the charging policy is appropriate as it is not sustainable to continue not charging in particular professional researchers.

**Supplementary points on this question/statement:** One history society member said that this answer suggested that there was no charging policy in the past, whereas the reason why there is little **income**, rather than no **charging policy**, is that very few inquiries require large periods of research by staff. Ms McKenzie responded to these concerns by admitting that there was already a charging policy and that there would be little real change. Several of the local history society members present made the point that a review of the charging policy was therefore likely to really mean a reduction in levels of free service.

### **Question/Statement: The statement 'Produce an Acquisition and Disposal Policy' the word disposal is worrying. Another point is that books are becoming less used, libraries are dying out. Money could be used to improve other services including Museums and Archives.**

**Answer:** This is a standard part of the work of the museums and archives. There maybe occasions where need to dispose due to a finite amount of space. Artefacts are appraised based on their historical value. Donors would always be notified and artefacts can be offered to other museums and organisations.

**Question: Do you have an idea of the size of the floor space?**

**Answer:** Floor areas are the same as Willesden as per the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) condition.

**Question/Statement: The Archives Visitor Survey projection in Appendix 2 of the strategy document is deeply flawed and needs to be removed.** Local history society members were particularly concerned that the Survey had been used for the draft Strategy to **estimate** a figure of only 245 visitors per year to the Archives, when **actual** figures showing around 2,000 visitors were known to exist. The survey had a sample size of only 33 completed forms, which led one member to comment that he represented the 3% of Archives visitors from the NW9 postcode area, but if he had completed one of the forms on each of his visits during the survey period (instead of just a single form), then the results would have shown nearly 9% of Archives visitors from NW9.

**Answer:** We will check the report again and amend accordingly and resubmit on the Council's consultation portal. The amended document will be distributed at future consultation meetings and events.

**Question/ Statement: The Draft Strategy includes a number of case studies, some based on fact finding visits, some of these are not relevant e.g. Manchester. There were many good things already being done at Brent Museum and Archives which could and should be reflected in the Strategy, as case studies of existing "strengths" which Brent's Heritage Service can build on.**

**Answer:** The points have been noted and will be incorporated into the final version of the strategy. The case studies have been selected as we want to look outwards to showcase the potential.

**Question: Does it make sense to look at future governance at this stage?** One local history society member queried the order in which things were being done, suggesting that governance surely came first and strategy should then developed afterwards, rather than possible changes in governance being included in a strategy.

**Answer:** It is necessary to look at different governance arrangements e.g. trust, tri-borough at this stage due to the current economic situation. An options paper will be presented to Councillors who would ultimately make the decision about any future arrangements.

**Comment/Questions: Philip Grant said that comments submitted as part of the exercise with local history societies in autumn 2013 were supposed to help the Brent team develop the Draft Museum and Archives Strategy; it was very disappointing that this Draft Strategy did not reflect some of the clear pointers given in detailed comments which he had provided in November 2013. Why was this comments document not included as part of the Preliminary Consultation notes at Appendix 2 of the Draft Strategy documents?**

**It had already been commented that the Draft Strategy gives no indication of what it proposes that the future Archives service will be, even though the January 2014 preliminary version of the Draft Strategy contained a note saying: 'SM to add a paragraph on Archives provision in the new building'. It also included a sentence about a comprehensive enquiry service- why was this deleted?**

**Dealing with customer enquiries is a very important area, particularly for the**

**Archives / Local History Centre, which is meant to be the first port of call for anyone interested in the local history of any part of Brent. A good public service here will be an essential part of the “offer” at the new Centre in Willesden Green, which will raise the profile of Brent’s Heritage when it opens in Spring 2015.**

**There were a number of further specific comments under this section of his November 2013 document about opening hours and the number, knowledge and personal skills of staff available to deal with customer enquiries, and the need to provide at least some general public service before the new facilities at Willesden Green open in 2015, which should have been reflected in the Draft Strategy going out for consultation and should certainly be part of the Final Strategy.**

**Answer:** We continue to be committed to an excellent public service and we must also recognise the need to improve it by increasing access through better catalogues, indexes and online resources. The comments document supplied in November 2013 will be posted on the council’s consultation portal and more detail on the archives service will be incorporated into a final version of the strategy.

**Question: Please provide a copy of the Survive and Thrive report:**

**Answer:** A copy will be sent as requested.

**Note:** At the end of the meeting Sue Mckenzie said that a number of personal comments about her had been made during the meeting. She reiterated her commitment to providing the best museum and archives service possible for Brent. She also pointed out to those present that personal attacks were unprofessional and inappropriate.



# Draft Museum and Archive Strategy Consultation Stakeholder meeting Notes- 15 April 2015

**Attendees:** Rhoda Ibrahim (RI) – Somali Advice and Forum For Information.  
Nekane Cherrie (NC) – Brent Resident, Geoffrey Hewlett (GH)- Local Historian and  
Tina Morton (TM)-National Archives  
Stephanie Alder, Neil Davies (ND) and Sue McKenzie(SM) (All Brent Council Officers)

## Consultation to date

Neil Davies explained that “the development of the draft strategy was informed by a preliminary programme of consultation and a self assessment which included:

- Internal stakeholders - Regeneration and Major Projects, Children and Families, ITU, BACES and Legal and Democratic Services
- Wembley History Society and Willesden Local History Society
- External stakeholder focus group
- Museum of London
- National Archives
- Mount Stewart Junior School and St Mary’s Catholic Primary School
- Archives Visitor survey
- Best practice visits to other London boroughs

## Draft Museum and Archive Strategy

Sue Mckenzie set out the background and need for the strategy. “Brent Museum and Archives exist to collect, preserve, and provide access to the borough’s history, providing enjoyment, learning and inspiration for all.

Heritage services face unprecedented challenges in today’s economic climate. Maximising the accessibility of collections to demonstrate the value of museums and archives, challenging traditional ways of delivering services, and finding sustainable funding sources are unavoidable priorities.

However, these challenges also present opportunities to re-evaluate and re-model services for the better. This strategy sets out a framework and action plan for evolving the service to meet the needs of a wider audience.

We have an amazing opportunity with the building of new museum and archive spaces in the new WG centre; we want to make the most of an opportunity that is unprecedented in today’s economic climate and create an excellent service.”

## How we have consulted to date

Sue reiterated that “the development of the draft strategy was informed by a preliminary programme of consultation and a self assessment.

Sue then outlined the main findings from the consultation:

- A more proactive approach can be adopted for the acquisition and display of materials and objects from industries, businesses, schools and community organisations
- Digitisation of Museum and Archives material, including oral history material, and the resulting widening of access to the rest of the UK and abroad should be a priority for the service. A cross London digitisation project is under way

- Capacity to deliver service improvements can be achieved by strengthening collaborative working with schools, local historians and volunteers. For example, volunteers could undertake a floor walking role in the museum
- Consideration should be given to renaming Brent Museum and Archives. For example, renaming the facility Brent Museum and Local History Centre may generate more interest amongst non users of the service particularly younger people
- Workforce development is a priority for the Heritage sector as a whole in order for authorities to deliver seamless services to a diverse audience
- Young people like creative and interactive ways of finding out information e.g. touch screens, arts and craft activities and competitions

## Consultation Plan

Sue went on to say that “A full consultation plan is an appendix to the draft strategy and incorporates the following elements

- Questionnaire and supporting documents to be available on the Consultation portal and key stakeholders notified of the consultation process as part of a communication campaign which will include the use of social media
- Hard copies of the consultation documentation available on request and from all Brent Libraries and Sports Centres
- Focus group meetings with Wembley History and Willesden Local History Societies and stakeholders- by invitation only.
- Attendance at three Brent Connects Forums (formerly Area Consultative Forums)
- BME and Multi-Faith Diversity groups notified of the consultation process at their February/March meetings and sent the strategy and supporting documents for distribution via their electronic mailing lists. Documents will also be sent to the Voluntary Sector mailing list.
- Attendance at a Brent Youth Parliament meeting
- Two informal drop-in sessions at Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre, Stonebridge and BAR, Walm Lane, Willesden”

## Vision and Objectives

Sue outlined the vision of the strategy:

**To offer everyone a gateway to the people and places of the borough’s past and the chance to learn about, enjoy and celebrate Brent’s unique identity and heritage.**

She went on to talk about the key objectives that were identified in order to achieve the vision:

### Objectives

4. Ensure that everyone has access to the diverse history of Brent by improving the management and development of the heritage collections.
5. Increase participation through wider community engagement and working with a broader range of partners.
6. Provide a financially and environmentally sustainable service which meets the needs of current and future users.

## Key Recommendations

Sue went on to outline the key recommendations to deliver the objectives:

- Open the new museum space and archives search room at The Library at Willesden Green
- Develop a joint collections policy to cover the acquisition, loan and disposal of museum and archives materials: an audit of the Archives collection; an action plan to complete the indexing and cataloguing of existing collections
- Develop a protocol for the indexing and cataloguing of new materials
- Devise a schedule of fixed term off site displays e.g. Brent Civic Centre and libraries.
- Produce a volunteer policy and recruit and train five volunteers to improve the customer offer and develop links with community groups
- Establish a Friends of Brent Museum and Archives group to help inform the future development of services and act in an advocacy role
- Explore options for alternative governance arrangements
- Develop a schedule of collaborative projects with other authorities
- Implement recommendations of the London Archives project

## Questions/Comments and Answers

**NC Comment/Observations:** People are interested in sports e.g. how Wembley Stadium was built. You should interact with other venues- RAF Museum in Barnet and Wembley Stadium. Community would love to see/learn about buildings. Volunteer Lady is a tour guide and she knows that people would be interested. She thinks that the community should be engaged. Wembley Stadium didn't know about the BEE exhibition.

**SM Answer:** Yes, it definitely should be about interacting.

**GH Comments/ Question:** Books on local history still sell very well- it is a sign that people are still interested. He has a series of interviews (oral histories 1972-1987) about life in Edwardian Kingsbury e.g. Queen Victoria's funeral. In terms of information there is a lot that can be done- there is a lot of information out there such as the elephant being walked down the road. Gives slide show presentations to schools such as the Welsh Harp and was interested to know what schools we were working with. Exciting as a volunteer- the recovery of the Brondesbury Road Book 1789- found all the paperwork in Washington DC- hopes it is still in the museum. Architect Humphrey Repton for Fryent Country Park. Would be prepared to loan out the book for anyone who is interested. Will we make genealogy websites available?

**SM Answer:** We already do- Ancestry online is available in every library.

**GH Comment:** I have 25,000 slides of the local area- made a list, wants them to be used- if there is anything he can do to help he will. I am currently working on a book about landscaping and parks- he's looking at issues in Harrow as well as Brent. Will help to sell for profit. I have been looking at Queens Park and at how green spaces have come about. Walking with the Civic Trust (Open House) advocates Historic Walks.

There is a lot out there that people don't know but would like.

**TM Comment:** There are lots of example templates we can use such as that at Tower Hamlets. Look for themes- always a good place to start to engage communities' interest. Exhibitions can highlight particular collections specifically. Wouldn't change the name. Talk to people who have interacted with the service in the past- they will remember good things to use. Collections audit will highlight. The strategy is outward looking. You don't want the BMA to be isolated. After the action plan is time to be specific. The context of the action plan makes sense. Action plan is ambitious for such a new team. As part of my work at the National Archives, I am preparing a guidance paper on governance.

**GH Comment/Question:** Did anyone see the BBC programme about the Wembley tower that was on earlier in the year? I have a wide range of information about the Buxton landscape:

**SM Answer:** We can add this very useful information to our guide.

**Question by Neil Davies: Do you think we should change the name of the service?**

**Answers: GH-** Thinks a quirky name wouldn't make sense in 10 years.

**SM-** It is not what it is called really, it is what you do with it.

**RI-** Concept is always difficult to understand. Libraries, yes but nobody in my Somalian community really knows about Museums and Archives. It is more about letting people know about what we do. It is more about advertisement and about learning history.

**NC-** Don't get rid of the word museum.

**Question by Neil Davies- How about Museum and History Centre?**

**NC-** We may never agree.

**GH-** We have to put the time and effort in for the public, which is what is important.

**SM-** Yes, We need to build up the service.

**TM Comment-** Widening access. You need to build up the resources- balance between digitisation and cataloguing- opens up collections more than you think.

**SM Answer-** This is why we are joining forces with Aim25 and the other London Boroughs to give a much wider appeal.

**GH Question: Will we still need to book appointments to see material?**

**SM Answer:** We are still working on this and need to strike a balance between access and what can be made available on the day with no appointments.

**Neil mentioned key documents such as Archives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The best services, the most forward looking are very much linked to the communities. He went on to ask what people thought about how ambitious we should be. A lot of people never forgave the move from the Grange Museum and how there were no welcoming members of staff. It is difficult for new staff to do this in the current economic situation- we could use volunteers.**

**NC Answer:** Human interaction is vital. People expect a little bit more- they want and need this type of interaction. I don't know how this work on a practical level. Perhaps it could be offered at the weekend rather than the weekdays.

**SM Answer:** I have been to the National Trust where there was a volunteer in each room.

**TM Answer:** Look carefully at what you offer volunteers- they need training and

managing. There are models out there to follow. Some people volunteer just to be an ambassador.

**GH Answer:** RAF Museum is mainly staffed by volunteers. Perhaps, you should contact them.

**NC Comment:** Another way to make it sustainable is to have a gift shop. Local people bring families who have travelled from abroad. Would like mementos example could be Wembley Stadium.

**SM-** We are looking at selling books online.

**NC-** Using museums as multi-use facilities for hiring.

**TM-** Suggests Museum later- could offer something more bespoke.

**ND comment-** It would be good to establish link with the Higher Education sector:

**TM-** I will send some documents. Brent have some collections that be of great interest to student and those in Higher Education.

**ND-** One of our local Councillors mentioned that there is not much on 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> generation Brent.

**TM-** We should build up collections with all the different communities if at all possible.

# Draft Museum and Archive Strategy Consultation Survey Findings Report

## Introduction

Public consultation on Brent Council's draft Museum and Archives Strategy took place between 31 March to 20th June 2014. The consultation offers users the chance to help shape future service provision.

The draft strategy unites museum and archives provision in Brent under a single vision, set of objectives and action plan. It is considered that the success of the strategy depends on the support from those with an interest in Brent Museum and Archives Service.

Thirty-four (34) people or representatives of organisations responded to the consultation.

Note that sample sizes were small over much of the survey. In the results below, percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

A summary and analysis of the responses is provided here. Where the 'Response rate' is indicated, this is the percentage of total respondents who answered the question.

Respondents were provided with opportunities to provide further comments. A subjective analysis is included in this report. Be aware that as respondents may have commented on more than one issue, that the number of comments may exceed the number of respondents. Note also that some of the comments covered a number of aspects, for example commenting within a single comments on both the wording of the draft Strategy and on one or more substantive issues. Interpreting the focus and priority of the comments is subjective.

## SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESULTS

### Results

The large majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with:

- **Section A: Vision and Objectives:** The overarching vision of this strategy is 'To offer everyone a gateway to the people and places of the borough's past and the chance to learn about, enjoy and celebrate Brent's unique identity and heritage'.
- **Objective 1: Ensure that everyone has access to the diverse history of Brent by improving the management and development of the heritage collections.**
- **Objective 2: Increase participation through wider community engagement and working with a broader range of partners.**
- **Objective 3: Provide a financially and environmentally sustainable service which meets the needs of current and future users.**
- **To what extent do you agree that the action plan in Appendix 3 has covered the key issues?**

- **Does the strategy cover all the key aspects of museum and archives provision?**

**Comments:** Comments were received from all 34 respondents and these are summarised in the main section of this report.

**Have you visited Brent Museum and Brent Archives service in the last two years?**

Most respondents had used Brent Museum services during the past year, though a large minority had not. A third (35%) of respondents had visited Brent Archive Services during the past two years. The large majority of respondents used the Museum services either several times a year or less than once a year. For the Archives, half of respondents used the service less than once a year. However, approximately a fifth of respondents were either weekly, or more frequent visitors to either the Museum or the Archives. Just over a third of respondents had visited the Brent Archives website in the last two years.

**Would you be interested in being a Brent Museum / Archives volunteer or 'Friend'?**

Over a third of respondents would be interested in volunteering. Over half of respondents would be interested in being a Friend of Brent Museum and Archives.

**Organisations:** 18% of respondents indicated that they were responding on behalf of an organisation.

**Analysis of the postcodes indicates\*** that of the respondents, a third (33%) were resident in Willesden, and half (53%) were resident in the south of Brent. That compared with 40% who were resident in the north of the Borough. One respondent (7%) was resident outside of Brent – in Harrow.

\*Assumes that those residing in NW2 and NW9 postal districts are within the Brent Borough boundaries.

**What is your sex?** Approximately half of respondents were female (53%) and half were male (47%).

**What is your age group?** Respondents were predominately in the older age ranges. Over forty per cent (41%) were aged 55-64 and over half (59%) were in the 55-74 age range. Ninety-six (97%) of respondents were aged 35 or over. No respondents were aged 24 or under.

**Please state your ethnicity?** Approximately three-quarters of respondents (75%) were of the White British or broad White groups (71%). Over a fifth (22%) of respondents were of the broad Asian group. The respondents differ markedly from the population of the Borough.

**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?** Six per cent (6%) of respondents indicated that they have a disability, while the large majority (94%) did not consider that they had a disability.

**What is your religion / belief?** Approximately half (48%) of respondents were Christian, slightly higher than their representation in the Brent population. Sample sizes were small, though on the basis of the responses received, nearly a third (30%) were of no religious belief, which was higher than for the Brent population; while Hindu and Muslim respondents were under-represented compared with the Brent population.

**What is your sexual orientation?** A high proportion of respondents either did not answer or preferred not to say. All (100%) of the other respondents indicated that they were Heterosexual/straight.

## DETAIL

### Questions 1; and 2 (comments)

#### Section A: Vision and Objectives

The overarching vision of this strategy is 'To offer everyone a gateway to the people and places of the borough's past and the chance to learn about, enjoy and celebrate Brent's unique identity and heritage'.

To what extent do you agree with the vision?

Response rate: 100%

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Strongly agree	65%
Agree	21%
Neither agree nor disagree	6%
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

The large majority of respondents strongly agreed with the vision.

Ten respondents provided further comments.

Eight of the comments concerned the wording and layout of the Strategy; one that there should be no political bias; one that the Strategy should be considered in relation to the Libraries; one that the service should be entirely free at the point of use; one that physical access to the archives should be maintained if part of the service was put online; and two comments concerned the priority that Brent was giving to heritage, museums and archives.

### Questions 3; and 4 (comments)

#### Section B: Objectives

Objective 1: Ensure that everyone has access to the diverse history of Brent by improving the management and development of the heritage collections.

To what extent do you agree with Objective 1?

Response rate: 100%

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Strongly agree	65%
Agree	18%
Neither agree nor disagree	9%
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

The large majority of respondents strongly agreed with the objectives.

Eight respondents provided further comments including, four comments on the collections policy; three comments related to physical and other access to the collections; two to cataloguing; two to staff knowledge and training; one to access to Council Planning documents; one to lack of information regarding the design of the new Centre; one to charging policy; and one to the wording of the consultation / draft



Strategy.

**Questions 5: and 6 (comments)**

Objective 2: Increase participation through wider community engagement and working with a broader range of partners.

To what extent do you agree with Objective 2?

Response rate: 100%

<b>Answer</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>
Strongly agree	53%
Agree	32%
Neither agree nor disagree	6%
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Over half of respondents strongly agreed with 'Objective 2' and in total the large majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed.

Eleven respondents provided further comments.

Three comments related to the wording of the consultation and draft Strategy; two comments concerned outreach practice and access; one comment suggested that local schools should be invited to workshops where they could handle exhibits; one comment that the Strategy should be politically neutral; one commented on concern about the possible risks of private sector contracts for managing museum and archive services; one comment concerned staff policy; and one on the need to provide education on local history to sectors of the Brent community.

**Questions 7; and 8 (comments)**

Objective 3: Provide a financially and environmentally sustainable service which meets the needs of current and future users.

To what extent do you agree with Objective 3?

Response rate: 100%

<b>Answer</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>
Strongly agree	50%
Agree	35%
Neither agree nor disagree	3%
Disagree	3%
Strongly disagree	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Half of respondents strongly agreed with Objective 3 and the large majority either agreed or strongly agreed.

Thirteen respondents provided further comments that included two comments concerned the wording of the draft Strategy and one that the Objective was not clear; one comment concerned the Council's priority for heritage, museum and archives; three concerned finance (that the Strategy promoted financial sustainability, that it did not promote financial sustainability; and that finance should not be the main factor for the Strategy); one welcomed the possibility of a professional research service; one comment concerned the role of volunteers; and one comment that historical information

should be provided to elected Members.

### Questions 9; and 10 (comments)

To what extent do you agree that the action plan in Appendix 3 has covered the key issues?

Response rate: 100%

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Strongly agree	21%
Agree	47%
Neither agree nor disagree	21%
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

While the majority either agreed or strongly agreed, this question had the lowest positive response of the questions within the Questionnaire.

Comments generated from questions 10, 11 and 12 are considered at question 12.

### Questions 11 and 11a (comments)

Does the strategy cover all the key aspects of museum and archives provision?

Response rate: 88%

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Yes	73%
No	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

The large majority of respondents agreed that the strategy covered all key aspects of museum and archive provision.

Comments generated from questions 10, 11 and 12 are considered at question 12.

### Question 12

Do you have any other comments on the draft strategy? If yes, please comments below.

Response rate: 32%.

In total 34 people provided comments on the Action Plan (question 10), general comments (question 11) or any other comments (question 12). Some of the main issues are summarised below. For further information please on the detailed comments and responses please log onto [http://brent-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/ens/libraries\\_arts\\_and\\_heritage/draftmuseumarchive\\_strategy](http://brent-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/ens/libraries_arts_and_heritage/draftmuseumarchive_strategy)

Twenty (20) comments were concerned about aspects of the wording of the draft Strategy; ten (10) comments concerned staffing policy; five on physical access to the museum and library including suggestions for part of the materials to be available elsewhere in the Borough; five on various aspects of the implementation of the

Strategy; four on governance issues; four comments concerned charging policy; four the role of volunteers; four on the relationship of the service to sectors of the community; three on the needs for on-going user consultation; three on the proposed naming of the Willesden Library e-address and the name of the Museum; one on the role of research; one comment concerned the historical periods that would be covered; while one commented that illustrating similarities between Brent and other areas was as important as highlighting the differences.

### Question 13a

Have you visited Brent Museum in the last two years?

Response rate: 100%

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Yes	59%
No	41%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Most respondents to the questionnaire had used Brent Museum services during the past year, though a large minority had not.

Have you visited Brent Archives service in the last two years?

Response rate: 91%

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Yes	35%
No	65%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

However, only a third (35%) of respondents had visited Brent Archive Services during the past two years and the majority had not used the service.

### Question 13b

On average, how frequently have you visited during the past two years?

	Museum	Archives
Response rate	62%	41%
More than once a week	5%	14%
Weekly	14%	7%
Monthly	0%	7%
Several times a year	38%	29%
Less than once a year	43%	43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

The large majority of respondents used the Museum or Archive services either several times a year or less than once a year. For the Archives, half of respondents used the service less than once a year. However, approximately a fifth of respondents were either weekly, or more frequent visitors to either the Museum or the Archives.

### Question 14

Have you visited the Brent Archives website in the last two years?

Response rate: 97 %

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Yes	42%
No	58%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Just over a third of respondents had visited the Brent Archives website in the last two years, while the majority two-thirds had not.

#### Question 15a

Would you be interested in being a Brent Museum / Archives volunteer ?

Response rate: 88%

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Yes	37%
No	63%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Over a third of respondents would be interested in volunteering.

#### Question 15b

Would you be interested in being a Friend of Brent Museum and Archives?

Response rate: 91%

Answer	Percentage of respondents
Yes	58%
No	42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Over half of respondents would be interested in being a Friend of Brent Museum and Archives.

#### Question 16

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation please provide the following contact details:

For question 16, the percentage figures are presented as a total of all 34 respondents for each sub-question.

Response rate: 18%

	Percentage of respondents
Name	18%
Organisation	18%
Postcode	?
Email	18%
Telephone number	9%

If you are responding as an individual please provide the following details:

Response rate: 62%

	Percentage of respondents
Name	62%
Address	59%
Postcode	59%
Email	50%
Telephone number	38%

Analysis of the postcodes indicates\* that of the respondents, a third (33%) were resident in Willesden, and half (53%) were resident in the south of Brent. That compared with 40% who were resident in the north of the Borough. One respondent (7%) was resident outside of Brent – in Harrow.

\*Assumes that those residing in NW2 and NW9 postal districts are within the Brent Borough boundaries.

### Question 17

What is your sex?

Response rate: 94%

Approximately half of respondents were female (53%) and half were male (47%). Most questionnaire surveys of cultural services undertaken by Brent Council during recent years, have typically elicited a higher return rate from female as compared with male users.

### Question 18

What is your age group?

Response rate: 100%

Age group	Percentage
Under 16	0%
16-24	0%
25-34	3%
35-44	15%
45-54	15%
55-64	41%
65-74	18%
75+	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Respondents to the Draft Museum and Archives Strategy consultation were predominately in the older age ranges. Over forty per cent (41%) were aged 55-64 and over half (59%) were in the 55-74 age range. Ninety-six (97%) of respondents were aged 35 or over. No respondents were aged 24 or under.

### Question 19

Please state your ethnicity?

Response rate: 97%

Ethnic group	Percentage of respondents	Percentage of the Brent population at the 2011
--------------	---------------------------	--

		<b>Census</b>
White: British	66%	18 %
White: Irish	3%	4 %
White: other	6%	14 %
Black: African		8 %
Black: Caribbean		8 %
Black: other		3 %
Asian: Bangladeshi	9%	< 1%
Asian: Pakistani	3%	5 %
Asian: Indian	9%	19 %
Asian: Chinese		1 %
Asian: Other		9 %
Mixed White / Black Caribbean		1 %
Mixed White / Black African		1 %
Mixed White / Asian		1 %
Mixed: other		2 %
Other	3%	6 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Comparisons for the broad ethnic groups are presented in the table below:

<b>Ethnic group</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of the Brent population at the 2011 Census</b>
White	75%	36 %
Black		19 %
Asian	22%	34 %
Mixed	3	5 %
Other	4%	6 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Approximately three-quarters of respondents (75%) were of the White British or broad White groups (71%). Over a fifth (22%) of respondents were of the broad Asian group, including 9% Asian Bangladeshi. For the broad groups the figures are similar to that for the Brent Archives Visitor Survey undertaken during February-April 2013, albeit the small sample sizes, particularly for the individual ethnic groups, means that detailed analysis is not valid. For example, the Brent Archives Visitor Survey recorded some use amongst the Black group, and none of the Asian Bangladeshi groups.

Nevertheless, the responses to the current consultation were predominately from the White group, and differ markedly from the population of the Borough.

#### **Question 20a**

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Response Rate: 94%

Six per cent (6%) of respondents indicated that they have a disability, while the large majority (94%) did not consider that they had a disability.

#### **Question 20b**

In order to help us improve our services and meet your needs please indicate which impairment reflects your disability?

Response rate: 9%.

This question elucidated more responses than that for disability itself (question 20a); and some respondents had more than one impairment. The responses were: Hearing (3%), Long-term illness (3%), Mental Health (3%), Physical impairment (3%), and Prefer not to say (3%).

### Question 21

What is your religion / belief?

Response rate: 79%.

Religion	Percentage of respondents who stated a religion	Percentage of the Brent population at the 2011 Census
Christian	48%	44 %
Buddhist		1 %
Hindu	11%	19 %
Jewish	4%	2 %
Muslim	7%	20 %
Sikh		1 %
Other		1%
No religious belief	30%	11 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Approximately half (48%) of respondents were Christian, slightly higher than their representation in the Brent population. Sample sizes were small, though on the basis of the responses received, nearly a third (30%) were of no religious belief, which was higher than for the Brent population; while Hindu and Muslim respondents were under-represented compared with the Brent population.

### Question 22

What is your sexual orientation?

Response rate: 52%.

A high proportion of respondents either did not answer or preferred not to say. All (100%) of the other respondents indicated that they were Heterosexual/straight.



Brent Museum and Archives Strategy

Consultation:

Group Interviews/Focus Groups

Report by Barry Creasy





# **Brent Museum and Archives Strategy Consultation**

## **Group Interviews/Focus Groups**

**Report by Barry Creasy**

### **Background and Introduction**

Brent Museum and Archives exist to collect, preserve and provide free access to the borough's past, offering enjoyment, learning and inspiration for all. In the context of this, in 2014, the London Borough of Brent drafted a strategy for improving its museums and archives service that had the following vision:

“Brent's museum and archives are here for everyone; a window into the history of Brent, its people and places. We will use these unique resources to create opportunities, improve lives and create stronger communities.”

It is proposed that the vision would be realised through three objectives:

- Ensure that everyone has access to the diverse history of Brent by caring for the collections, telling their stories and making them available to all
- Increase the scope and use of the collections through wider community engagement and working with a broader range of partners
- Provide a financially and environmentally sustainable service which meets the needs of current and future users.

In 2014 Brent carried out a questionnaire-based consultation on the draft strategy with the general population. In addition to this, and in order to glean more detailed information (particularly from identified target groups of residents), in September 2014, the Libraries, Arts and Heritage service of Brent Council commissioned a series of focus groups/group interviews to glean data on what residents understood about museums and archives, and how they felt about them, with a view to informing what is to be delivered in the new building. The three areas for exploration in these groups were:

- 1) What will make their communities engage with the museum and archives?
- 2) What kind of subjects would they like to see covered in our exhibition programmes?
- 3) How we can make our collections more relevant and how we can gain the trust of communities so that they will donate material to the collections?

Four groups were set up with different target sample sectors of the population as follows:

Group	Demographic	Number in group
I	Retired Irish members of the Brent community living in a sheltered housing project (Innisfree)	14
S	Somali members of the Brent community	8
C	A sub-set of Brent's citizen's panel, containing a mix of demographics (but with a heavy bias to white European)	9
G	Indian (primarily Gujarati) members of the Brent community	17

Each of the sessions lasted around two hours, and consisted of a series of focused questions (based around the three areas outlined above), to which the groups were asked to provide answers; responses occurred either on an individual basis, or as a group consensus arising from discussion. The groups were chaired by an independent facilitator, who recorded, transcribed, coded and analysed the outcomes.

The questions asked were around people's experiences of museums and archives, in particular those in Brent; they were asked to consider what archives and museums in Brent might contain, and what services (in particular outreach services) they would like to see from such organisations. They were additionally asked whether they might consider donating materials to a museum or an archive. A copy of the detailed question schedule is attached at Annex A, and a copy of the list of proposed areas of work is attached at Annex B.

## Findings

### Caveat

Two of the groups (S and G) had limited facility with English, and, in both cases, the session was mediated through a translator. It was not, therefore, possible for the facilitator to capture the discussion, and it was necessary to rely on the translator's summary.

It should be noted that, as these were focus groups/group interviews, the data that they supplied cannot be seen as statistically representative of any of the population or sub-populations of Brent; it is simply indicative of the views of that particular group.

### How would you describe a museum and archives?

All of the groups identified that a museum was somewhere that objects and artefacts of the past/historical objects were kept; two people indicated that current items might be kept there. Three groups (I, C, G) also indicated that a museum was a way of seeing how life was lived in the past.

"It's a place where they have all valuable antiques and things of the past" [I]

"It gives an idea of what was used in the ancient period – the olden days; before us" [G]

"A museum is where you keep history" [S]

Group C, in particular, also saw a museum as an active space, where learning took place:

“A living space – up-to-date and constantly changing” [C]

“A place of learning” [C]

“A space of discovery” [C]

Groups I and C indicated that archives were where documentary evidence was kept; in general, groups S and G saw the difference between an archive and a museum as one of age in terms of objects kept (seeing an archive as for more ancient materials). It is possible that this difference in perception is down to language, and the very specific meaning of the word ‘archive’ in English. One person in group G, however, indicated that an archive would be somewhere you would go to research family history.

“Written literature” [I]

“Microfiche” [I]

“Records – sources” [C]

“Photographs” [C]

Where they keep old things – things from long time ago [S]

Something prevalent during our great-grandfather’s time and older [G]

A couple of members of group C also saw an archive as where things not of immediate relevance, or things that were more difficult to find were kept.

### **Do you currently visit museums or archives?**

Groups C and I were the most regular museums/archive visitors. Group I had a regular programme of visits that included sporting stadiums, the seaside, and museums, and they usually went as a group; this programme involved a museum visit about every 6 months. Some members of the group also visited museums individually, or as couples. Museum visits in group C varied; all indicated that they had been to a museum at least once in the last year, some much more frequently. Four people mentioned undertaking archive research at Kew/the National Maritime Museum/the Imperial War Museum/the Army Museum/the London Metropolitan Archives.

Of group G, eight people indicated having visited a museum once in the last year, and one person indicated having visited a museum around 15 years ago; the others had never visited. In group S, four people indicated they had been to a museum at some point (although not necessarily in the last year) – these included the Natural History Museum, the V&A, the British Museum and a museum in East London.

### **Which cultural organisations in Brent do you visit?**

#### **Brent Museum**

A few of group I knew about this and had visited; one mentioned the cinema there, and another mentioned an exhibition of life in the 1950s. Two from group S had been in the long past. Around half of group C had been, and two from group G had been (one 40 years previously).

#### **Tricycle Theatre**

No-one in group G had been to the Tricycle; a few knew where it was, but the majority not. One member of group S had been. All of group C knew of the theatre, and the majority had been there. All of group I knew about the theatre, and around half indicated they'd seen a performance there.

### **Encee Academy**

Only one person (group C) in the entire exercise knew of the Encee Academy.

### **Lexi cinema**

Around half of group I knew of the Lexi, and a couple had been; two in group S knew where it was, most of group C had heard of it, but only a couple of people had been; no-one in group G had been, although a couple had heard of it.

### **East Lane Theatre**

No-one in any of the groups had heard of the East Lane theatre.

### **Brent Temples/synagogues etc**

Group I, as part of their regular programme of visits, had visited the synagogue in Sudbury, and planned to visit some other temples/religious buildings in the borough; several indicated they wished to visit the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir temple in Neasden. A couple of people in group S knew of religious buildings of various faiths, but no-one had been to them. One member of group C was not interested in religious buildings; others had visited the temple in Kingsbury, a mosque in Chichele road and St Sebastian's church (in the context of cultural, rather than religious visits). Group G regularly visited Hindu temples all over the borough to worship; a couple had also visited churches and Buddhist temples (as cultural visits), and one person mentioned visiting a Sikh gurdwara.

### **Exhibitions in libraries**

Two people in group I mentioned this, but no others in any of the other groups.

### **Private galleries/exhibitions**

One participant in group S mentioned visiting one in Harlesden; a visit to a private exhibition at The Tricycle was mentioned by a member of group C.

### **Reasons why/why not**

Two groups (C and I) mentioned that they visited exhibitions because they were free; curiosity/the educational aspect was also mentioned by participants in groups C, I and G. Groups C and I also articulated that visiting museums was about making themselves aware of their own (or others') cultural identity in Brent.

“As far as Innisfree is concerned, it's about making people aware of their sense of identity as Irish people – it's an Irish identity, but it's also about recognising the contributions they have made” [I]

All groups mentioned that they went to cultural events/exhibitions to enjoy themselves (entertaining children was also mentioned in this context, by group S); group G primarily visited temples for worship and to socialise.

“They are the bread and butter of life – the jam as well” [C]

Members of group I at this point also mentioned the reduction in spending on cultural activities due to funding cuts, and, in particular, indicated their displeasure at Brent's cutting funding to the annual St Patrick's Day parade in the borough.

## **Do you visit Willesden Green library/Wembley Civic Centre?**

### **Willesden Green**

About half of group I had visited, two from group S, seven from group C (one had visited the old Wembley library) and two from group G (plus one who visited 40 years ago).

### **Wembley Civic Centre**

All of group G had visited; of group C, four out of the nine hadn't visited before the evening of the focus group (the group was held at the Civic Centre); four of group S had visited and nine of group I had visited.

### **Reasons why/whynot**

Reasons for not visiting either centre were primarily geographical – it was not local to them (this was particularly the case with Willesden Green). The Wembley Civic Centre is a hub for other activities and areas of life (e.g. housing benefit, registry office), and it is therefore more frequently visited. The four members of group S who had visited Willesden Green indicated that they liked the varying exhibitions of Brent communities. Group C participants mentioned the other facilities at Willesden Green as positive reasons for visiting (cinema, café etc.).

## **What was the last exhibition you visited?**

Participants in group G were unable to answer this question. Members of group I had recently been on a group visit to view the facades of buildings around Euston (including The Wellcome Foundation Friends House, University College), and four members of group S had been to the exhibition of Somali artefacts at the Civic Centre. Individual responses to this question were many and varied:

The Geffrye Museum [I]

Willesden library [I]

Poole in Dorset – people and how they lived [I]

Portsmouth naval museum [I]

The V&A [I]

Imperial War Museum [I]

British Museum [I]

Family Records Centre [I]

Cathedral at St Alban's [I]

Emerald Stadium (Irish football) [I]

National Railway Museum [I]

National Trust houses [I]

Madame Tussauds [S]

British Library comic exhibition [C]

National Portrait Gallery [C]

Titanic exhibition in Belfast [C]

Livery Companies halls (Watermen, Mansion House, Apothecaries) [C]

Burlington House at Open House Day [C]  
Maritime Museum [C]  
Natural History Museum [C]  
Kenwood House [C]  
RA Summer Exhibition [C]  
Tate Modern [C]  
National Gallery [C]

The reasons given were mostly because of personal interest; one person went on a family outing, and another person (in group C) arranges regular trips for a group. One participant in group C nearly always drops into a museum or gallery when in town.

### **Have you visited the current exhibition at the Civic Centre?**

(Northwest London Somali Project, an exhibition that captures the lives and the experience of the Somali community in Brent in the form of oral history and photography)

Apart from the four members of group S (see above) who had been as a group trip, only one person from all four groups (group C) had been to the exhibition – it was visited on the way to the focus group held at the Civic Centre. Two or three people who visited the Civic Centre regularly, but who had not visited the exhibition (groups C and G) commented that it was very badly signposted, and that they had seen no publicity.

### **What sorts of things do you think Brent Museum & Archives has?**

All four groups suggested everyday objects of the past, and groups I, C and G related these to the way people lived on past times; groups I, C and G mentioned objects/materials relating to the history of Brent. Groups I and G mentioned architectural materials (designs of houses, plans etc.), and groups C and G mentioned natural history/archaeological/prehistoric specimens. Specific mentions are listed below under categories; most of them were made as individual suggestions.

#### **The home**

Domestic recreation [I]  
Tin baths [G and I]  
Cutlery/eating implements/bowls etc. [I and S]  
Electrical kitchen equipment [I and G]  
Materials/clothes [I]  
Clothes/material [G, S and I]  
Telephones [I and S]  
Gas meters and electric meters (coin-operated) [G]

## **Documents and paper records**

Births/marriages and deaths [I]  
Council meetings – minutes of meetings [I]  
Newspapers [I and C]  
Records of the troubles/IRA bombings [I]  
Town planning [I]  
Photographs [I and S]  
Maps/plans [I and C]

## **Wartime**

Materials from local regiments (Kilburn Rifles) [C]  
Wartime objects [G]

## **Local history**

Domesday material [C]  
Objects made in Brent (old Brent) – industrial processes [C]  
Wembley Park House and grounds (designed by Harvey Repton) [C]  
Artefacts from Dollis Hill House [C]  
Trowbridge properties – items on the castles at Kingsbury [C]  
Information on Wembley Stadium/Watkin's Tower [C]  
Materials from the Empire Exhibition at Wembley [C]  
Materials from the Post Office research facility – the first programmable computer [C]  
Churchill's underground bunker at Dollis Hill [C]  
History of the Empire State [C]  
Stuff from the Willesden historical society [C]

## **Community history**

Somali artefacts [C]  
A Victorian/Irish house [I]  
What people contributed that came from Ireland [I]

## **Transport**

Cardboard bus tickets [I]  
Buses in olden times [G]  
Material pertaining to the Metropolitan line [C]  
Pictures of railway cottages [C]

**Brent Museum & Archives aims to put on exhibitions that focus in some way on local history or communities. Are there any particular stories, subjects, communities that are specific to Brent that you would like to see an exhibition on?**

All of the groups engaged well with this question, and were able to suggest many different ideas for exhibitions and exhibition material.

**Multiculturalism**

All four groups mentioned the multicultural aspect of Brent, and how exhibitions relating to their own culture, or the culture of other groups would be interesting.

“A local museum has the capacity to put on an exhibition that will explain the surroundings you walk through, and what your ethnic group did to make that happen. This is the Irish one ... and this is the Somali one ... and the Jewish community and the Hindu community. You have the opportunity to show the similarities not the differences.” [I]

The Irish community in Brent is perhaps the oldest immigrant community, and group I mentioned several areas of interest where this community had had an effect in Brent: the history of the Catholic church in Brent, and the building of the canals and railways and associated artefacts/architecture.

“And then Irish people can walk out into a multi-ethnic community with their chin up feeling ‘I’m here’. And you don’t get this with some of the larger national museums.” [I]

Members of the Hindu community in group G were also interested in exhibitions that concentrated on immigration (and how different groups got here), and on their own culture, and the impact it had had on Brent:

“How the Hindu community came to Brent; how they settled; how they contributed to the economy, and the changes they brought about” [G]

The Somali culture is, perhaps, one of the newer cultures to influence life in Brent.

Although Somali people have lived in the UK since the 19<sup>th</sup> century (and group S suggested that newspaper articles about Somali contributions to the two world wars would be of interest), the biggest influx was after the insurgency and subsequent civil war in the 1980s/1990s. Somali history is predominantly oral (the written language has only been in existence since the 1970s), and members of group S were interested in museum records that allowed the capture of these oral traditions:

“Spoken poetry would be interesting. Spoken stories by older generations of people; some people came here in the 1940s, but the biggest influx to Brent was in 1984 after the war in Somalia, when many people arrived as refugees. There will be people around from those days, and their spoken testimony would be a good thing to have, so that future generations of Somalis living in Brent could hear this”

Group S were also interested in exhibitions of Somali artefacts from back home, which they felt would remind them of life back in Somalia – these included: spoons; drinking vessels; milk containers; preserving containers; cheese-making equipment; pictures of camels; traditional bibs; clothes.

Group G were interested in an exhibition that outlined Hindu culture, and what Hindu people enjoy.



Group I also mentioned the Polish community in Brent, and how immigration of this group had begun during the second world war (the Polish war memorial at Greenford was mentioned).

### **Local history/geography**

Groups I, G and C spent some time discussing this, and several suggestions were made.

“History and Geography covers everything” [G]

They included how Brent got its name (from the river Brent), how the geography affected the way the area developed (so the Brent feeds the Welsh Harp reservoir, and thus the canals). In turn this led to suggestions about telling the history of industry in Brent – McVitie’s biscuits, Ilford photographic factory, Airco (aircraft manufacturer in World War I) de Havilland, GEC Hirst and various munitions manufacturers were all mentioned. The effects of strikes were mentioned, and, in particular, group C raised the Grunwick strike of the late 1970s.

Brent’s parks were mentioned by groups I and C, as was the changing face of shops, and the changing face of Brent in general over the years.

“What did Brent look like through the ages? What sort of people lived here?”

Groups I and G mentioned weather phenomena through the ages – including the smogs of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the cold winter of 1963 and the local tornado in 2006. Group C were also interested in the political changes in Brent – how the political entity of ‘Brent’ came into being; where it was heading in the future (and was it becoming more ‘gentrified’, for example?). Group I also suggested an exhibition on how healthcare in the borough had changed through the ages, and one member of group G was interested in looking at how provisions for people with disabilities of sight have changed.

### **Arts and culture**

Groups C and I mentioned various aspects of cultural activities that might be good subjects for exhibitions; they included: Willesden Carnival; Brent shows; the history of pop music in Brent; the history of working men’s clubs; the history of theatres in Brent (including the one at Willesden Green library); famous Brent residents through the ages.

### **Miscellaneous suggestions**

These came from individuals, and included: ‘old science’ (the history of evolution) (G); the history of Harlesden Road (I); birds (G); a history of fireplaces/central heating (G); a history of education (G)

### **Museums themselves**

Groups I and C also spent a small amount of time commenting on the museums themselves – how they should look, and the sort of spaces they would like to see there. Group I liked the idea of an exhibition space at the new museum – which could be used for themed events or exhibitions of objects. Interactive displays were also popular with group I, and they also suggested remote access to the collection via an online ‘virtual’ exhibition. Group C mentioned the importance of maintaining the outside space at Willesden Green, so that the building remained inviting, and group I suggested a café and somewhere to relax.

## **Which of the areas of Brent Museum and archives work would you most likely be interested in engaging with/coming to?**

(A sheet – attached at Annex B – was given to all group members to study)

### **Permanent museum**

This was most popular with groups S and C – all members of both groups apart from one (in group C) were interested in a permanent museum. From their answer to the previous question, it was clear that many in group I would be interested in a permanent museum, but only one person overtly stated this in answer to this question. None of group G mentioned this as something they would engage with.

### **Temporary exhibitions**

These proved generally popular with all four groups. The changing nature of such exhibitions (and the ability of them to be topical) were seen as positive points by groups I, C and G. Group C, in particular, felt that a touring exhibition – the same exhibition touring all of Brent's libraries, and spending a couple of months in each – would be a good idea. Group C were also keen to make sure that exhibition spaces were properly prepared, and were given priority, and were not simply:

“...dead spaces that no-one can find a use for.” [C]

Group I felt that an Irish-themed temporary exhibition March 2016 would be relevant to them, as it was the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Innisfree, close to St Patrick's Day (and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Easter Rising).

### **Archives search room**

A couple of people each in groups I and G were interested in such a facility. Group S saw it as somewhere that would best be used by specialists. This was mostly seen to be of interest by group C, who discussed how it might work – possibly via a dedicated search facility (computer terminal) within the main library, and a quiet room in which to view materials; this would probably need to be supervised. There was concern about how easy access would be, as the access to the Willesden Green archives was reduced to one evening a week.

### **Schools programme**

This was very popular with group S, and three members of group G were interested in such a programme. Group C had mixed views: one member was not keen on libraries becoming the centre of noisy children's activities whereas others saw a role for libraries as classrooms (with exhibitions fitting into the curriculum, and children being given a chance to handle objects from history). One member mentioned the glass children's area at Kentish Town, as being ideal – in that it allowed visibility, but cut out noise. Group I did not mention this at all.

### **Activities for families and adults**

These were extremely popular with all four groups. Group G mentioned social activities and adult education (adult education was also popular with group C). Group I had had a visit from the museum service who had brought some artefacts for them to handle (and had explained the history of them) and they were very positive about this experience.

“Somebody with a good bit of knowledge to pull information together into a lively and interesting talk, and bring it round to places like Innisfree would be good.” [I]

Group C mentioned history walks, dance, artists' displays and activities for community groups. Groups I and C also commented on the need for public spaces – somewhere that community groups could book/hire. The need for a café/restaurant

was also emphasised (group I pointed out how good restaurants at places such as the Wellcome Foundation made museums and collections more popular).

### **Other**

Groups C and I emphasised the need for good publicity for any exhibitions (including online and hard-copy materials, and using the local press); group C commented in particular on the poor publicity for the Somali exhibition at the Civic Centre. Group C also discussed a digital collection (i.e. a website where the collection could be toured 'virtually'). Some felt this was not always a good thing, but others felt it would encourage people to visit.

### **Would you consider donating an object, photograph etc. to Brent Museum and archives?**

All four groups indicated that they would be happy to donate objects; group S pointed out that much of the current Somali exhibition came from objects that they and their friends had donated.

“... this is Somali culture; we are part of this Borough” [S]

Groups I, C and G suggested that they (and other people) would not always be sure what sort of object would count as something a museum might be interested in.

“The problem is realising and communicating what is valuable” [C]

Group C also suggested that objects could be lent as well as donated. A member of group C also pointed out that donation can be cheaper than storage!

Scanning of photographs was popular with all four groups, and seen by them as a way of being able to keep photographs, while still hanging onto the originals.

The idea of an event where people could bring objects or photographs along, and tell their history, was seen as a good idea by groups I and C:

“We could have a scan day where people’s photos were uploaded to a hard drive, then copied to the museum” [I]

“There needs to be an event like Antiques Roadshow, where people bring things – so you get the stories along with the objects” [C]

All of the groups were happy to donate objects whether they would be used or not, but there was a slight feeling that they would be more prepared to do so if they knew an object would be going into an exhibition:

“If it’s of sentimental value you’d want it on display – not so much photos, but if it’s an object, you’d want it to be used” [C]

### **Other comments**

Group I made some additional comments.

They wondered whether the museum would charge for entry.

They also commented that this was a tremendous opportunity to do something exciting, but that the service needed to both go out into the community and to draw people in

## Conclusions

The brief of the exercise was to find data that contributed to the three areas outlined in the introduction.

It should be re-stated that these four focus groups cannot be seen as statistically representative of the communities they were drawn from, so any 'conclusions' reached in this section cannot be seen as definite – only the conclusions reached from listening to 48 people. Some broad statements can be made, however, about the data supplied by these 48 people, and they are grouped below under the three area headings.

### **What will make their communities engage with the museum and archives?**

- All of the groups were able to understand what a museum is, but the difference between a museum and an archive (and how an archive can help people to research history) needs perhaps more explanation, particularly for those whose first language is not English.
- On the whole, the white Europeans in the groups visited museums more than the people from other ethnic groups
- The minority ethnic groups in the exercise (Irish, Indian, Somali) tended to see museums as somewhere they could enjoy their own culture, or demonstrate it to others; the white Europeans (these included the Irish group) in the exercise were more likely to see museums as a chance to view the culture of others
- Location plays a large part in whether people visit museums; there were those who would visit a museum out of curiosity wherever it was, but, for example, casual visitors to the old Willesden Green museum largely visited because of its proximity. Many people visited the Civic Centre for reasons other than to view an exhibition.

### **What kind of subjects would they like to see covered in our exhibition programmes?**

- Principally, the groups saw museums as a repository for everyday objects that tell stories of the past; a few saw them as places where documents are kept
- What most people in the exercise wanted out of a Brent museum was for it to be a place where cultures within Brent are shared (through the display of everyday objects, documents and stories that explain those cultures), as well as being a place where the history and geography of Brent is displayed and explained

### **How we can make our collections more relevant and how we can gain the trust of communities so that they will donate material to the collections?**

- Although the idea of a permanent exhibition was popular with some of the participants, the most popular form of exhibition was a temporary one, which could be topical, and could travel.
- Outreach activities were very popular – particularly those for families, and if they involved adult education. 'Active' activities (that involve people doing things, rather than passively looking at things) were also popular.
- There is a need for better publicity and signposting.
- Museum spaces beyond simply the collections (e.g. cafés, activity areas etc.) were also popular

- No-one in any of the groups indicated that they *would not* be willing to donate an object to a museum; the largest barrier to this would seem to be to get people to understand what would be the sort of material a museum might want (i.e. to help people realise the value of what they simply see as everyday objects or materials). In this context, some sort of publicised 'donation event' might be popular.

## Brent Museum and Archives Strategy Consultation

## Focus Group Schedule

**Opening**

Tea/coffee etc. (10 mins)

Welcome and explanation (5 mins)

Introductions (5 mins)

**Topic**

<b>Main question</b>	<b>Follow-ups/prompts/probes</b>	<b>Timing</b>
How would you describe a museum & archives?	Tease out museum and archives separately	10
Do you currently visit museums or archives?	How often?	10

**Core**

<b>Main question</b>	<b>Follow-ups/prompts/probes</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Which cultural organisations in Brent do you visit?	Prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brent Museum (do you know there's a Brent Museum &amp; archives?)</li> <li>• Tricycle Theatre</li> <li>• Encee Academy</li> <li>• Lexi Cinema</li> <li>• East Lane Theatre</li> <li>• Brent temples</li> <li>• Exhibitions in libraries</li> <li>• Private galleries/exhibitions</li> </ul> Why do you visit them?	10
Do you visit: Willesden Green library? Wembley civic centre/library?	Why/why not?	5
What was the last exhibition you visited?	Why did you choose this one?	5
Have you visited the current exhibition at the Civic Centre?	<b>Northwest London Somali Project, an exhibition that captures the lives and the experience of the Somali community in Brent in the form of oral history and photography</b>	5

Main question	Follow-ups/prompts/probes	Timing
<p>What sorts of things do you think Brent Museum &amp; Archives has?</p> <p>Can you think of any specific examples?</p>	<p>Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collections reflect working and domestic life in Brent from about 1850 to the present day</li> <li>• Artefacts</li> <li>• Video/oral history recordings</li> <li>• Around 10K items</li> <li>• Records of Brent Council (minutes, building plans)</li> <li>• Historical maps/street directories</li> <li>• Electoral registers</li> <li>• School records</li> <li>• Photographs</li> <li>• Postcards</li> <li>• Reference library</li> <li>• Newspapers dating back to 1870</li> <li>• Records of local groups/organisations/individuals</li> </ul>	10
<p>Brent Museum &amp; Archives aims to put on exhibitions that focus in some way on local history or communities. Are there any particular stories, subjects, communities that are specific to Brent that you would like to see an exhibition on?</p>		15
<p>Please have a look at the sheet. Which of the areas of Brent Museum and archives work would you most likely be interested in engaging with/coming to?</p>	Use sheet	15
<p>Would you consider donating an object, photograph etc. to Brent Museum and archives?</p>	<p>Why or why not?</p> <p>Would the ability to keep your original photograph and donate a digital copy influence your decision to donate?</p> <p>Would it influence your decision to donate an object if you knew whether or not it was going to be included in an exhibition? (it isn't always possible to display everything donated)</p>	5

Thanks and explanation of next steps

## List of Brent Museum &amp; Archives proposed areas of work

Permanent museum	A display of artefacts and material related to Brent's social history that is always on display at Willesden Green
Temporary exhibitions	1–3 per year. Special exhibitions lasting a couple of months or so, with artefacts on a particular theme or topic at one of the main centres – Wembley or Willesden Green, or possibly smaller libraries
Archives search room	A room at Willesden Green where you can search on computer/in hard copy archives (so old newspapers, old records etc.)
Schools programme	A workshop programme at Willesden Green or in schools to use materials and stories from Brent's history to the attention of learners, so that they use them in their school work
Activities for families and adults	These would include craft sessions, history walks, talks and lectures in Brent libraries – linked to current exhibitions