



**Executive**  
17 January 2011

**Report from the Directors of  
Environment and Neighbourhood  
Services and Customer and  
Community Engagement**

Wards Affected:  
ALL

**Arts and Festivals Strategy**

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1** This report outlines the proposals of the draft Arts and Festivals Strategy for Brent Council. The strategy examines the current Brent offer and proposes changes that deliver savings and a more effective and efficient service.
- 1.2** When work started on producing this strategy both the arts and festivals teams were based in the Libraries, Arts and Heritage service within Environment and Culture. Since then, and whilst the strategy was being developed, there have been some significant changes, including:
- The outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review and the need for Brent to find further savings in addition to the £90 million already planned for.
  - A significant reduction in Arts Council budgets and a new approach to ACE funding of arts organisations
  - As a result of the Staffing and Structure review the festivals team (2 FTE posts) have transferred to the new Customer and Community Engagement department. The arts team (2 FTE posts) have remained within the new Environment and Neighbourhood Services.
- 1.3** This report recommends a public consultation on the strategy for Arts and Festivals in Brent.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1** That Members note the proposals of the Draft Arts and Festivals Strategy at 5.3.
- 2.2** That Members approve public consultation on the proposals as set out in Option 1

**2.3** That Members agree the submission of a further report to the Executive in June 2011, setting out the consultation results and final recommendations on the future arts and festivals in Brent.

### **3.0 Detail**

#### **3.1 Arts**

Brent's Arts team (currently 2 FTE) sits within the Libraries, Arts and Heritage service and currently provides: Advice, guidance and support for local artists and arts groups:

- Capacity building projects for artists, arts groups and creative industries
- Cultural input into regeneration projects
- Arts outreach work linking with Brent festivals
- Management of the grant to the Tricycle Theatre
- Collaborative work with West London boroughs through the Western Wedge
- Collaborative projects with other council departments and community groups such as the Anti Graffiti project
- Advice and expertise on public art

#### **3.2 Tricycle Theatre Grant**

**3.2.1** The Tricycle Theatre produces a programme of culturally diverse theatre, cinema and visual arts in north-west London. The theatre is also an important producer of national and international work, and operates a Creative Space for educational workshops and social inclusion programmes for children and young people aged from 18 months to 26 years. Brent Council's grant of £218,000 is managed by a Service Level Agreement and funds.

**3.2.2** The theatre also receives grants from the Arts Council (£725,000). Following the government's reduction in funding for the Arts Council, they have introduced a new funding application process. There is therefore no guarantee that this level of funding will continue.

**3.2.3** The £56,587 grant that the theatre receives from the London Councils Grants Programme has now been withdrawn as part of their grants review programme.

#### **3.3 Festivals**

Brent's Festivals function has recently transferred to the new Communications and Community Engagement department. The team of two deliver the following:

- Organisation of Brent's main Festivals Programme: Eid, Diwali, Respect, St Patrick's, Christmas, Chanukah, Holocaust Memorial Day, St George's Day
- Management of grant for Navratri

There are a number of other festivals/events managed within Brent Council which have been 'wrapped up' within the Festivals Review: Countryside Day, Bonfire Night, International Women's Day, LGBT week and 'festive lights'(the dressing of trees in town centres and other locations).

### **3.4 Drivers for Change**

There is a clear commitment to the development of an improved arts and culture offer in Brent and a strategic context for change outlined in the new Corporate Strategy, Brent Cultural Strategy and in the One Council agenda. Brent is a key partner within the Brent Culture, Sports and Learning Forum, the sub-group of the LSP, who produced the Cultural Strategy.

A clear strategy for arts and festivals provision in Brent is long overdue. There is an increasingly urgent need for clarity and direction for a number of reasons:

- 3.4.1** Impending public sector spending cuts and need to make savings.
- 3.4.2** Lack of clarity regarding what Brent Council's Arts service provides.
- 3.4.3** Imbalance of resource invested into festivals as the programme has developed in an 'ad hoc' way over time.
- 3.4.4** Need for clear outcomes from grant funded organisations.
- 3.4.5** Imbalance of spend and cultural emphasis in festival's programme.
- 3.4.6** Fragmented approach to events delivery across the council.
- 3.4.7** Need for reorganisation of arts and festivals team to reflect agreed strategic priorities and to support Brent's 'cultural offer'.
- 3.4.8** The opening of the new Civic Centre in 2013 with the potential to provide significant cultural opportunities.
- 3.4.9** The plans to redevelop Willesden Green Library Centre and create a cultural hub/council service centre.

### **3.5 The Strategy**

The Arts and Festivals Strategy aligns with the principles of Brent's Cultural Strategy 2010-2015.

There are separate sections for Arts and Festivals to clarify the roles of the two distinct but related functions. There is a clear need to define and separate arts/cultural development versus festivals and events delivery in Brent.

The strategy addresses the following issues:

- 3.5.1** There are concerns about the appropriateness of some of some of the historic spending commitments on festivals in the face of a changed demographic and the perceived unfairness of a lack of access to resources of the newer communities.
- 3.5.2** Brent is failing to properly exploit the potential for arts and, more broadly, cultural activity which will deliver real returns in social, learning and economic benefits.
- 3.5.3** The opportunities for creating excellent, inclusive cultural facilities in Brent's new Civic

Centre and at the refurbished Willesden Green Library Centre necessitates a clear focus for the arts team.

- 3.5.4** The relationship with the Brent Culture, Sports and Learning Forum is strong but further work is needed to embed this group and further develop work with key partners.
- 3.5.5** The Tricycle Theatre is a significant cultural asset for the borough. The relationship with the Tricycle Theatre needs to be developed so that the council's priorities are reflected in the grant funded activities and the level of grant is clearly linked to outcomes.
- 3.5.6** The London 2012 Games will provide a catalyst to celebrate Brent's rich cultural heritage and develop opportunities for arts organisations in 'dressing the borough' and participating in Cultural Olympiad activities.
- 3.5.7** The arts team should build relationships with other Arts Council funded groups in Brent.
- 3.5.8** There is potential for generating significant income through sponsorship/partnerships, particularly with festivals and events.

#### **4.0 Consultation on the draft strategy**

The consultation will run from January 31<sup>st</sup> 2011 to April 18<sup>th</sup> 2011. There will be an online survey and presentations to area consultative forums, as well as meetings with specific groups and stakeholders. The results of the consultation will then be incorporated into the final strategy, which will be presented to the Executive in June 2011.

#### **5.0 Cost Reduction Proposals**

##### **5.1 Festivals**

The Council's core budget for festivals delivered by the Festivals team in 2009/10 was £293,210. This figure excludes staffing. Additionally approximately £42,000 was spent by the Parks Dept on Countryside Day and Bonfire Night, £5,000 by the Diversity Team on LGBT month and International Women's Day and £80,000 on festive lights (which refers to seasonal tree dressing in town centres and key locations only) Below is a table that show the cost of each event (excluding staffing costs and arts outreach activity).

<b>Festival</b>	<b>Cost (£)</b>
Holocaust Memorial Day	5,000
Chanukah	4,000
St Patrick's Day	25,000
Eid	18,000
Diwali	97,000
Fireworks Night	12,000
Countryside Day	30,000
Respect	76,000

Christmas	5,000
St George's Day	2,000
LGBT month	2,000
International Women's Day	3,000
Navratri grant	67,000
Festive lights (tree dressing)	80,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>426,000</b>

The strategy includes a comparison of London Boroughs festivals and outdoor events programmes, which shows that Brent Councils funds a comparatively high number of events.

## 5.2 Arts

The Arts budget of £380,000 includes a £218,000 grant to the Tricycle Theatre. After staffing costs are extracted there is a development budget of £50,000.

There will be a need to restructure the arts team to reflect the delivery of new priorities.

## 5.3 Savings Proposals

### 5.3.1 Festivals

At present, the preferred option is to retain a core provision of festivals as in option 1. However, the costs shown in the table above enable further refinement of the offer if necessary and other options could be developed.

#### Option1

- All festivals are stopped apart from a Brent Festival (incorporating Respect and Countryside Day) Diwali, Holocaust Memorial Day and Bonfire Night
- The cost of Diwali is reduced by £25,000 to £72,000
- The Navatri grant is stopped

Saving: £231,000

#### Option 2

All festivals are ceased and the Festival team is disbanded (staff savings of £82,000)

Saving: £508,000 (less redundancy costs in first year)

### 5.3.2 Arts

#### Option1

- The Arts budget remains the same and a sponsorship plan is developed to increase capacity
- The team is restructured to enable delivery of priorities

Savings £0

## **Option 2:**

As Option 1, plus

- The Tricycle grant is reduced by £20,000

Saving: £20,000

## **6.0 Financial Implications**

**6.1** Cost reduction options are offered for both the Festivals and Arts strategy:

- Option one of the Festivals Strategy reduces the provision currently being offered, although the core provision is retained as illustrated in paragraph 5.3.1. This would result in a saving of £231k, assuming that the changes take place at the start of the financial year. Implementation during the year would result in reduced savings for 2011/12.
- The second option of the Festivals Strategy is to cease all festival activities. Thus savings will be made on activities as well as staff. The estimated savings would be £508k but these do not take into account any redundancy costs that may arise as a result. The £508k is a full year effect and implementation after the start of the financial year will result in reduced savings for 2011/12.
- Option one of the Arts Strategy result in no financial savings and is focussed on increasing capacity and delivery of priorities.
- Option two of the Arts Strategy results in a £20k saving, which is a reduction in grant to the Tricycle Theatre.

## **7.0 Legal Implications**

**7.1** The Local Authority has a power to provide (or arrange for the provision of) entertainment, the development and improvement of the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts, and otherwise attract visitors to the area for recreation etc under S144 and 145 of the Local Government Act 1972.

**7.2** It is important that the Council consults the public and relevant arts and festival groups since their views need to be considered when deciding on the future shape of arts and festivals in the borough. Staff will also be consulted as any plans may ? or will ? affect them too. It may be necessary to carry out consultation with trade unions and others and advice can be provided on this. In conducting the consultation, it will be made clear what the possible implications will be for staff. Any implications will be reported to Members enabling them to make a fully informed final decision.

## **8.0 Diversity Implications**

**8.1** A full Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out and will be included in the final report to Executive once consultation has taken place.

## **9.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications**

**9.1** The strategy recommends a restructuring of the Arts Team, which will be carried out

in accordance with the Council's Managing Change policy. Staff and trade unions will be fully consulted.

**Background papers**

Draft Arts and Festivals Strategy

**Contact Officers**

Sue Mckenzie  
Head of Libraries, Arts and Heritage

Cheryl Curling  
Head of Communications

Sue Harper  
Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services

Toni McConville  
Director of Customer and Community Engagement