



Executive
13 June 2011

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

All Wards

Arts and Festivals Strategy and Programme

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report outlines:

- the overarching draft Arts and Festivals Strategy (Appendix 1) for the council which has been developed following the recent consultation.
- options for the council's delivery of an Arts and Festivals Programme for the borough within the current financial constraints. This report takes into consideration feedback from the council's recent consultation (Appendix 2a and 2b) on the council's Arts and Festivals offer as well as feedback and monitoring gathered over a number of years (Appendix 3) and London Boroughs events comparison (Appendix 4).

You will note that where appropriate separate headings for Arts and Festivals have split the report to allow for arts and festivals options to be considered individually. Otherwise the report applies to both functions.

2.0 Recommendations

That Executive:

- 2.1 notes the principles set out in the draft Arts and Festivals Strategy (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 approves Option 2 (outlined at 6.9). This will deliver an arts programme against the four key priorities and reduce the grant to the Tricycle Theatre by £20k per annum.
- 2.3 approves Option 3 (outlined at 6.14). This will deliver a reduced events programme against the four key priorities with no faith-related events.
- 2.4 endorses the council's commitment to the future development of arts and

cultural activities in the borough at the new Civic Centre and a new cultural hub in Willesden, conditional on the proposed redevelopment progressing.

- 2.5 endorses the commitment to providing advice and support for local community groups to stage a broad range of celebratory events.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 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 council's Corporate Borough Plan, Brent – Our Future 2010-2014 and Brent's Cultural Strategy 2010-2015. Brent is a key partner within the Brent Culture, Sports and Learning Forum which developed Brent's Cultural Strategy adopted by the council in 2010.

The Cultural Strategy acknowledges that Brent has a key leadership role in developing partnerships among cultural providers to ensure the best possible opportunities flourish within the borough. There is a clear commitment to supporting local community groups, advising them on how to stage and deliver their own events, encouraging local ownership while ensuring safe delivery, alongside the expectation that the council will develop a range of cultural services, including its own arts development activities.

- 3.2 A clear strategy for arts and festivals provision in Brent is overdue and required. There are a number of increasingly urgent reasons for clarity and direction, namely:

3.2.1 Public sector cuts and the need for the council to make savings.

3.2.2 Reorganisation of both the arts and festivals team to reflect agreed strategic priorities and to support Brent's cultural offer outlined in Brent's Cultural Strategy.

Festivals

3.2.3 The imbalance of resource invested into specific festivals as the programme has developed in an 'ad hoc' way.

3.2.4 The need for clear outcomes from grant funded organisations.

3.2.5 Imbalance of spend and cultural emphasis in the festivals programme.

3.2.6 Fragmented approach to events delivery across the council.

3.2.7 Brent Council has traditionally delivered far more events and festivals than the majority of other local authorities.

Arts

3.2.8 The requirement to be transparent in prioritising arts development activity within the council recognising limited resources.

3.2.9 Clarity regarding what Brent Council's arts service provides and what should be led by other groups.

- 3.2.10 The opening of the new Civic Centre in 2013 with the potential to provide significant new cultural opportunities for community and voluntary groups.
- 3.2.11 Plans to redevelop Willesden Green Library Centre and create a cultural hub/council service centre, conditional on the proposed redevelopment progressing.
- 3.2.12 The need to develop the existing partnership working with the Tricycle Theatre so that Brent residents get the maximum benefit from the grant funding. 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 outreach activity with young people. The theatre also receives grants from the Arts Council (ACE) and, until recently, received £56,000 from London Councils. Following the government's reduction in funding for ACE they have reduced their grant to the Tricycle by 11 per cent. Therefore, the public grant funding of the Tricycle has been reduced by over £100,000 this year.

4. **Draft Arts and Festivals Strategy**

- 4.1 The attached draft Arts and Festivals strategy for the council (Appendix 1) has been written to align with the principles of Brent's Cultural Strategy 2010-2015. It has separate sections for Arts and Festivals to help clarify the roles of the two distinct but related functions. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be carried out into the content of the Strategy and once the Arts and Festivals Strategy is finalised, it will be presented to the Executive at a later for consideration and approval. This will give Members the opportunity to consider the content of the EIA before deciding whether to approve the Council's Arts and Festivals Strategy.
- 4.2 The council's draft Arts and Festivals strategy has been produced to ensure arts and festivals activities and opportunities are planned and developed in an agreed and coordinated way within Brent, rather than accepting the historical ad hoc list of festivals currently delivered as being the appropriate programme for the borough.
- 4.3 It recognises the vital role the council plays in community leadership in the encouragement, development and empowerment of local community groups. It also recognises the range of organisations and agencies involved, and the role they will play in delivering the strategy and highlights the contribution that arts and cultural activities play in terms of improving health, creating safe places, tackling worklessness and increasing community cohesion.
- 4.4 The Council also acknowledges the significant presence of the film and television industry in Park Royal and Wembley and aims to work with this sector, both through the Culture Sports and Learning Forum and through the arts team building partnerships on specific projects.
- 4.5 **2012 Olympics**
While the draft Arts and Festivals strategy covers the next four years it recognises the significance of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and identifies that the period leading up to the Games and after will be the dominant cultural event for the whole of London in the next 12 months. With Brent hosting events in two Olympic venues – football at Wembley Stadium, badminton and rhythmic gymnastics at

Wembley Arena – the delivery model for arts and festivals during this period is likely to be heavily influenced by the Games.

4.6 **New Civic Centre/Cultural Hub in Willesden**

The draft Arts and Festivals strategy also acknowledges the impact of the new Civic Centre from the summer of 2013. The position of the Civic Centre, opposite Arena Square, provides opportunities to host a range of arts and cultural events. The building will have significant quality public areas within which to hold events including halls, a garden, foyer and gallery areas. The council is keen to maximise the use of the building for community and income generation purposes and will develop a Calendar of Events to ensure this is achieved. The Calendar will include a wide range of activities to reflect the diversity of the borough, promote arts and culture and celebrate key Brent community events. In addition the council is proposing to develop a new cultural hub in Willesden.

5.0 **Consultation and monitoring**

5.1 The draft Arts and Festivals strategy has been developed in consultation with internal and external partners and stakeholders over a sustained period of time. It builds on the extensive participation that developed the Culture Sport and Learning Forum's Cultural Strategy during 2010.

5.2 The most recent consultation took place from 7 March to 26 April 2011. The results can be found in Appendix 2a and 2b. The consultation included an online consultation document, a paper consultation and presentations at Brent's Multi-faith Forum and Brent's Culture, Sports and Learning Forum. There were 202 responses to the online and paper consultation plus nine emails, one letter and feedback from the Environmental Projects and Policy Team.

5.3 The consultation document sets out the council's proposed eight priority areas of work, four for Arts and four for Festivals, and asked: if they were the right priorities; were they of equal importance; and to rate them in preference of importance. It also asked if there were other areas of work not covered in the identified priorities and there was a final open question asking if there was anything additional to add.

5.4 The results of the consultation has helped to inform the options proposed for Executive to consider.

5.5 Other relevant consultations and feedback have taken place over the past few years which have also informed the strategy. These include a period of public consultation in 2008 for stakeholders to comment on the festivals programme (Appendix 5); a mapping exercise of current provision took place in 2009 (Appendix 6); consultation on the Cultural Strategy took place in 2010; and London Borough events comparison (appendix 4)

Arts

5.6 The priorities consulted on for Arts were:

- Supporting the regeneration and infrastructure investments underway
- Promoting the cultural economy
- Commissioning and promoting art

- Promoting arts and festivals linked to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

5.7 The response percentages to the questions in relation to arts were:

- Are they the right priorities?
 - Arts – 54% agreed, 46% disagreed
- Are they equally important?
 - Arts – 71% disagreed, 29% agreed

5.8 The consultation provided an opportunity for feedback on current provision and future provision of Arts. Respondents identified the two preferred priorities as promoting the cultural economy and supporting the regeneration and infrastructure investments underway. Open comments show a preference for supporting the cultural and creative work that taps into Brent's diverse communities and also the importance of arts work in supporting regeneration in the borough. The full results are attached as appendix 2a and 2b.

Festivals

5.9 The priorities consulted on for Festivals were:

- An all encompassing approach that promotes festivals and events which are inclusive of all Brent's communities
- Promoting events that act as a community showcase creating vibrant public spaces which attract visitors to the borough
- Promoting a business development approach to festivals and events which secure additional funding and sponsorship
- Promote best practice jointly between the council and external event organisers to ensure we deliver safe and well organised events.

5.10 The response percentages to the questions in relation festivals were:

- Are they the right priorities?
 - Festivals – 53% agreed, 46 % disagreed
- Are they equally important?
 - Festivals – 70% disagreed, 30% agreed

5.11 Two online petitions were also set up by interested parties. These were:

- Petition to retain support to the St Patrick's Day Parade – 110 signatures (Appendix 9).
- Petition to continue funding the Navratri festival – 281 signatures (Appendix 10).

A paper petition was also received:

- Save Navratri Petition – We oppose Brent Council cutting funding for the Navratri celebrations and call for it to be restored – approximately 5,000 signatures.

5.12 The consultation provided an opportunity for feedback on the current and future provision for festivals. The full results are attached as Appendix 2a and 2b. Respondents identified the two preferred priorities as an all encompassing approach that inclusive of all Brent's communities and promoting events that act as a community showcase creating vibrant public spaces. In general, there was recognition of the need to save money while still delivering activities for Brent's diverse communities. There was support for specific cultural or faith activities but overall the consensus was to deliver activities that were not faith-based but rather brought Brent's communities together in a celebration.

5.13 The delivery of the strategy will be monitored through performance monitoring of outcomes attached to specific and individual arts and festivals activities. The strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis with a comprehensive review planned for 2014 to allow sufficient time for a subsequent strategy to be produced.

6.0 Options for Arts and Events Programme

6.1 The options have been developed with consideration to the need to make savings on the current levels of spend, the results of all consultation over a sustained period of time, and to meet the needs of Brent's diverse communities in an equitable way.

Arts

6.2 The aims and vision of the strategy will support the options below, other than Option 1 for Festivals which would result in the strategy becoming solely an Arts based strategy. Depending on the options chosen an action plan would need to be developed to ensure delivery.

6.3 Although there have been some significant successes and partnerships built 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 for the borough.

6.4 The developments around infrastructure bring exciting opportunities for creating excellent, inclusive cultural facilities in Brent's new Civic Centre and potentially at the refurbished Willesden Green Library Centre necessitate a clear focus for the arts team.

6.5 The Tricycle Theatre is a significant cultural asset for the borough. Brent Council currently provides the theatre with an annual grant of £218,000 linked to outreach work with young people in the borough. The relationship with the Tricycle needs to be developed so that the council's priorities are reflected in the grant funded activities and so that local people recognise it as a Brent asset.

6.6 A new team to drive forward arts development in Brent is about to be put in place. This team with a small budget will need to be focussed on priority areas of work.

6.7 The four priorities proposed for the 2012 and Arts Development Team in Brent are as follows:

- **Supporting the regeneration and infrastructure investments underway**
Over the next three years, the Council will be focusing its resources on two major developments: the new Civic Centre in Wembley and the redeveloped Willesden Green Library Centre in the south of the borough, conditional on the redevelopment proposal going ahead. Two brand new libraries, a new museum, arts development work in South Kilburn and Harlesden and exciting new public spaces will create opportunities to foster creativity and community participation. Additionally the council will build on the partnership with the Tricycle Theatre, developing the existing service level agreement to ensure the Brent residents benefit from this valuable cultural resource in the borough. The council will use the arts to encourage participation and responsibility for the borough's cultural assets and public spaces.
- **Promoting the cultural and creative economy**

The creative economy in Brent is complex and diverse, ranging from national facilities such as Wembley Stadium, Wembley Arena and major television studios to a wide range of individual artists and performers. Promoting the creative economy creates social and economic opportunities for Brent residents and the team will focus on improving cultural leadership in the borough, particularly through the work of the Culture, Sports and Learning Forum. Locally based practitioners can be supported into careers and businesses related to their art forms and the council can showcase existing areas of cultural economic activity in the borough, such as textiles, music, carnival arts and writing.

- **Commissioning and promoting art**

The team will create a structured programme of commissioning artists to both create art and animate public spaces with performance. The Council is already a significant patron of the arts due to the extensive regeneration of the borough in recent years. The team will continue that work, enhancing the environment for residents and visitors and promoting Brent as a vibrant cultural centre. The council will be looking to encourage and promote the best of Brent talent in the arts as well as bringing prestigious artists into the borough.

- **The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games**

The cultural elements of the Games will dominate the work of the team in the first eighteen months of the strategy, promoting arts events that reflect the borough's love of sport and its connections to communities across the world. A programme of community engagement linked to the Games is already in place to maximise the opportunities created by the borough's hosting of five major sports and to ensure a tangible legacy for residents.

6.8 **Option 1**

The new Arts and 2010 Team deliver against the four priorities identified above using existing resources and leveraging in external funding to increase capacity.

6.9 **Option 2**

As Option 1, plus the grant to the Tricycle Theatre of £218,00 p.a. is reduced by £20,000. This reduction is necessary in the current financial climate and with the council's need to make savings but also acknowledges the importance of this partnership and its potential to enhance the cultural offer for Brent residents. This would bring savings of £20,000.

Festivals

6.10 The options have been developed with consideration to the need to make savings on the current levels of spend, the results of all consultation over a sustained period of time, and to meet the needs of Brent's diverse communities in an equitable way. Depending on the options chosen an action plan would need to be developed to ensure delivery.

6.11 The four priorities for the Festivals Team are:

- **An all encompassing approach**

Promoting festivals and events which are inclusive of all Brent's communities. Festivals and events are a great driver for promoting a sense of belonging and

unit in local communities. The event programme aims to produce cultural events that are inclusive to all Brent's diverse residents.

- **Promoting best practice**

To ensure that Brent delivers safe events officers will work with and assist external event organisers. To promote the current online guidance which provides clear, up-to-date guidance on all the necessary steps for delivering an outdoor event, ensuring the guidance is maintained and accessible to all event organisers.

- **Events that act as a community showcase**

Promoting events that create vibrant public spaces which attract visitors to the borough. Events create opportunities that showcase areas that are not typically tourist destinations, while participation in events can broaden horizons, realise aspirations, improve education attainment and contribute to health through feelings of self-worth and wellbeing.

- **Promoting a business development approach**

Activity will be developed to secure additional funding and sponsorship. Using the programme of activities there is an opportunity to create a business plan for festivals and events with the aim to increase earnings from sponsorship to support limited budgets.

6.12 **Option 1**

Continue with the current programme of events and festivals

This would involve service areas continuing to deliver the events/festivals they currently provide, so forgoing the opportunity to bring them together under one centralised team.

It would not allow for the savings identified to be made which would result in savings needing to be identified from other areas. Also the level of activity is increasingly unsustainable and inappropriate given the pressures on the council's budget and the changing demographic of the borough. The consultation identified that there was no appetite for maintaining the status quo and also recognition that savings were necessary.

6.13 **Option 2**

Deliver the reduced list previously proposed and consulted on

This would involve stopping all festivals apart from Respect, Countryside Day, Diwali, Holocaust Memorial Day and fireworks night. It is proposed that the funding to Diwali is reduced by £25,000 and the Navratri grant is ceased. This would bring a saving in the first year of £231,000.

This option would allow for already identified savings to be achieved. It does allow for scope to review Respect and Countryside Day to more closely reflect the requirements for Brent's diverse communities. But, by keeping a clearly faith focused event such as Diwali, it could lead to claims of unfairness or lack of access to resources to newer communities. This point was also identified in the consultation feedback and could potentially have a negative impact on Brent's reputation.

6.14 **Option 3**

Cease delivery of any faith-based events and deliver a reduced programme

Deliver one Brent Celebrates event (which is anticipated to be an event attracting up to 30,000 people) and continue to provide fireworks night and Holocaust Memorial Day. The council would also work with others in the community, to provide advice and guidance to resident groups to promote festivals and events they may identify.

This would mean the council ceasing its current events for Chanukah, St Patrick's Day, Eid, Diwali, Christmas, St George's Day, LGBT Month, International Women's Day. It would also no longer fund Navrati or the Christmas/festive lights.

This option would enable the council to build on the support already provided to a number of events, festivals and activities delivered by community groups which is currently working well. This would meet the requirements identified in the Brent Cultural Strategy 2010-2015 of providing a key leadership role in developing partnerships with cultural providers. This support could include advice and, where appropriate, training. Savings of approximately £270,000 would be achieved in the first year. The consultation feedback does not oppose this option and does support festivals and activities that bring all communities together.

This is the preferred option.

6.15 **Option 4**

All festivals are ceased and the festival team is disbanded

This is the second option recently consulted on and would result in £508,000 savings in the first year less redundancy costs.

The recent consultation has shown that this is not a preferred option. While respondents recognised that there is a requirement to making savings it is not accepted that this should be at the cost of ceasing all activity. Most identify they would like to see some form of festival/event activity but that it should move away from any 'religious' attachment. This option would also not meet with the agreed requirements of the Brent Cultural Strategy 2010-2015 in providing a key leadership role in developing partnerships among cultural providers and supporting/advising on delivery of community owned events. It does not enable the council to exercise its 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. It would also have a significant detrimental impact on support for activities for 2012 and support for activities at the Civic Centre when open.

6.16 It should be noted that the council is not proposing stopping the celebration of any specific dates or events. It would positively encourage these taking place – they would need to be community-led.

6.14 To deliver the Events and Festivals Programme it is suggested that the newly formed Events and Marketing Team in Customer and Community Engagement lead on the programme with identified cross-council support from relevant services areas as required. These would include parks, health safety and licensing, libraries arts and heritage and others as required.

7.0 Festivals/Events/Activities for 2011/2012

No major events have been programmed in for this financial year as this would have pre-empted the Council Executive's decision. If the Executive decides to continue

providing a festivals/events programme it is proposed that this is regarded as a transition year and that a new programme would be developed for next year. There is insufficient time to programme any large scale events this year and the recruitment of specialist staff has been on hold pending the outcome of this report. Depending on the decision both fireworks night and the Holocaust Memorial Day could go ahead.

8.0 Financial Implications

Arts

- 8.1 Option 1 of the Arts strategy results in no financial savings and is focussed on increasing capacity and delivery of priorities.
- 8.2 Option 2 of the Arts strategy results in a £20,000 savings, which is a reduction in grant to the Tricycle Theatre. This figure is already assumed in 2011/2012 budget so if not made here would have to be found elsewhere within the arts budget.

Festivals

- 8.3 For Festivals Options 2 and 3 reduces the current provision resulting in a saving of £231,000 and £275,000 respectively, assuming the savings are taken at the start of financial year 2011/2012.
- 8.4 Option 1 for Festivals would see no savings which would require additional savings to be identified in service areas.
- 8.5 Option 4 would see a saving of £508,000 but redundancy costs and salaries paid would need to be taken into account for 2011/2012. The full year saving would be in effect from 2012/2013.

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 While there is no duty on the council to provide arts or events activities, 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.

10.0 Diversity/Equality Implications

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been conducted and is attached as appendix 8. Its current status is that it is being audited by the council's Diversity team.
- 10.2 Section 149 in Chapter 1 of Part XI of the Equality Act 2010 is the new public sector equality duty which came into force on 5 April 2011. Attached as appendix 9 is a full explanation of the duty which members need to consider. Broadly speaking Section 149 extends the scope of the duty to all 'protected characteristics' as defined in section 4 of the Act except marriage and civic partnership.
- 10.3 The protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment;

pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

- 10.4 The EIA finds that the current provision for festivals does not meet the needs of the eight protected characteristics and consultation feedback indicates that there are concerns that the current programme is divisive. The proposition to go with a reduced programme that includes an all inclusive Brent Celebrates event would mainstream the protected characteristics. There would also be opportunities for individuals or groups to receive advice, training and support to allow them to deliver local activities for specific equality groupings.

11.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

Arts

- 11.1 A restructuring of the Arts Team is currently being carried out in accordance with the council's Managing Change policy. Staff and trade unions are being fully consulted.

Festivals

- 11.2 A restructuring of the Festivals Team has been carried out as part of a wider restructure of the Customer and Community Engagement Team. The restructure was carried out in accordance with the council's Managing Change policy. Staff and trade unions were fully consulted.
- 11.3 The restructure of the Festivals Team has allowed for this small team of two to be aligned with the current Business Development Team – also a small team of two – to form an Events and Marketing Team of three full-time equivalent staff. This alignment will allow for greater promotion and support of events activities and also for greater opportunities to identify and development sponsorship.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 – Draft Arts and Festivals Strategy

Appendix 2a and 2b – Consultation results

Appendix 3 – Monitoring information

Appendix 4 – London Boroughs events comparison

Appendix 5 – Brent Festival Strategy Review

Appendix 6 – Culture indicators

Appendix 7 – Equality Impacts Assessment

Appendix 8 – The Public Sector Equality Duty

Appendix 9 – Petition to retain support to the St Patrick's Day Parade

Appendix 10 - Petition to continue funding the Navratri festival

Appendix 11 – Cost of Events

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