



Executive
18 July 2011

**Report from Director of Customer
and Community Engagement**

Wards affected: All

Future funding of an events programme

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report outlines:

- the overarching priorities underpinning the future delivery of a programme of activities that are inclusive to all which have been developed following recent consultation.
- options for the council's funding for the delivery of a programme of activities 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).

2.0 Recommendations

That Executive:

- 2.1 approves Option 3 (outlined at 6.5). This will deliver a reduced events programme with no cultural or faith-related events from 1 April 2012.
- 2.2 endorses the commitment to providing advice and support for local community groups to stage a broad range of celebratory events.
- 2.3 notes the priorities underpinning any future delivery of an inclusive events programme.

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.

3.2 A clear strategy for an inclusive events programme in Brent is overdue and required. There are a number of increasingly urgent reasons for clarity and direction, namely:

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

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

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.

4. **Overarching priorities for a future inclusive events programme**

4.1 The attached priorities (Appendix 1) have been written to align with the principles of Brent's Cultural Strategy 2010-2015.

4.2 The council's four priorities have been produced to ensure 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 and increasing community cohesion.

4.4 **2012 Olympics**

It is anticipated these priorities will underpin an inclusive programme of events for the next four years which 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 activities during this period is likely to be heavily influenced by the Games.

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

Any future programme of events will also acknowledge 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 cultural events. The building will have significant quality public areas within which to host activities 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 recommendations within this report have 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 Other relevant consultations and feedback have taken place over the past few years which have also informed the proposed options. 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).
- 5.5 The priorities consulted on for the delivery of a festivals programme 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.
- 5.6 The response percentages to the questions were:
- Are they the right priorities?

- 53% agreed, 46 % disagreed
- Are they equally important?
 - 70% disagreed, 30% agreed

- 5.7 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.

- 5.8 The consultation provided an opportunity for feedback on the current and future provision for events/festivals. The full results are attached as Appendix 2a and 2b. Respondents identified the two preferred priorities as an all encompassing approach that was 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.

6.0 Options for a future inclusive programme of events

- 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. Depending on the option chosen an action plan would need to be developed to ensure delivery.

- 6.2 The four priorities for the Events and Marketing 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.

6.3 **Option 1**

Continue with the current programme of events and festivals

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.

6.4 **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.

6.5 **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 Navratri 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 recommended option.

6.6 **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.

6.7 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.

6.8 For future delivery of an inclusive programme of events 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

7.1 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 with a new inclusive programme being developed from next year.

7.2 There is insufficient time to programme any large scale events this year, in particular Respect, Countryside Day and Diwali. With the recruitment of specialist staff having been on hold pending the outcome of this report the planning activity necessary to ensure the safe delivery of these events has not taken place. This has not allowed for work to take place within communities and schools to ensure activities are in place to deliver 'on the day'.

7.3 There is an opportunity to deliver a reduced programme of activities for the current financial year but these would have to take place within the reduced budget available.

7.4 As part of this reduced programme a Festival of Light and Firework Display could be delivered on 5 November, a free activity open to all to attend, which would bring together the finale of Diwali and Fireworks Night.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 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.

- 8.2 Option 1 would not realise any savings which would require additional savings to be identified in service areas.
- 8.3 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 audit carried out. It is attached as appendix 7.
- 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 8 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 historical provision for events/festivals does not meet the needs of the eight protected characteristics and consultation feedback indicates that there are concerns that the current programme is potentially 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)

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 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 develop sponsorship where appropriate.

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 Impact 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**

Contact Officers

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