

## Consultation on Brent's Arts & Festival Strategy

### Executive Summary

This consultation ran between 7 March and 26 April 2011. The consultation took the form of a questionnaire in both on-line and paper formats.

**Number of responses.** There were one hundred and ninety four (194), responses to the online questionnaire and eight (8) paper responses. Responses to both questionnaire formats have been amalgamated for the purposes of analysis. In addition a number of emails and letters were received. The Council has also received two petitions:

1. To retain funding support the St Patrick's day parade
2. To retain funding to support the Navratri Festival .

### Top line analysis

#### Arts questions

The consultation document set out the council's proposed four priority areas of work – which would be used to inform a programme of support to future arts events in the borough. The priority areas 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.

**Are they the right priorities?** Participants were asked whether or not they agreed these were the correct priorities? The answers to this question were fairly evenly split with 54% agreeing they were and 46% saying they were not. When asked if the priorities were equally important a majority of respondents, (71%) said the proposed priorities were **NOT** of equal importance. Only 29% agreed the four priority areas were of equal importance.

**Rating the priorities!** When given the opportunity to rate the proposed four priority areas of work in order of importance, (1 = most important / 4 = least important), the responses were as follows:

Importance	Priority area
1st	Promoting the cultural economy
2nd	Supporting the regeneration and infrastructure investments underway
3rd	Commissioning and promoting art
4th	Promoting arts and festivals linked to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

**Other suggestions!** Participants were also asked if they could suggest other areas of work not covered in the proposed priority areas. 93 respondents answered this question. The comments have been themed and are attached.

Arts activities that promote the cultural economy, particularly with reference to Brent’s cultural diversity, feature significantly in the responses to this question. Black art, history, young people, schools and the disabled are groups specifically mentioned as priorities for arts development. Activities that support the regeneration and infrastructure investments etc., also attract some additional support. Willesden Green Library Centre, the Stables Art Gallery and ‘job creation’ are specifically mentioned in relation to this priority. Promoting arts and festivals linked to the Olympic and Paralympic games was rated 4<sup>th</sup>. There are few comments on this proposal – one commentator questions the relevance to Brent while another is not clear that the Olympics will have a lasting legacy in order for this to be a priority. A few respondents have taken the opportunity to register their support for continued funding to festival events – notably the Navratri Festival.

## **Festivals questions**

The consultation document set out the council’s proposed four priority areas of work. The priority areas of work would be the guiding principles which be used to inform a programme of support to future festival events in the borough. The priority areas 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 council officers and external event organisers to ensure we deliver safe and well organised events.

**Are they the right priorities?** Participants were asked whether or not they agreed these were the correct priorities? The answers to this question were fairly evenly split with 53% agreeing they were and 47% saying they were not. When asked if the priorities were equally important a majority of respondents, (70%) said the proposed priorities were **NOT** of equal importance. Only 30% agreed the four priority areas were of equal importance.

**Rating the priorities!** When given the opportunity to rate the proposed four priority areas of work in order of importance, (1 = most important / 4 = least important), the responses were as follows:

<b>Importance</b>	<b>Priority area</b>
1st	An all encompassing approach that promotes festivals and events which are inclusive of all Brent’s communities
2nd	Promoting events that act as a community showcase creating vibrant public spaces which attract visitors to the borough
3rd	Promote best practice jointly between council officers and external event organisers to ensure we deliver safe and well organised events
4th	Promoting a business development approach to festivals and events which secure additional funding and sponsorship

**Other suggestions!** Participants were also asked if they could suggest other areas of work not covered in the proposed priority areas. 85 respondents answered this question. The comments have been themed and are attached.

An all encompassing approach that promotes festivals and events which are inclusive of all Brent's communities feature significantly in the responses to this question. Other communities identified include, young people, disadvantaged and at-risk groups youth and homeless. Promoting 'community spirit' and community cohesion are also mentioned. Promoting 'best practice' and promoting a 'business development' approach both attract support in this section. As with the similar question on arts, some respondents have taken the opportunity to register their support for continued funding to festival events. Navratri attracts the most support and to a lesser extent support is registered for 'Respect', Diwali, Christmas, St Patrick's Day, Eid, Chanukah and Holocaust Memorial Day.

**Anything additional!** The final question asked participants if there was anything additional to add to proposals for supporting arts and festivals in the borough. 109 respondents answered this question. Comments have been themed and edited - a full list is attached.

The largest single number of respondents to this question have chosen to register their support for continued funding of the Navratri Festival. Comments in some cases have been reproduced verbatim in different individual consultation responses. One comment was repeated on 10 occasions. Support for continued funding of the St Patrick's Day parade is also registered as is support for Christian festivals and 'Respect'. A number of commentators support the notion of arts and festivals on a more community (than religious) basis. Young people and the importance of the Olympics are mentioned. Considerable support is expressed for support to and development of local art and artists. Sponsorship and partnership arrangements to maintain funding receive some support. Closer involvement with local people and the voluntary sector is also recommended. There are some commentators who are promoting more equal distribution in the funding regime – citing examples of current unfairness or bias. There are two comments recommending no funding in favour of community self support.

**Demographics** – to follow.

### **Arts & Festivals Strategy – 2 Petitions**

1. Save St Patrick's Day. Author – Michael Kearny (BIAS) – approx 300 signatures.
2. Continue funding the Navratri Festival. Author Jack Gajjar - 281 signatures.