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| Meeting: | Overview & Scrutiny |
| Date: | 20 th November 2007 |
| Subject: | Overview & Scrutiny Review of Cultural Services |
| Responsible Officer: | Javed Khan, Director of Community & Cultural Services |
| Portfolio Holder: | Councillor Anjana Patel – Portfolio Holder for Community & Cultural Services |
| Exempt: | No |
| Enclosures: | None |

Section 1 – Summary

This report provides a progress update to the recommendations in the July 19th Overview and Scrutiny Report to Cabinet for the Scrutiny Review of Cultural Services.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

2.1 The review made 26 specific recommendations for action across four main themes of:

- consultation with the wider community should be central to the development of cultural services

- clear aims and priorities should be developed
- planning for sufficient capacity and sustainability should be considered
- robust performance management plays a key role

2.2 Response to specific recommendations

The following update addresses the committee's recommendations by each point:

| RECOMMENDATION | RESPONSE |
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| <u>STRATEGIC ISSUES</u> | |
| <p>Recommendation 1: <i>The first step towards developing the Harrow Cultural Strategy in 2009 should be to identify key aims for cultural provision in the borough. Local people and groups should be consulted and enabled to take an active role in working with officers to carry out the work to identify these aims.</i></p> | <p>The Council will ensure that the 2009 revision of the borough- wide Cultural Strategy will actively involve local people and groups.</p> <p>November Update: An overarching Cultural Forum has been formed from a variety of disparate committees and will hold a first meeting in late November to agree a Terms of Reference and begin to recruit broader membership.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 2: <i>In the long term, the council should consider entering into partnership with an independent, charitable organisation to deliver arts services.</i></p> | <p>The council has recently taken over two key arts and heritage facilities following the demise of a private charity for the second time in 7 years. This reflects the challenges of such partnership, and the limited market of service providers. Further work must be done to determine the root causes prior to any progression towards this goal. Additionally, with the new facilities project at Gayton Road, this may present some challenges for the council with a partner in a co-located council space.</p> <p>November Update: Officers will consider further the potential market options for provision.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 3: <i>The opportunity should be taken as part of the council's new cultural strategy to maintain the council's commitment to placing the arts, and culture,</i></p> | <p>Agreed. A Cultural Services Officer Group (CSOG) has been meeting regularly since 2005 and continues</p> |

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| <p><i>at the centre of the way it thinks about the services it provides to local people, through strategic, tactical and operational links to high-level service plans and strategies.</i></p> | <p>to develop strong links between the breadth of cultural services delivery, ensuring that the importance of these services is reflected in the Council's corporate ambitions. CSOG will begin work on the next Cultural Strategy in 2008.</p> <p>November Update:</p> <p>The CSOG has been instrumental in raising the profile of Culture and has lobbied to include measures in the Local Area Agreement, has undertaken a Regional Commentary with GOL, and has successfully secured 15 days of high level technical support from the London Cultural Services Improvement Manager to ensure that Culture plays a key role across council services and the community, and in the lead up to the 2009 Cultural Strategy.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 4: <i>A robust approach to performance management is key to the successful operation of cultural services. Officers should recognise this by seeking to establish a more robust approach to performance management, leading to a performance management culture in cultural services. Performance management must be kept under review by the scrutiny function.</i></p> | <p>CSOG and a Performance Management Support officer are undertaking an internal review of the scorecard of measures required and their relevance to holistic cultural services performance management. Cultural Services performance is also monitored at the recently established Service Improvement Board Meetings.</p> <p>November Update:</p> <p>Two Improvement Boards have taken place since the last report and Culture has shown improvement in many reporting areas including performance management with a significant gain in some key KPI's. The performance team of the CSOG group meet to retain a high profile on these improvements and have identified pressures and priorities for improvement.</p> |
| <p><u>CULTURAL FACILITIES</u></p> | |
| <p>Recommendation 5: <i>The council should justify plans for the future based upon firstly</i></p> | <p>Service areas already make use of data from a range of sources and the</p> |

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| <p><i>a baseline understanding of current facilities and their use, and secondly on a robust analysis of the needs which need to be met for cultural services in the borough. The review group would like to see evidence of this at a later date.</i></p> | <p>results of studies such as the extensive Sports, Recreation and Open Spaces Study. Further analysis will be undertaken in the lead up to the Gayton Road Project, and in the collection of data for audience development and a cultural ‘observatory’ of data.</p> <p>November Update: Council Officers are harvesting information from a variety of new data sets through arts, sports and leisure, and beginning development of additional data collection and analysis systems in light of the Gayton Road Project and the Leisure Sites Project (pending November Cabinet decisions) and outcomes from the Regional Commentaries.</p> |
| <p><i>Recommendation 6:</i> <i>The council should put its reference and reliance on a wide range of demographic information, including the Harrow Vitality Profiles, on a more formal footing for the planning of cultural services, recognising them as key tools for analysing the needs of local people and making long term plans accordingly.</i></p> | <p>Services already rely heavily on the Vitality Profiles and other data to inform service planning and delivery. The recent Beacon Centre opening and Celebrating Change programme of arts activities were developed precisely around identified need.</p> <p>Vitality Profile data and other cultural data can sometimes be challenging as it is often demographically based or culturally based, but seldom interchangeable. Demographic data paints a picture of social need without consideration for cultural aspiration and often the most active cultural communities are those in the most deprived wards. Conversely, affluence does not necessarily influence cultural participation. The data sets available in the creative industries, for example, are disparate and specialised. Recent years have seen a regional effort to create cultural ‘observatories’ of knowledge, which the Council aspires to develop locally.</p> <p>November Update: As noted in Recommendation 5, new data tools are now emerging in the Cultural Services Service Planning.</p> |

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| | <p>One in particular, the Passport to Culture, will be in rapid development as a tool to map public and private facilities and venues and engage audiences through a culture card and marketing offer. The backbone of this system is a data collection process that will inform about user patterns and preferences, which can in turn be used to develop future programmes and price incentives.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 7: <i>Cultural infrastructure, and its development, should be planned with reference both to perceived exemplars of best practice in this field, and to the aims and aspirations of the council's cultural strategy, as part of a robust performance management process.</i></p> | <p>Agreed.</p> <p>November Update: No specific action. Consideration given at all opportunities and within all working programmes.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 8: <i>In the medium and long term, provision at Harrow Arts Centre and the Harrow Museum should be fully integrated within the rest of the borough's cultural provision.</i></p> | <p>Agreed. Provision at Harrow Arts Centre has been fully integrated into the arts provision by reorganisation of the department and refresh of the service plan following the successful re-launch of the centre. The Harrow Museum has been fully integrated into the libraries and heritage provision by assimilating the staff and service planning after the re-opening of the site.</p> <p>November Update: No further action.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 9: <i>Steps should be taken as part of the process for the development of the 2009 cultural strategy to outline a vision, for the HAC in particular, that permits long-term decisions to be made about the physical fabric of the main building and the site as a whole.</i></p> | <p>Agreed. A whole site review will be considered for the Hatch End site that includes the other site users (leisure, medical, private) and aspirations for a repositioning of the site as a Culture and Leisure centre.</p> <p>November Update: November Cabinet report on Leisure Sites recommends a feasibility and masterplan be developed for the Hatch End site (including the arts centre).</p> |
| <p><u>COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</u></p> | |
| <p>Recommendation 10: <i>The council should not consider resident satisfaction data as a</i></p> | <p>The limited nature of data collection in the annual reporting of Culture</p> |

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| <p><i>standalone issue. Surveys should be integrated within a range of other methods of community involvement, thus allowing a more holistic view to be taken on the success of cultural services from the point of view of service users.</i></p> | <p>Block Indicators is showing a slanted view of the reality of Cultural Services. There are numerous other collection and consultation methods in place across the services that are not measured or considered, and the resident's data alone is not sufficient. Surveys are also subjective and officers are keen to develop stronger real engagement methods with audiences and residents who are already, or could be participants.</p> <p>November Update: The Cultural Forum will be taking a lead to assist Officers in developing new methods of data collection and consultation. In addition, specific projects such as the Leisure Sites Development Programme each have a sub group formed for communications and consultation. Additionally, box office and audience development at the arts centre are now beginning to collect better data with new data systems.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 11: <i>The council should reassess the effectiveness of the cultural forums. They should be used as one of a raft of measures to involve the local community. Community involvement should extend to individual residents and users on their terms, rather than on the terms of the council as a method to achieve its own ends in consultation.</i></p> | <p>The healthy involvement of the existing cultural forums and planning groups across a range of events, with delivery based on the active involvement of our users and residents, would question the validity of this recommendation. The cultural forums are one of many engagement strategies in place within the service, which influence the development of service plans. The services show excellent value for money and have been measured year on year with extraordinary outputs and cultural delivery. Whilst the reminder that our community is at the core of our planning for a cultural strategy is welcome, given the strength of existing activity, this recommendation serves little purpose. The Council is currently recruiting to a new post of Audience Development Manager, which will add significantly to existing successes.</p> |

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| | <p>November Update: An Audience Development Programme is now well underway to relaunch the arts centre and work more closely with the community to define the programmes and activities it wants in future programmes. Immediate benefit has been seen as children's shows are a sell out. A Community Sports & Physical Activity Network (CSPAN) has also now been facilitated by the officers to ensure a wider involvement of participation in defining our future plans for sports and leisure. This group is structured more like a strategic partnership with independent decision making and is currently writing its action plan of priorities for an allocated fund of £158k secured by Officers from Sport England.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 12: <i>The council's 2009 cultural strategy should be designed to place the needs of the local community, as expressed through community involvement activities, in a strategic context.</i></p> | <p>Agreed. Community involvement is of the utmost importance and the Council will continue to develop these strong links through to the design of the next cultural strategy. We also recognise that arts and culture is about aspiration and contemporary exploration—these cannot exclusively be realised through community need. The intention of the arts service must also be about raising the bar and inspiring new horizons of thought beyond the known local frame.</p> <p>November Update: No specific action taken but a wider community involvement in many areas is now underway. As service planning commences all opportunities for strategic community involvement are being considered.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 13: <i>The council should take immediate steps to ensure that current consultation activities identify community need, established both by conventional needs analysis and community involvement</i></p> | <p>The notion that all activities must be justified prior to any action is a sweeping statement that would work to deter the very valuable ongoing work of services, which is based on</p> |

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| <p><i>activities, as the paramount concern in any cultural development.</i></p> | <p>strong robust plans framed on current thinking. We understand that for any major projects, more must be specifically done to assess needs and then prioritise.</p> <p>November Update: The Cultural Forum has been created to partly address this recommendation and for all capital development projects a subgroup of Communications and Consultation is formed.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 14: <i>The council and ward councillors should investigate the possibility of creating community funds, which can be used by local people to carry out specific projects. Local people should be provided with the support necessary to be able to apply for and use these funds effectively.</i></p> | <p>The Council already operates Prosperity Action Teams at a Ward Member level.</p> <p>November Update: No specific action required of Cultural Services.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 15: <i>The cultural services strategy should ensure that Gayton Road's pre-eminence as the borough's flagship community cultural facility is established and maintained.</i></p> | <p>Agreed.</p> <p>November Update: Related to Cabinet report decision in November.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 16: <i>Consideration should be given to the potential of the Gayton Road project to act as an element of, and driver for, the redevelopment of the town centre.</i></p> | <p>Agreed.</p> <p>November Update: Related to Cabinet report decision in November.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 17: <i>The main gallery space at Gayton Road should be professionally curated.</i></p> | <p>This issue will be considered fully at the appropriate stage of development.</p> <p>November Update: Related to Cabinet report decision in November.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 18: <i>The Council should look critically at the proposal for a commercial performance space seating 350 in the context of the financial viability of such a venue.</i></p> | <p>The documentation provided on this matter clearly spelt out the justification for a 350-seat theatre rather than 250 seats. The minimal risk and nominal fit out costs for an additional 100 seats far outweigh the overwhelming opportunities it affords to local and regional commercial arts activity.</p> <p>November Update:</p> |

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| | Related to Cabinet report decision in November. |
| Recommendation 19: <i>The Council should make clear estimates of, and firm commitments to, ongoing revenue funding for the Gayton Road arts centre.</i> | We are considering this issue within the Council's Medium Term Budget Strategy. November Update: Related to Cabinet report decision in November. |
| Recommendation 20: <i>We consider an ongoing library facility in the centre of Harrow to be essential over the transitional period.</i> | We are developing options to maintain the library's functional resources through virtual and other means during its period of closure. November Update: Related to Cabinet report decision in November. An alternative location has been identified for the library. |
| Recommendation 21: <i>More detailed community involvement work, consulting local people and groups about the design brief, eventual architects' plans and fit-out for the site, needs to be carried out in tandem with the physical construction of the project.</i> | We have established a project sub-committee, which is focusing specifically on developing a Communication plan for the project. This will include local consultation on the various aspects of the project. November Update: Related to Cabinet report decision in November. |
| Recommendation 22: <i>Capital improvements to be undertaken within cultural services should be prioritised, to identify which are the most important for the council and to manage competing project priorities accordingly.</i> | Case Study: Bernays Gardens November Update: Following a Cabinet decision in November there will be further consideration of existing sites and a prioritisation plan will be put in place. Additionally, a master planning exercise and further consultation will aid Cultural Services in identifying the priorities as seen by the users. |

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| <p>Recommendation 23: <i>Artists' studios – and other space for creative industries – should be developed to meet need in such a way that the volume of space and the number of potential studios is maximised. Some sites may not be appropriate for certain developments; a strategic approach should be taken.</i></p> | <p>Case Study: Bernays Gardens</p> <p>Agreed.</p> <p>November Update: No action taken as there has been no development toward artists studios.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 24: <i>As part of a prioritisation exercise, definite plans on the use of the site should be drawn up and the appropriate community groups consulted before any further action is taken.</i></p> | <p>Case Study: Bernays Gardens</p> <p>Further action on this matter will be considered in due course, including the need for further community consultation.</p> <p>November Update: No action taken as there has been no further development at the site.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 25: <i>Local councillors should be approached regarding providing funding for some elements of the development through the Prosperity Action Teams, in conjunction with community fundraising.</i></p> | <p>Case Study: Bernays Gardens</p> <p>Prosperity Action teams will be made of aware of these options.</p> <p>November Update: No action taken as there has been no further development at the site.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 26: The Cultural Services Review should reconvene in six month's time to consider the success of the Beacon Centre and report their findings to Overview and Scrutiny.</p> | <p>See below.</p> |

Recommendation 26 Update:

Officers have worked closely with Home Group (formerly Warden Housing) to develop activities and cultural offer at the new Beacon Centre. While it has only been operational for several months, there has been significant development and much more is planned in coming months. Activity is steadily increasing:

Home Group Involvement:

The Beacon Centre publishes a newsletter. It aims to keep the users informed. There is an HA2 club which provides:

- girls youth club on Mondays 5pm-7pm which involves street dance, drama and I.T skills,
- junior club ages 8-12 on Tuesdays 5pm-7pm which involves multi-sports and creativity

- older youth club ages 13-19 on Wednesdays 6-8pm which involves college applications, job search and I.T skills
- Estate football league Thursday ages 8-12, 5pm-7pm
- Estate football league Thursday ages 13-19, 7pm-9pm

Council Department Involvement:

Cultural Strategy for Rayner's Lane

A draft Cultural Strategy has been developed for Rayner's Lane Estate, which is currently in discussion with the tenants association. Further work will proceed on this in the coming months and will allow for community consultation.

Sports

A Sports Development Officer assists with a programme of activity by local sports clubs in Basketball, Table Tennis, Badminton and Karate. Roller Skating is taking place at the facility on a couple of nights per week.

Cricket, Weightlifting and Netball have all been highlighted for further development.

Watford Football Club will be rolling out their two year Football Foundation funded KICKZ project in the new year, which will further supplement the excellent work for football on the estate.

The facility is also working with Harrow College, to develop a series of coach education and Sports Leadership courses.

Harrow Sports Development Team have applied for funding (LDA) to provide Street Games style activity in three locations in the Borough - Rayners Lane have been highlighted for activity.

Celebrating Change event that the Sports Team helped facilitate.

Adult Community Learning (ACL)

ACL runs some IT courses at the Centre and also supplied all the IT equipment there. The Council has recently run some training programmes for community organizations and some Family Learning taster events earlier in the year, with plans for more of these later in this year. If a current Big Lottery Fund bid is successful, Family Learning programmes at the Centre will be greatly expanded for the next 3 years.

Youth Engagement

A recruitment for a Youth Worker in Training has begun, which will be based at the Beacon Centre. They will be assisting with the KICKZ project scheduled to begin work there too.

Section 3 – Further Information

This report summarises the follow up activity required from the July Overview and Scrutiny Review of Cultural Services.

No further updates are required.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

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Background Papers:

**Scrutiny Review of Cultural Services
Cover Report to Cabinet, July 19th 2007**