

Full Council: 13 December, 2016

Opposition Motion: Cllr Kath McGuirk

A Cultural Strategy for Barnet

Council believes that culture and the arts enriches lives, inspires learning and education, boosts economic growth, attracts investment, helps build communities and strengthens community cohesion by celebrating diversity.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has said he plans to "democratise the arts" in the capital, so that Zone 1 should not "hog the best arts and culture in our city".

Council notes that Barnet has a rich cultural heritage and history, and is one of the best placed boroughs to demonstrate what outer-London can offer.

Barnet has vibrant community festivals in East Barnet and East Finchley; museum space at the RAF Museum, Avenue House and Barnet Museum; an English Heritage registered battlefield where the Battle of Barnet was fought during the Wars of the Roses; 2,155 listed buildings, objects or structures considered to be of special architectural or historic interest; 4 registered historic parks and gardens; amateur and professional theatres such as the artsdepot, Finchley Youth Theatre, The Bull Theatre, The Incognito Theatre and The Garden Suburb Theatre, and Community Focus who has a long history of engaging with young people and those with disabilities through the arts.

Barnet also has other venues hosting arts events within the borough and on our borders such as The Phoenix Cinema, The Hampstead Garden suburb Institute and Chicken Shed Theatre.

This list is not exhaustive, but shows the breadth of Barnet's cultural offer.

Council believes that investing some time and effort into developing a cultural strategy for Barnet could help meet council policy objectives across all themed committees, as well as improve the Borough's standing in London, nationally and internationally.

Council also believes that a proper cultural strategy for the borough could help position Barnet to be a future London Borough of Culture.

Council therefore requests that the CELS Committee works with partners including schools, Barnet College, Middlesex University, Barnet Borough Arts Council and local businesses to develop a Cultural Strategy for Barnet.

As a first step, Council asks that the CELS Committee receives a report at the next committee meeting detailing:

- What LB Barnet is doing to promote culture and the arts in the borough, and
- How LB Barnet is engaging with arts and heritage groups in the borough, the Arts Council and the Mayor of London to promote Barnet as a cultural centre.