



Community Leadership and Libraries Committee

7 February 2023

Title	Civic and Community Events Policy
Report of	Chair of Community, Leadership & Libraries Committee
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	Appendix 1. Civic and Community Events Policy
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Summary

Barnet Council has a new focus on engaging with residents, empowering communities and celebrating the culture of the borough. The forthcoming Corporate Plan will set out a vision to make Barnet a borough of fun, where those who live and work have opportunities to enjoy life and celebrate the things that are important to them. To support this, we are proposing a year-long programme of community engagement and capacity building to enable more community events. This policy outlines our approach and describes how it will work.

Wherever possible our approach will be to enable community groups to put on their own events, whether by providing access to funding or working in partnership with them. We will also showcase their achievements through our communications channels. This supports the council's Community Participation Strategy and its principles of empowering residents and community groups to celebrate their culture and take an active role in civic life. Events also provide opportunities to get to know our communities and to engage them through fun and creative activities.

The policy also puts forward a confirmed list of the festivals and awareness events that the council will officially mark and the civic events that we will observe.

Officers Recommendations

That members approve:

1. The Civic and Community Events Policy appended
2. The community events programme and the approach we will take to deliver it
3. A list of the faith festivals, cultural celebrations, awareness days and memorial events that the council will officially mark.

Authority is delegated to the relevant Chief Officer to approve the award of grant funding as provided in the Civic and Community Events Policy.

1. Why this report is needed

- 1.1 The Civic and Community Events Policy sets out the council's intentions to foster community cohesion and celebrate the culture of our borough by enabling groups in our Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector to hold events.
- 1.2 The approach we are proposing in this policy has already been trialled during Black History Month 2022 and the recent Winter Festival programme. While both of these activities have existed previously, this year the council made grant funding available to groups to put on events in the community. This significantly increased the number of events taking place around the borough. While the promotion of these events and the publicity they generated created much more of a 'buzz'. This was particularly noticeable during Black History Month.
- 1.3 This approach to a community events programme is at the heart of this policy. While it includes community events that the council will put on, the programme is distinct and complementary to others that take place in the borough, such as large-scale summer festivals or events held through neighbourhood regeneration initiatives. The community events programme will be focused on events that are connected to a particular culture, faith, protected characteristic or shared cultural identity.
- 1.4 Community events will be supported by grant funding that will be promoted to the community around a set calendar of significant religious or cultural festivals and awareness dates. Groups will also be able to apply for grants outside of these times by bidding to an 'always-on' fund' within the main grant budget.
- 1.5 Delivering the community events programme supports the approaches set out in the council's 2022 Community Participation Strategy. And like the pathfinder projects detailed in the strategy it is a pilot initiative through which we will learn by doing. We will continuously evaluate each stage of this first year of the community events programme so we can adapt and refine it for future years.
- 1.6 The events programme offers residents opportunities for volunteering. Another objective of the Community Participation Strategy.

- 1.7** The Civic and Community Events Policy also supports the council's aims to develop the cultural capital in the borough and to help make Barnet a 'borough of fun'. Our events grant funding will build capacity within our communities to deliver creative and innovative events that celebrate the rich culture and diversity of the borough. We will communicate and publicise the events programme to celebrate its successes and build a rich picture of the cultural life of Barnet.
- 1.8** As well as enabling events in the community, the policy also confirms what cultural festivals and awareness days the council will publicly mark through the raising of flags or lighting up the Town Hall. There is already an established calendar of civic events that are managed by the Mayor's Office, and these are factored into the programme. The events policy also supports and complements the Events in Parks Policy, and any community events delivered in parks will comply with its requirements. It is also our aim that the community events programme supports any large outdoor events managed by Barnet's Greenspaces and Leisure Service and increases opportunities for community involvement in them.
- 1.9** Outside of the agreed calendar of events and festivals the council will observe, there will also be unexpected events and occurrences that may require a response. Recent examples of these include the raising of the Ukrainian flag on Ukraine Independence Day in 2022 and the flying of Barnet's civic flag at half-mast following the plane crash in Nepal earlier this year. In events like these, the Communications team will advise senior management on possible ways to publicly respond. The final decision on all these matters however will rest with the administration, and its sign-off will be sought before any statement or action is taken.

2. Alternative options considered and not recommended

- 2.1** The community events programme is a valuable means of engaging and understanding our communities, supporting integration and cohesion. Without it, we would need to rely on other forms of community engagement that would be far less impactful.
- 2.2** Providing funding to community groups empowers them to take ownership of the events and genuinely celebrate their culture and identity. Not providing this support would result in far fewer events, and significantly reduced social and cultural capital in the borough. This would make it much harder to deliver on the council's vision of Barnet as a borough of fun and culture.
- 2.3** Historically there has sometimes been confusion over what dates the council should mark and how – whether through public statements, flag raising or lights. Without an agreed calendar of observance dates and actions this uncertainty will continue and could lead to reputational risk.

3. Post decision implementation

- 3.1** Following approval, the council's Strategy and Engagement team will take forward its proposals. We have appointed an interim Community Events Officer funded from the Transformation Programme Budget to lead on this work in partnership with Barnet Together Alliance, our VCFSE partners and other appropriate organisations and partners.
- 3.2** The approaches set out in the policy have already been trialled in Black History Month and the Winter Festival. We will feed any learning from these pilots into the ongoing programme.

4. Implications of decision

4.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 4.1.1** The Civic and Community Events Policy supports a number of priorities as set out in the Community Participation Strategy. These include increasing public engagement with civic life, building capacity in diverse and minoritised communities, fostering culture and creativity and celebrating diversity.
- 4.1.2** The policy and its events programme support the forthcoming Barnet Culture Strategy by providing opportunities to highlight and celebrate the creativity within our communities and using our shared public spaces such as town centres and green spaces to bring people together. It will also highlight organisations and individuals in the borough who can contribute to the development of our culture offer.
- 4.1.3** The forthcoming Corporate Plan will also reference the council's aim to make Barnet a place that people associate with fun; where people enjoy themselves and live a good life. There is no doubt that a rich programme of community events and celebrations will support this aim.

4.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 4.2.1** This new approach to community empowerment and capacity building will require some additional resource to implement. This includes the appointment of a Community Events Officer to manage the programme and take the lead on any community events production or management required from the council. This post is funded from Transformation Programme budget.
- 4.2.2** At Policy and Resources Committee on 19 July 2022 it was approved to allocate a sum of £250,000 from Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) receipts to support community engagement activity. This will fund the community events programme. Of this £250k, we have allocated a prospective £120,000 to be spent on community events. We anticipate that a proportion of this budget will be allocated at each point in the Community Events calendar, with a combination of funding for events the council is putting on, and a grant pot to enable community groups to put on events. The allocations will change for different occasions. Outside of the events in the main calendar, an 'always-on' grant pot will be available for VCFSE groups to bid for events throughout the year. This first year is a pilot, and the learning from how

funding is allocated and spent will inform the budgeting for following years.

4.3 Legal and Constitutional References

- 4.3.1 The remit of the Community, Leadership and Libraries Committee includes:
(1) Responsibility for general consultation and engagement policy not linked to projects under the terms of reference of other committees, libraries, culture, civic events, the mayoralty, voluntary, community and faith sector strategy and engagement, community safety, environmental crime (excluding littering, fly-tipping, fly-posting and graffiti), registration and nationality service, food security and Covid-19 enforcement.

4.4 Insight

- 4.4.1 Working effectively with residents across Barnet is only possible with a comprehensive understanding of the communities that exist in the borough. We will make sure to use existing and emerging insight and data to build this knowledge and inform our work with communities. We will work with partners in Barnet Together to better understand and reach diverse and minoritised communities.
- 4.4.2 We will also use insight gathered through the implementation of the events programme to increase our corporate awareness of the borough's communities.

4.5 Social Value

- 4.5.1 Enabling community events and celebrating culture in the borough are themselves significant acts of social value that foster community cohesion and shared celebration. The events programme will also provide many opportunities for sponsorship and investment and could therefore be developed as a social value channel for commercial partners.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 Any public event carries a certain amount of risk. All groups holding events are able to receive advice or recommendations from the council's Safety Advisory Group and Events Board. Both groups are made up of a range of internal and external professionals with a range of expertise in events management and production. These meetings allow for any risks to be monitored and analysed with any risk elements mitigated prior to the events taking place.

4.7 Equalities and Diversity

- 4.7.1 Pursuant to the Equality Act 2010, the council is under a legal obligation to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share it; and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' and persons who do not share it. The 'protected characteristics' are age, disability, gender reassignment,

pregnancy, and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation and in some instances marriage and civil partnership.

4.7.2 The Community Events policy is underpinned by an aim to ensure all areas of our community are involved. We work through our VCFSE partners to ensure we reach as far and as deeply into the community as possible providing lesser heard communities with the opportunity to access resources for capacity building. Following approval an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) will be carried out on the policy.

4.7.3 Funding decisions made through our events grant programme are taken by a diverse panel. Panel membership is adjusted to reflect certain events and festivals.

4.8 Corporate Parenting

4.8.1 The Council expects partner organisations in the VCFS and private sectors to agree with our corporate parenting pledge and support our endeavours to raise outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.

4.9 Consultation and Engagement

4.9.1 The events programme is itself an act of community engagement. It is coproduced with residents and VCFSE groups who propose their own events which we then choose to support. This creates an ongoing dialogue with communities where they can feel ownership of their events.

4.10 Environmental Impact

4.10.1 None in the context of this report.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

5.1 [Revised Budget 2022/23 and Business Planning 2023-2027](#)

5.2 [Community Participation Strategy 2022](#)

Appendix1. Civic and Community Events Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

As set out in the Community Participation Strategy, Barnet Council has a new focus on engaging with residents, empowering communities and celebrating the culture of the borough. Increasing the number of community events in the borough and communicating these widely will help to make Barnet feel more fun - a destination borough with a rich and diverse cultural offer.

We will empower local communities to be involved in event creation and showcase their achievements through our channels. We will work in partnership with all communities to co-create an inclusive programme of events where all our communities feel celebrated, listened to and included. We will do this by reaching out to all our communities, in particular those who are less often heard.

Managing and implementing the events programme will be the responsibility of the Strategy and Engagement Team, working in close partnership with internal partners and the local Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector and other organisations and persons where appropriate.

2. THE COMMUNITY EVENTS PROGRAMME

Public, civic and community events are held by the council and its partners throughout the year. The community events programme will be distinct from these in that it will focus on events that celebrate cultural or faith festivals and awareness days linked to cultural identity. It will focus on a series of key times of the year where most community events will be clustered, using an approach that has already been trialled during Black History Month 2022 and the 22/23 Winter Festival. Outside of these periods, an 'always on' grant pot will enable events to be supported throughout the year.

The elements of this approach are:

- A small grants pot is made available to VCFSE groups to enable community events.
- The grant scheme will be promoted to the community through external communications channels and partner organisations such as Barnet Together and the Barnet Multi Faith Forum.
- A diverse and representative funding panel will agree bids based on published criteria.
- Advice and capacity building will be provided to community groups alongside the offer of funding. This is in recognition that funding alone is not always what is preventing groups from staging events. This will be provided by the council's Community Events Officer and by Barnet Together, the council's VCFSE infrastructure partner.

The annual community events programme calendar

The programme will focus activity on several key times of the year. These have been selected so as to cover the major religious festivals observed in the borough, as well as the key cultural or social awareness events. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list. For example, the number of religious festivals celebrated in a borough as diverse as Barnet is extensive.

Most of these will be marked by the council through social media posts, and in many cases a community event will be attended by the Mayor or a nominated councillor. For the community events programme however, we will focus on the most significant festivals in each of the largest faith groups.

These will be the times of the year when we will tend to focus promotion of the grant scheme and also consider staging our own events, such as the events we will be holding on International Womens Day. They also include month-long campaign events such as Black History Month and Pride where we may create local communications materials and branding.

The grant scheme will still operate outside of these times however, and groups will be welcome to propose events for other festivals or awareness dates throughout the year. These will be considered by the panel on a rolling basis.

3. Community Events Programme: 2023 calendar

Month	Event	
January	Winter Festival	Lunar New Year
February	LGBTQI+ History Month	
March	International Women's Day	
	Ramadan and Eid al Fitr	
	Nowruz	
May	Coronation of King Charles III	
June	LGBTQI+ Pride	
July /August	South Asian Heritage Month	
October	Black History Month	
	Silver Week	
November	Winter Festival	Diwali
December		Christmas
		Channukah

4. THE COMMUNITY EVENTS GRANT SCHEME

Funding has been allocated from Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) to support community engagement. Within this is a budget to fund community events.

Funding for events will be portioned out across the year to ensure adequate funding for the main events as shown in the table above. During these periods a specially convened grants panel will meet regularly to assess and award bids. Outside of these times an 'always-on' grant scheme will run. Community groups will be able to make a bid for a community event at any time and a small panel will be convened to assess each of these as they are received.

Application process

To ensure that a fair and consistent approach we have implemented the following elements to the grant scheme:

- Scoring criteria based on corporate objectives and values, ensuring inclusivity
- Applications forms designed to ensure sufficient diversity information is captured, enabling the reach and take up of the scheme to be monitored
- Comprehensive guidance notes for applicants
- Diverse panels made up of staff and partners that reflect the communities celebrating the specific events
- Monitoring and reporting to capture trends and to ensure funding is distributed appropriately
- Encouraging a story-telling approach to evaluation through photos, video and other media to contribute to ongoing learning
- Provision of support to grantees through workshops and one-to-one advice - in partnership with Barnet Together

5. CIVIC EVENTS

Civic events are distinguished by the requirement of councils to formally recognise and mark ceremonial occasions. These include national memorial days, and other events of social or cultural importance, such as Remembrance Day, Holocaust Memorial Day and Armed Forces Day.

Sometimes the council's response to an event will incorporate both civic and community activities – such as International Women's Day where events will take place in the community but the Town Hall is also lit up in commemoration. Royal events present the best opportunities for a combined civic and community response. Last year's celebrations of The Queen's Diamond Jubilee saw an unprecedented number of resident street parties, while the Mayor's office led on a civic service and other formal acknowledgement.

Local authorities often use flags and floodlighting to recognise and show solidarity with a range of causes and communities; to commemorate, celebrate or raise awareness. Sometimes there has been a lack of clarity within the council as to what events we will and won't mark through these kinds of activities. This policy therefore sets out a proposed list of events the council will observe, and the action it will take to do so.

Flag policy

Flags will be raised on the permanent flag poles at both Hendon Town Hall and the Bristol Avenue offices in Colindale. Union flags will be flown at all times at both sites and lowered to half-mast during agreed periods of national mourning. During official visits from twin towns the civic flags of those guest municipalities may also be flown.

Both sites have two flag poles, one of which carries the union flag at all times. In situations where more than one awareness flag is required to be flown, the council and administration will agree how this is managed.

Lighting up policy

Coloured uplighters will be used to illuminate Hendon Town Hall on agreed occasions as set out in the table below.

Responding to unexpected events

The council is politically neutral so will not pledge its support to politically driven campaigns or movements. However, unforeseen events will sometimes occur that the council may choose to acknowledge publicly. Recent examples of these include the raising of the Ukrainian flag on Ukraine Independence Day in 2022 and the flying of the civic flag at half-mast following the plane crash in Barnet's twin town of Pokhara, Nepal earlier this year.

In events like these, the Communications team will advise senior management on possible ways to publicly respond. The final decision on all these matters however will rest with the administration, and its sign-off will be sought before any statement or action is made.

Proposed events for flags and lighting 2023

Month	Day	Event	Lighting	Flag
January	27	Holocaust Memorial Day	Purple light	
February	1-28	LGBTQI+ History Month		Pride flag
March	8	International Women's Day	Purple light	
	14	Commonwealth Day		Commonwealth flag
	23	St George's Day		St George's flag
June	1-30	LGBTQI+ Pride Month		Pride flag
	25	Armed Forces Week (Mon-Sat)		Armed Forces flag
	14	Grenfell disaster anniversary	Green light	
July	17-	South Asian Heritage Month		SAHM flag
August	-18			
October	1-31	Black History Month		BHM flag
November	11	Armistice Day	Red light	
	12	Remembrance Sunday	Red light	
	25-	16 Days of activism against gender-based violence	Orange light	
December	-15			
	1	World AIDS Day	Red light	

6. DELIVERING IN PARTNERSHIP

Implementation of the Civic and Community Events policy will be led by the Strategy and Engagement team and managed by the Community Events Officer. Other key partners and agencies involved are:

- The Mayor's Office
- Barnet Council internal Events Board – a group of officers involved in running events
- Safety Advisory Group - an internal board that reviews the safety aspects of public events being held in the borough

- Town Centres team – supports town centre regeneration schemes and fosters engagement, coproduction and creative placemaking in urban renewal
- Barnet Equality Allies and staff diversity networks – our internal EDI resource
- Barnet Together Alliance - our VCFSE infrastructure partnership, providing access to diverse community groups and organisations
- Barnet Multi Faith Forum – our strategic interfaith partnership
- Other councils – learning from peers and exploring opportunities for shared events
- The elected administration and individual ward members – representing communities and neighbourhoods