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## THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

COUNCIL – 28 June 2006

### REPORT BY CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION, ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND LEISURE

### RESPONSE TO PETITION ON HAMMAM AND MOROCCAN ARTS CENTRE IN NORTH KENSINGTON

This report provides information for Members on action taken following the petition presented to the Council requesting the development of a new Hammam and Moroccan Arts Centre in North Kensington.

**FOR INFORMATION**

#### 1. Background

The prayer of the petition said,

"We the undersigned residents and young people of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea call upon the Council to take action to provide a Hammam in North Kensington with adjacent Moroccan museum. We request this for our health and cultural heritage to benefit the community at large."

Councillor Bridget Hoier presented a petition containing 208 signatures. Pursuant to Standing Order 18 the petition stood referred to the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Parks, Arts and Museums for consideration and report back. Following reorganisation of Cabinet responsibilities shortly after its presentation, the petition stood referred to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environmental Management and Leisure.

#### 2. Action

##### The Arts in North Kensington

- 2.1 Within the North Kensington area, there are presently no dedicated arts facilities funded by the Council. Indeed, there is a limited amount of available space on which new premises could be built.
- 2.2 There are a number of community-focused premises, some of which such as the Venture Centre, may include a limited amount of arts

activities within their programme of activities. Within these activities the purpose of the arts is often to enable people to participate, gain new skills, or to increase their confidence.

- 2.3 The Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre was awarded a small grant in 2005 to ascertain the feasibility of developing an arts programme within the centre, primarily for the local Moroccan community.
- 2.4 A review of the future of the Tabernacle Centre, a key community venue, is underway. The main findings from a recent community consultation indicated that:
- A vision needs to be agreed for the future of the Tabernacle – as an arts centre or a community venue, or both.
  - Some of the discussion groups felt that it had a role as a centre for community activities.
  - Many participants felt it should maintain its arts focus, and the arts groups felt that the venue would not work as a community centre.
  - A number of the discussion groups said that the Tabernacle will need careful marketing and more targeted publicity to attract people in.
  - Survey results indicate that activities should focus on attracting firstly local and then Borough wide audiences.
  - Many of the discussion groups agreed that activities would need to be made accessible and affordable to local people.
  - The carnival focus group suggested carnival and carnival arts as a possible focus.
  - Three quarters of survey respondents felt that it was very or quite important for the Tabernacle to be involved with carnival in the future. 1 in 5 respondents felt it was not very or not at all important.
  - 4 out of 10 respondents felt that there should be year round carnival activities at the Tabernacle. A third of respondents did not think so, 1 in 4 respondents did not have a view.
  - From the list provided, the six activities that the highest proportion of survey respondents thought should be provided at the Tabernacle were:
    1. Theatre performances - 83.1%
    2. Music events - 82.6%
    3. Café - 80.2%
    4. Activities for older people - 78.3%

- 5. Activities for children and young people (evenings and weekends)  
- 77.5%
- 6. Dance classes - 76.9%

2.5 Though the community are supportive of the inclusion of an arts element to the Tabernacle, these results do not indicate a high level of community support for the Tabernacle to become a Moroccan focused centre.

### **Improved provision in the long term**

2.6 The Westway Development Trust are currently undertaking a feasibility study into the development of a new Arts Centre for the local community under the Westway. This development will take into account the future usage of the Tabernacle and other community centres in the area to ensure there is not a duplication of services, and an unrealistic expectation of public funding.

### **Hamмам Facilities**

We currently provide two leisure centres in the Royal Borough; Kensington Leisure Centre in the north and Chelsea Sports Centre in the South. Both of these facilities provide a balanced range of leisure opportunities for the local residents.

A recent survey undertaken with Sport England substantiates this fact and illustrates that Kensington Leisure Centre is well used by the all groups within the local community.

Kensington Leisure Centre has recently undergone a £4 million pound refurbishment in 2000 (aided by Lottery support) and there are no plans for further new facilities to be provided in the north of the Borough.

However, there has been an identified shortfall in provision in the south of the Borough and we are currently investigating how facilities there could be improved.

**FOR INFORMATION**

**Councillor Nicholas Paget-Brown  
Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environmental Management  
and Leisure**