

Service Change Full Equality Analysis

Section 1: General Information

1a) Description of the service that will be affected

The Boishakhi Mela Community Trust has submitted an application for grant funding to support its work to deliver the Boishakhi Mela on 17th May 2015. The Mela is a long standing and popular community event celebrating the Bengali New Year and is attended by a predominantly Bangladeshi audience. Last year visitor numbers are estimated to have been 50,000. The report to Commissioners detailing the background to the application includes the option not to approve the application for funding. This could **potentially** have an impact on the viability of the event although it is not clear that this is the case for certain. This EA is premised on a scenario that the decision to not approve funding would have a knock on effect resulting in the cancellation of the event.

1b) Service area

Culture

1c) Service manager

Shazia Hussain

1d) Name and role of the officer/s completing the analysis

Shanara Matin, Service Manager, Research and Equality, Corporate Strategy and Equality
Leo Nicholas, Senior SPP officer, Corporate Strategy and Equality

Section 2: Information about changes to services

2a) In brief please explain the proposal and the reasons for this change

The report considers the application for funding to support the delivery of the Boishakhi Mela in the context of identified and other potential risks of making the award and there is a proposal to not approve the applications on the basis of those risks.

This includes risks related to the performance of the Trust in failing to meet the agreed management milestones and outputs in delivering the Mela including actions that are outstanding from the event in 2014. Awarding funds could also result in a local authority funded event taking place during the pre-election period which could be used as a political platform during a pre-election period ahead of the Mayoral election in June 2015.

2b) What are the equality implications of your proposal?

The decision to not approve the application for funding could result in the cancellation of the Boishakhi Mela. This could therefore, impact on a service accessed predominantly by the Bangladeshi community who share a protected characteristic as an ethnic minority group.

The Mela is the single largest event targeted at the Bengali community and celebrating their culture. Observational estimates suggest that the audience is nearly all Bengali although this has shifted in recent years with an increase to 10 – 15% of attendees from other backgrounds.

A cancellation would be an effective withdrawal of a service that celebrates the history and heritage of a minority community which has historically faced discrimination. There are smaller scale alternative provisions to celebrate the diversity of heritages across the borough. However this is an event of significant cultural importance and has become a flagship event for sections of the Bangladeshi community. The event is viewed as a non-religious and primarily secular celebration and is also popular with the Bangladeshi Hindu community, who are a minority group within the wider Bangladeshi community.

Relevant Documents

Borough Equalities Assessment
 Draft Community Plan
 Main Stream Grants 2015/18 specification
 Annual Residents Survey 2013/14

Section 3: Equality Impact Assessment

With reference to the analysis above, for each of the equality strands in the table below please record and evidence your conclusions around equality impact in relation to the proposal.

Please list in the table below any adverse impact identified and, where appropriate, steps that could be taken to mitigate this impact. This analysis will inform the decision making process

If you consider it likely that your proposal will have an adverse impact on a particular group (s) and you cannot identify steps which would mitigate or reduce this impact, you will need to demonstrate that you have considered at least one alternative way of delivering the change which has less of an adverse impact.

If an adverse impact cannot be mitigated please describe an alternative option, its costs and the equality impact.

Target Groups	Impact – Positive or Adverse	Reason(s)
What impact will the proposal have on specific groups of service users and staff ?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please add a narrative to justify your claims around impacts and, • Please describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform members decision making

Race	Adverse	<p>The Mela celebrates the culture and heritage of a specific minority community. A cancellation would impact directly on this group and potentially affect community relations.</p> <p>The Bangladeshi population makes up 32 per cent of the boroughs population making it the largest single community and a significant minority group.</p> <p>78% of all residents who responded to the 2013/14 Annual Residents Survey (ARS) agreed that people from different backgrounds in get on well together and events like the Mela have been key to fostering cohesion and good relations between groups. The cancellation of this event would mean the loss of the single biggest opportunity to showcase Bengali heritage to the rest of the borough.</p> <p>There are also risks related to a poorly delivered or managed event in the case of the Trust having insufficient funds to ensure the proper delivery of the Mela. This could adversely impact the community in a number of symbolic ways if the event is deemed to be a failure or if the Trust is found to be wanting in its delivery.</p> <p>However, this risk exists in both options of approving or not approving additional funding because of the issues identified about the robustness of the Trust as a provider organisation. The Trust must be fit to manage significant funds and a major cultural event that receives local and international coverage to ensure negative impacts are avoided.</p>
Disability	N/A	
Gender	N/A	
Gender Reassignment	N/A	

Sexual Orientation	N/A	
Religion or Belief	N/A	
Age	Neutral	The Bangladeshi population is a young population with nearly half the community under the age of 19. Anecdotally, staff who have supported the event have observed that the early part of the event tends to be attended by families with smaller children. The latter part of the event is attended predominantly by young men and some older men but with far fewer women and children.
Socio-economic	Adverse	Race inequality is linked to poverty and lack of access to services and other provision. This event is free to attend and would potentially impact on people from poorer socio-economic backgrounds who would lose a free community resource that celebrates their heritage. Additionally, with high levels of child poverty and overcrowding the loss of a safe and free leisure event for children and young people could also have an adverse effect.
Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	N/A	
Pregnancy and Maternity	N/A	
Other	N/A	

Section 4: Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Please list in the table below any adverse impact identified and, where appropriate, steps that could be taken to mitigate this impact.

If you consider it likely that your proposal will have an adverse impact on a particular group (s) and you cannot identify steps which would mitigate or reduce this impact, you will need to demonstrate that you have considered at least one alternative way of delivering the change which has less of an adverse impact.

Adverse impact	Please describe the actions that will be taken to mitigate this impact
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<p>Race – Impact on equality and community cohesion</p>	<p>Potential mitigating options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postponement of the event. The current scheduled event falls just outside of the month of Boishakh which is the first month of the Bengali new year. • Scaled down provision: Fund activities that celebrate the new year without the concert event in the park. • Alternative provision: Make funding available for or otherwise encourage other arts and culture provision focussed on BME communities. The current MSG programme includes a specific funding stream for ‘Cohesion, Engagement and Resilience’ which is targeted at activities to improve the participation of under-represented communities and to foster good relations across the borough. <p>The Council will also develop clear messages on the reasons for the Council not awarding additional funding and disseminate these via Council Communications and in the local BME media.</p>
<p>Age – loss of local resources and event attended by young people</p>	<p>Alternative provision: Make funding available for or otherwise encourage other arts and culture provision focussed on young people</p>
<p>Socio-economic – loss of free event and access to cultural and leisure facilities.</p>	<p>Alternative provision: Make funding available for or otherwise encourage other arts and culture provision that is free to access.</p>

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If an adverse impact cannot be mitigated please describe an alternative option, its costs and the equality impact.

Section 5: Future Review and Monitoring

Please explain how and when the actual equality impact of these changes will be reviewed and monitored.

It is proposed that future funding for the annual Boishakhi Mela be regularised as part of the 2015-18 Mainstream Grants process. Ongoing evaluation of the programme, with an annual monitoring and evaluation report to the Council on grant funded activities to incorporate an assessment of their success in contributing towards desired community plan outcomes