

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Report to: THE ECONOMY, HOUSING AND THE ARTS POLICY AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

Date: 06/04/21

Subject: Arts Commission Recommendations

Responsible Director: Tony Clements (Strategic Director Economy)

Executive Summary

As pledged in the council's 2018 Manifesto, Hammersmith & Fulham has established an independent Arts Commission (AC) to ensure that its collective arts and cultural strengths are maximised to deliver greater economic prosperity for the borough. The comprehensive research, discussion and evaluation process of the AC took a period of two years. The AC harnessed the expertise of both national and local leaders throughout the creative industries. Their scope encompassed overarching threads, ensuring that local opportunities are accessible to all. The AC ensured that arts and culture were viewed as an ecosystem and that diversity and inclusion were central to their work and recommendations. This work has strengthened relationships between the borough and local arts organisations and delivered opportunities for residents. The AC has delivered eight recommendations for consideration by H&F for adoption.

Recommendations

For the Committee to note and comment on the report.

Wards Affected: All

H&F Priorities

Please state how the subject of the report relates to our priorities – delete those priorities which are not appropriate

Our Priorities	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Priorities
Building shared prosperity	The AC represents a significant opportunity for the council to build on its shared prosperity through the harnessing of our creative economies to further the borough's economic growth.

Creating a compassionate council	The AC will further the Council's ability to provide compassionate high-quality services that residents can rely on.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	Through a bottom-up approach taken across the public consultations prior to the AC's inception and the committed representation of residents and stakeholders amongst the Commission's panel, we have sought to enshrine resident engagement from the outset.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	The commission seeks to generate insights that could produce significant return, both financially and socially for all residents.
Taking pride in H&F	The AC will further enhance the council's arts friendly reputation; a key building block of a borough-wide identity that all residents can take pride in.

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Summary

The Council's Arts Commission, established in November 2018, has explored the cultural landscape of our borough. H&F is in the process of deliberating these and finding the most constructive way of delivering them. The final report from the Arts Commission is contained within Appendix 1.

The core principles of the Commission fit strategically within our manifesto promises and organisational culture of H&F. This synergy will ensure the success of the Commission as we address its recommendations, deliver them and enhance the successful creative industries throughout the borough.

Strategic Background

Two key pieces of Council policy have directly informed the AC's remit and strategic focus; the Arts Strategy and the Industrial Growth Strategy.

- a) The Arts Strategy is built around the three core themes of ‘destination’, ‘creation’ and ‘inclusion’. Outlining a vision to make Hammersmith and Fulham:
- One of the country’s most popular destinations for people to participate in and enjoy the arts.
 - A place in which greater creativity and innovation thrive and the arts are experienced by more people from a wider range of backgrounds.
 - A place where residents and cultural organisations drive more clearly how the council supports the art, ensuring that every penny of arts funding is even more focused than now.
 - A place where the arts are at the centre of a dynamic local economy, fostering local jobs, businesses and economic growth.
- b) The H&F Industrial Strategy, *Economic Growth for Everyone*, reflects the council’s ambition to make the borough the best place to do business in Europe. Key areas impacting the Arts Commission can be seen in its objectives to:
- Develop land policy to deliver affordable flexible workspace for STEM, digital and creative industries.
 - Create new co-working and creative spaces, including council guaranteeing leases in exchange for profit share.
 - Review licensing to support a vibrant night time economy and review planning flexibility for pop-up events.

Process

Arts Commission Background

The Arts Commission was made up of residents, volunteers, arts experts and local arts organisations from across the borough. The Commission was directed to deliver recommendations which would enhance the thriving cultural sector and promote the growth and sustainability of our cultural offer and ensure that it is accessible to all.

Appointment of Commissioners

The AC’s independent chair, Johnathan Church and the appointed consultants, People make It Work, took care in appointing commissioners that reflected a broad cross-section of the borough’s arts practitioners and cultural stakeholders as well as ensuring that gender equality and diversity standards were upheld.

The following areas were fully researched, discussed and debated with expert witnesses’ testimonies ranging from representatives of Arts Council, GLA, Lyric Theatre Hammersmith, The Bush, Riverside Studios and HF Artsfest:

Early Success - London Borough of Culture

As a direct result of the AC's formation, H&F participated in the GLA's London Borough of Culture (LBoC) competition. This process was undertaken with members of the AC playing an integral part in the bid process.

The borough's bid resulted in a Cultural Impact Award announced by the GLA on 11th February 2020. Cultural Impact Awards are granted to 3 boroughs, who displayed exemplary individual projects highlighted in their overall LBoC bid. The award delivered £200,000 to be match funded to deliver an overall programme, using music as a medium to tackle knife crime, gang culture and provide work opportunities for talented, local young people. The award will bridge the gap between local talent and the music industry.

The borough's 'Sounds like Hammersmith & Fulham' programme will kick start a new sustainable arts programme, developing the next generation of stars from a talented, local pool of young musicians. We will enable young people to take their musical talent from the bedroom to the studio.

Early Success - DanceWest and Sands End Arts and Community Centre (SEACC)

Through their inclusion in the AC, DanceWest have found a home at the SEACC. The organisation works with 15,000 people living in the borough and provides both fee paying and free classes. This development will provide a sustainable income stream of £3,000/month for SEACC and ensure that we retain this vibrant organisation within H&F.

Early Success – Kindred Studios

Through their involvement in the AC, Kindred Studios, an organisation providing studio space for artists over a broad spectrum of genres have found a home in the borough. Currently occupying the former St Mungo's in Shepherd's Bush they plan to move to the Ravenscourt Stores and have raised £730k to undertake refurbishment works.

Early Success – Civic Campus

The AC's findings will ensure that creative work on the Council's Civic Campus is informed by its recommendations. This development will ensure, that more creative opportunities are available for our communities and that the views, passion and drive from the local creative industries are reflected across the vibrancy of the Campus. Ultimately, the Civic Campus will provide a viable and commercial vehicle for the borough, to ensure the economic and cultural impact is maximised.

Success during Covid-19

There is potential for the recommendations of the AC to contribute to our Covid-19 recovery strategy, using the creative industries as a mechanism to combat the social isolation and loneliness experienced within our community and provide opportunities to engage in activities which will help the borough to achieve its overall aspirations.

There is every opportunity to focus on celebrating our success and how the borough's artistic community has persevered during these extraordinary times. Their combined cultural offers will provide tangible solutions for communities to ensure we strengthen our cultural offer going forwards.

The medium of the AC has seen the relationships between the borough and local arts organisations strengthened and developed of new ways of working.

During the pandemic we have seen local organisations who were directly involved in the delivery of the AC recommendations taking initiative in delivering cultural experiences within our communities.

- The Irish Centre have delivered telephone story telling opportunities.
- HF Artsfest have delivered a plethora of online workshop opportunities for young and old and an online platform for gallery viewings.
- The Mangrove Steel band have entertained the borough's most vulnerable, whilst they were waiting in food queues to access food from the food banks and other emergency food outlets.
- Artsist Ella Golt has delivered street performances.
- In partnership with the Hammersmith BID, Artsfest have delivered street performances to those most isolated community members.
- Masbro Centre, Turtle Key Arts and others have all delivered online offerings.

Recommendations

H&F has been requested to fully consider the recommendations proposed by the AC.

There is a theme which connects all of the recommendations: creative opportunities must be available to all. At the heart of the recommendations is the firm belief that culture should be accessible to all and hold no barriers. There should be focus on enabling all local people to access these opportunities, investing in local talent, building on what we do best and exploring how we can best enhance our cultural offer. The arts provision in the borough should always be person-centered. We must consider invisible disabilities; work with all the small, powerhouse organisations in the borough to uncover the barriers to inclusion. Joined-up thinking will expedite this approach. We have already begun to work with local organisations to set a borough wide standard for inclusive practice. An outline of the recommendations is below:

Core Principles	Being Strategic	Amplifying Strengths	Investing to Improve
Support a “cradle-to- grave” approach to the arts offer Ensure diversity and inclusion are central to the borough’s approach to the arts Shift towards citizen-led decision-making Build from strengths; don’t duplicate them Preserve and enhance what is distinctive about the borough Be open-minded when defining culture	R1: Make a new cultural strategy	R4: Uncover local strengths, wants and needs	R7: Build capacity inside the town hall with a fully resourced and staffed culture team
	R2: Amplify and celebrate the diversity of the borough	R5: Join up what’s going on in the borough	R8: Support small local organisations
	R3: Embed culture into Planning Policy Framework	R6: Shout about what’s going on	

Action Plan

The recommendations of the AC are supported by an Action Plan that charts each recommendation within a framework, linked to the set of core principles. These high-level recommendations are contained within Appendix 9.

There are quick wins within the recommendations centering on the success stories apparent in the borough. We will deliver these recommendations by uncovering local strengths, joining up what is going on in the borough and amplifying and celebrating diversity. These will be our first steps in ensuring our approach is citizen led: for the people by the people. By enabling the formation of a localised network, we will ensure that the voices of local people are heard and acted upon. Preliminary delivery of this initiative discussions are underway with the HF Artsfest.

There is the opportunity to work internally to undertake the groundwork to stabilise the impacts of covid-19 by refreshing our cultural strategy, embedding culture into our Planning Policy Framework and using the mechanism of our Industrial Strategy

to ensure we support small local organisations. To create a new cultural strategy, the council will engage meaningfully with community members and artists. We will ensure local organisations are fully invested in and supported through a robust funding process, enabling opportunities to apply for funding such as S106 and through the use of a localised mentoring scheme.

There is also the possibility to explore the organisational development recommendations contained within the report. It is our aim to be an enabling authority, to curate in partnership with the community and to develop this function we must invest internally to ensure we have the internal capacity to deliver the joint aspirations of the Commission.

Conclusion

The AC has been a hugely successful initiative. Our model is now planned to be replicated by other London Boroughs. As part of H&F's commitment to do things with residents, rather than to them, and involve residents directly in shaping services and opportunities within the borough. Early successes have strengthened relationships between local arts organisations and the borough. With the delivery of the AC's findings, the borough can expect to see a set of powerful and imaginative ideas and recommendations for improving cultural life in our borough brought to life.

Consultation

Most Council Departments have been directly involved in one or more resident-led commissions, but none have been directly consulted on this report.

Equality Implications

The report is for information. There are no recommendations so there are no equality implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

The report is for information and there are no legal implications arising from this report.

Financial Implications

H&F will consider and make decisions around the level of investment that is required to deliver the recommendations from the AC. This will have an impact on budgets within H&F.

Implications for Local Businesses

The report is for information. There are no recommendations so there are no implications for local business arising from this report.

Commercial Implications

The report is for information. There are no recommendations so there are no commercial implications arising from this report.

IT Implications

The report is for information. There are no recommendations so there are no ICT implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

The report is for information. There are no recommendations so there are no Risk Management implications arising from this report.