

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 06/12/2021

Subject: Building collaborative networks with European states

Report of: Councillor Stephen Cowan, Leader of the Council

Report author: Candida Jones, Programme Manager Leader's Office

SUMMARY

Hammersmith & Fulham (H&F) is a diverse and vibrant borough. One in five of H&F's residents are European Union (EU) citizens and it is home to large Italian, French, Spanish, Polish and Irish communities as well as communities from every other European nation.

Some of the Borough's largest employers are European companies: L'Oréal, Net-a-Porter, Endemol UK, Universal Music, Immediate Media Company, Accor UK – Novotel and Ericsson Media Services.

LBHF has built a reputation as a prominent pro-European borough with 70% of voters in H&F voting to Remain in the European Union. H&F's relationship with mainland Europe is centuries-old, profound and integral to our Borough's culture. Just one illustration of this was H&F's decision in 1963 to twin with the municipalities of Neukölln (GE), Anderlecht (BE) and Boulogne Billancourt (FR). The Leader is having ongoing contact with our existing twins to share Council objectives.

We understand that our prosperity and success, especially in priority areas like climate change, industrial strategy, community safety and educational and cultural opportunities are enhanced by international collaboration, knowledge exchange and technology sharing. Those exchanges and collaboration provide significant mutual opportunities for growth. H&F is keen to learn from European partners and also to share its best practice, including:

- Our H&F Industrial Strategy which positions H&F as a global innovation hotspot capable of leading the world in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and the creative industries.
- Our climate strategy which was recently praised by Friends of Earth as a "very thorough document outlining the plans to bring H&F to net Zero Carbon by 2030".

Brexit has erected barriers to working, studying and living in H&F for those European citizens already here and for the Europeans of the future who want to settle here and contribute to our borough.

Following the UK's departure from the EU in January 2020, the Council declared its intention to establish meaningful, cultural, industrial and educational twinning links with towns within countries of the EU - a bold initiative that seeks to directly respond to the barriers erected by Brexit.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet approves the objectives to progressing our European collaboration ambitions as set out in paragraph 1 below.
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Wards Affected: None

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	European collaboration offers the opportunity for the Council to enhance its aspirations within the Industrial Strategy through knowledge exchange and technology sharing with a broader range of partners, to promote inward investment, economic growth and prosperity and in so doing cement the borough's position as a global leader in industrial strategy and innovation
Doing things with residents, not to them	The objective of European collaboration will be to engage local partners, schools and institutions to twin in parallel with the Council, opening up new avenues for co-operation and co-production in areas of culture, education, climate change, etc beyond the walls of the Town Hall
Taking pride in H&F	Collaboration with innovative and exciting towns and cities across Europe and the creation of cultural, creative and artistic links and exchanges across borders is a major contributor to civic pride
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	Climate Change represents the ultimate cross-border challenge and European collaboration may enable the Council and its partners to share best practice, learn from other cities where innovative action is being developed and share our experiences and knowledge in return.
Compassionate Council	European collaboration will assist the 20% of the borough's population who hold EU passports, to continue to feel valued and supported within our Borough.
Ruthless Financial Efficiency	European collaboration brings added value through shared expertise and knowledge with partners

Financial Impact

There are no direct financial implications at this exploratory stage, beyond that of officer time. Any subsequent requirements for funding will be brought back for later decision.

Legal Implications

There are no particular legal implications arising from the proposal at this stage.

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Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report - none

Detailed Analysis

1. The objectives of H&F's European Collaboration are:
 - To respond to the barriers erected by our departure from the EU by establishing alternative ways to collaborate, work, travel, learn and protect our liberal democracy, our borough's diverse culture and our way of life.
 - To strengthen the current links with existing twin towns including through consultation with them on potential new partners and other joint projects.
 - To establish new links with European partners, including those beyond the EU such as Switzerland, Norway and Iceland in order to gain access for our residents to the most cutting-edge innovations in industry and civic society available in our Continent.
 - To build alliances, both locally and with our partners, with schools and colleges, residents' groups and community groups eg the Hammersmith Society/Polish Centre/Irish Centre/West London European Movement to foster wider participation in the Council's European Collaboration Strategy.
 - To build **cultural and business links** with new towns and cities across Europe that are both practical and emotional, by engaging residents, resident groups, businesses and business leaders, cultural centres, students, and youth and sports clubs.
 - To support our **Industrial Strategy** and H&F's ambitions to be a global hotspot in STEM and the creative industries, the best borough in Europe to do business and a world-leader in innovation by: - building international partnerships and business innovation collaboration to support H&F enterprises to grow on an international scale and to attract foreign

businesses to locate, remain and invest here, including in our residents and local supply chains.

- To collaborate on **climate change initiatives**, technology and knowledge.
 - To build links with schools and universities that foster **cultural and educational opportunities**. This could include language learning or linking schools on issues of common concern like climate change or youth or sports clubs on joint cultural exchange projects.
 - To demonstrate that H&F is open, ambitious, outward-facing and international and is keen to work with European partners as well as other global partners on common concerns and shared objectives. These could include public health campaigns, climate change initiatives and educational and industrial and commercial partnerships.
2. The Council is not proposing “traditional” twinning i.e. ceremonial trips abroad. This is about building links, forging relationships, supporting businesses and investment, promoting educational exchanges, creating a ‘cultural trust fund for our children’ and reinforcing Hammersmith & Fulham’s role as a borough of innovation and a global leader at the heart of Europe and beyond.
3. A refresh of the ‘Twinning’ idea and innovations could mean
- Collaborate more with schools, our youth mayor, universities, businesses, cultural centres and residents;
 - Coordinated virtual community events or virtual meetings to establish common goals and projects;
 - Knowledge-share and promote technology exchange for instance in the areas of active travel or public health;
 - involve small scale activities like publishing joint articles on our webpages or largescale endeavours like building profitable export links for H&F businesses and attracting foreign direct investment to the Borough.

Equality Implications

4. There are no negative equalities implications, and it is envisaged that a strong and meaningful European collaboration programme will assist those 20% of H&F EU born citizens to know they are welcome and that the role they play in our community is valued.

Climate and Ecological Emergency Implications

5. Collaboration with towns and cities across Europe will give H&F the opportunity to build knowledge and share resources with leading authorities and communities. This proposal offers the prospect of learning and sharing ideas for enhancing our work on the environment, transport and climate change to complement the work we are already doing through H&F’s membership of ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability).

Implications drafted by Hinesh Mehta, Strategic Lead – Climate Emergency, Hinesh.Mehta@lbhf.gov.uk

Local Economy and Social Value

6. A programme across Europe will offer unique opportunities to promote the borough as the best place to do business in Europe and enable both the Council and the borough's businesses to share knowledge on inclusive growth and innovation strategies. Where relevant, partnerships will be developed to build capacity to deliver the Council's Industrial Strategy. The development of the Council's commitment to strong European ties is an important aspect of retaining and growing the borough's strong European commercial and entrepreneurial presence, as well as its cultural richness fostered by a strong European community.

Implications drafted by Karen Galey Assistant Director for the Economy, Economy Department Karen.Galey@lbhf.gov.uk