

<u>MEETING</u> EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL
<u>DATE AND TIME</u> MONDAY 26TH APRIL, 2021 AT 7.00 PM
<u>VENUE</u> VIRTUAL: https://bit.ly/3tqxp9x

Dear Councillors,

Please find enclosed additional papers relating to the following items for the above mentioned meeting which were not available at the time of collation of the agenda.

Item No	Title of Report	Pages
1.	PROPOSED MUNICIPAL LINK WITH POKHARA MUNICIPALITY, NEPAL	3 - 8

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Please note that this will be held as a virtual meeting. An audio and video live stream of the meeting can be accessed using the link below

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AGENDA ITEM 5

Extraordinary Council

26 April 2021

	
Title	Proposed Municipal Link with Pokhara Municipality, Nepal
Report of	Head of Governance
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	None
Officer Contact Details	Andrew Charlwood, Head of Governance, andrew.charlwood@barnet.gov.uk Angela Richardson, Mayoral Service and Civic Events Manager, angela.richardson@barnet.gov.uk

Summary

The current Mayor, Councillor Caroline Stock, has put forward a proposal for the establishment of a formal municipal link with the Pokhara Municipality in Nepal.

Officers Recommendations

- 1. That the Council of the London Borough of Barnet record and acknowledge the formation of the municipal link between the London Borough of Barnet and the Pokhara Municipality, Nepal, which has been established for the purposes of furthering goodwill between the two communities through the exchange of views and ideas and by personal contact among the citizens of the borough and municipality, and that the Council sincerely hope that the link will prosper and flourish in the coming years.**
- 2. That an endorsement of vellum of the foregoing resolution over the common seal of the corporation be presented to the representatives of the municipality of Pokhara.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

Background

- 1.1 Town twinning has been in existence in Britain for nearly 100 years, although it only really became established after the Second World War. This was part of a wider aim to bring communities together and to promote reconciliation. During the 1970's and 1980's, town twinning developed rapidly between British and European towns (especially France and Germany) and local authorities had greater freedom to determine with whom they would twin and the nature of the twinning. From the 1990's twinning links started to develop outside of Europe where areas with multicultural communities with a high proportion of people from a specific region, sought to increase cultural considerations and awareness to help promote social cohesion.
- 1.2 Town twinning has continued over time and is still very much in existence today albeit on a somewhat reduced scale. An increasing trend has been to move away from formal, long term, partnerships to those that are less formal and prescribed, but are endorsed by a friendship agreement or memorandum of understanding.
- 1.3 There is no formal cultural or statutory definition of town twinning and it can come in many forms. There is no statutory requirement or provisions relating to town twinning or friendship links and local authorities can determine what any relationship would involve.
- 1.4 Barnet currently twins with the following towns/cities around the world:
 - Chaville, France
 - Siegen-Wittgenstein, Germany
 - Jinja, Uganda
 - Le Raincy, France
 - Montclair, USA
 - Morphou, Cyprus
 - Ramat Gan, Israel
 - Tempelhof, Germany

Links with Nepal and the Pokhara Municipality

- 1.5 Britain and Nepal have 205 years of long standing diplomatic relations through Gurkha recruitment in the British Army since 1816. In 2016, Britain and Nepal celebrated bicentenary of the establishment of formal relations between the two countries. Barnet has a large Nepalese community. Twinning the London Borough of Barnet with Pokhara Municipality in Nepal will refresh and strengthen the long standing diplomatic relations between Britain and Nepal and create new cultural and economic links between the communities in Barnet and Pokhara. A formal municipal link will also recognise the contribution of Gurkhas to Britain.
- 1.6 Pokhara is the second largest city in Nepal and the capital of the Gandaki Province. It currently has a population of over 500,000. It is a tourism hub and acts as a base for trekkers in the Annapurna Conservation Area. The city is also home to many of the elite Gurkha soldiers. The Pokhara Region has a strong military tradition with a significant number of men being part of the Nepalese Army. The British Gurkha Camp is located at Deep Heights in Pokhara city.
- 1.7 The current Deputy Mayor, Councillor Lachhya Gurung, has strong links to the Burnt Oak Nepalese Community and has served as a Gurkha in the British Army. Councillor Caroline Stock, the current Mayor, has proposed that the Council establishes a formal municipal link with the Pokhara Municipality in Nepal due to the Nepalese connections with the Deputy Mayor.
- 1.8 The purpose of a municipal link will be to achieve the following for the citizens of the London Borough of Barnet in the United Kingdom and of Pokhara Municipality in Nepal:
 - To promote friendship and cooperation between the communities.
 - To promote tourism, sports and voluntary & charitable works
 - To encourage mutual understanding of life within the communities, in relation to cultural, economic, educational and social affairs, via communication between our communities, particularly through our children, students exchange between colleges but also through other sections of society

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To support the development of links between the United Kingdom and Nepal and the communities of the London Borough of Barnet and the Pokhara Municipality.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 The Council could decide not to develop a link with the Pokhara Municipality. This is not recommended due to the mutual benefits that can be derived from a twinning arrangement.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 A ceremony will be arranged involving representatives from Barnet and Pokhara before the end of the current municipal year.
- 4.2 Officers from Barnet and Pokhara will develop and agree a memorandum of understanding between the Borough and Municipality.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 The introduction of a twinning arrangement with the Pokhara Municipality will assist the Council in furthering the 2021 – 2025 Barnet Plan priorities of:

Family Friendly – by encouraging cohesive and inclusive communities; and
Thriving – through the development of new economic development opportunities

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

- 5.2.1 Any cost associated with the development of this municipal link will be contained within existing Mayoral Services and Civic Events and/or Governance Service budgets.

5.3 Social Value

- 5.3.1 Development of a municipal link will deliver social value through the furtherment of good will and exchange of ideas and goodwill between the governments and residents of the Borough and Municipality.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.4.1 Historically the Council has approved the establishment of civic links with the Boroughs twin towns. As such, it is appropriate for Council to pass a resolution to establish a new link.

5.5 Risk Management

- 5.5.1 N/A

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.6.1 N/A

5.7 Corporate Parenting

5.7.1 N/A

5.8 Consultation and Engagement

5.8.1 N/A

5.9 Insight

5.9.1 N/A

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 None.

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