1. Details of Recommendations

The Council is asked to

1. Approve the approach being taken towards civic events, religious festivals and flag raising in the London Borough of Hounslow during 2015, and a calendar of the specific events/activities.

2. Delegate authority to the Head of Communications to create a flag policy to incorporate the details set out in this report and to update it as may be required from time to time.

3. Approval for the erection of a second flag pole within the Civic Centre grounds.

If the recommendations are adopted, how will residents benefit?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits to residents and reasons why they will benefit, link to Values</th>
<th>Dates by which they can expect to notice a difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The marking of significant annual and historic events, religious festivals and other activities will help promote inclusiveness, build community cohesion and inform and educate people.</td>
<td>Continually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Report Summary

This report deals with the significant annual and historic civil events, religious festivals and other activities that the Council can support during 2015 to help promote inclusiveness, build community cohesion and inform and educate.
people. It sets out the approach being taken by the Council to mark these events and activities and gives details, in calendar form, of what is proposed to happen and when. The calendar also lists other key events linked to the 50th anniversary of the creation of the London boroughs and the Rugby World Cup. The Council is asked to approve the approach to all these as set out in this report, the erection of a second flag pole and the approval of a flag policy.

3. Reason for Decision and Options Considered

3.1 This report sets out:

- The Council’s approach to marking significant annual and historic civic events and other activities that the Council supports to promote and build community cohesion.
- The Council’s approach to annual religious festivals that reflect the majority of Hounslow residents’ religious beliefs and how the Council will note these.
- The Council’s policy on flag raising.
- How the events and activities will be managed and publicised.
- Calendar of events, flag days, religious festivals and other ‘days’ / ‘weeks’ / ‘months’ in 2015 (Appendix 1)

Annual and historic civic events, religious festivals and other ‘days’ / ‘weeks’ / ‘months’

3.2 In marking and supporting annual or historic events and festivals, and other activities, our aim is to show, encourage and celebrate the respect for diversity and commitment to equality displayed by our residents.

3.3 The local community in Hounslow is very diverse, both in terms of the range of people’s ethnicities and the proportions of ethnic groups. No one ethnic group dominates in size.

3.4 Residents tell us they value this diversity as one of the uniquely valuable features of living in the borough. (Source: Emerging Communities in Hounslow and West London: Mapping and Needs Assessment’ Research Report, by Middlesex University November 2014.) It is therefore essential we build on their strong sense of fairness and community cohesion and promote tolerance and respect for all our people’s values.

3.5 In order to build community resilience we should encourage people from different backgrounds both to share their different cultures and experiences and to understand and appreciate what they have in common.

3.6 To achieve this it is important activity is open to all residents, promotes inclusiveness, and informs and educates people.

3.7 The Council and its delivery partners commission a wide range of events and activities throughout the year. The underlying purpose of these activities is to encourage people to: spend time together; get to know each other and; understand and appreciate the differences which make Hounslow such a great and diverse place to live.

3.8 We should also celebrate key events which help highlight issues around understanding diversity and promoting understanding and tolerance – and in the long
term ensure residents who share one or more protected characteristic and those who do not feel fully engaged are part of the wider community. A list of proposed events that support this is given in Appendix 1.

3.9 It is also important the Council acknowledges the key annual religious festivals which reflect the religions most predominant in Hounslow. A list of these festivals is given in Appendix 1.

3.10 It is important, too, for the Council to mark dates or events that are of an historical importance to both the local community and nationally. A list of these is given in Appendix 1.

Flag raising in Hounslow

3.11 There are no specific legal implications regarding a flags policy. Although the Department of Culture, Media and Sport has issued guidance in connection with the flying of flags from Government buildings, the Council is free to determine its own flags policy.

3.12 The Union flag is currently flown at the Civic Centre every day. It is proposed this practice continues, except that the flag is replaced as and when necessary by others to mark national days of communities in the borough with a significant long-term heritage link to the UK and Commonwealth.

3.13 To ensure the Union flag can continue to be flown every day, the solution would be to erect a second flag pole. The second flag pole could be used to fly the Hounslow Borough flag when not otherwise required.

3.14 The celebration of other national or Independence Days in this way will demonstrate that the Council recognises the diversity of the borough and is an important contribution to community cohesion.

3.15 A list of the national and Independence Days on which it is proposed a flag other than the Union flag is flown is given in Appendix 1 ‘Flag Days’.

3.16 Some of these national and Independence Days may be further marked by a simple community event to mark the raising of the flag.

The passing of a serving or former Hounslow Councillor

3.17 Upon receiving notification of the death of a serving or former Councillor, the Hounslow Borough flag will be flown at half-mast at the Civic Centre on the day of receiving the news and on the day of the funeral. The passing will also be announced on the council website and be recognised formally at the next Borough Council meeting.

3.18 It is also proposed that the Borough flag is also flown at half-mast in the same way upon receiving notification of the death of someone who has been awarded Freedom of the Borough.

National flag protocol

3.19 Occasions on which the Union Flag is to be flown at Half Mast:

1. On the announcement of the death of the Sovereign.
2. The funeral of a member of the Royal Family (Subject to special commands from Her Majesty, in each case).
3. The funeral of a foreign Ruler (Subject to special commands from Her Majesty, in each case).
4. The funeral of the Prime Minister or an ex-Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (Subject to special commands from Her Majesty, in each case).

3.20 Half Mast means the flag is flown two-thirds of the way up the flagpole, with at least the height of the flag between the top of the flag and the top of the flagpole. If another flag is to be flown whilst the Union Flag is at Half Mast, they should both be flown at Half Mast, or the second flag shouldn't be flown at all.

3.21 Flags of a foreign nation should not be flown at Half Mast unless that country is observing a period of mourning.

**Flying the Royal Standard**
3.22 If Her Majesty The Queen is present in a Government building, the Royal Standard should be flown. If the building has more than one flagpole, the Royal Standard should be flown in the superior position.

**Event management and publicity**
3.23 The planning, coordination and management of events will be the joint responsibility of the council’s communications team and event management team, with other parts of the organisation, such as the Mayor’s office, acting as commissioners or sponsors.

3.24 All civic events, religious festivals and flag raising days will be included in a six-month forward plan of events to be published in December and June each year.

3.25 They will also be listed in the Council’s central events calendar. This is hosted on the authority’s intranet and also includes details of all other events too. A public version of this calendar will be a main feature of the Council’s new website, which is currently being developed.

3.26 The forward plan and events calendar will be maintained by the communications team, which will categorise each event or activity according to its profile and needs.

3.27 The events are broadly classified as follows:

**Grade A**
All major, high profile council events involving members of the public that could have a significant impact on the council’s reputation. These will typically involve the mayor and members, senior management, council partners and VIP guests. Examples include mayoral dinners and functions, the annual meeting of the council.

**Grade B**
All other council events and meetings involving members of the public. These would include borough council meetings, cabinet and committee meetings and exhibitions, such as fostering events. They also include private hire functions at the Civic Centre and other council properties, such as weddings.

Grade B events also include certain council events that don’t involve the public are nevertheless important in terms of their organization. An example of this would the partners marketplace held in 2014 for new council members.
3.28 The classification of events is undertaken by a Standing Events Panel, which also reviews the events calendar; ensure all arrangements are in place for the upcoming events; check any building works aren’t going to put an event at risk; and monitor event management systems, performance and ‘customer’ feedback.

3.29 The Standing Events Panel meets monthly and consists of the head of communications, facilities manager and events manager. Individual event organisers or sponsors, such as the Mayor’s office attend panel meetings as and when required.

4. Key Implications

4.1 The key implication of marking significant annual and historic events, religious festivals and other activities is that the Council will be seen to be promoting inclusiveness, building community cohesion and informing and educating people.

5. Comments of the Assistant Director Strategic Finance

5.1 If the Council decides to erect a second flag pole in the Civic Centre grounds the cost will be around £2,905.

5.2 The cost of purchasing the additional flags to be raised is £1,242.

5.3 The cost of the flag pole and flags can be funded from the Corporate Communications budget.

5.4 The costs of staging Civic events and activities needs to be considered as part of the process for the approval of the forward plan of events. Where events cannot be funded through sponsorship or existing council budgets, additional funding sources will need to be identified and approved alongside the forward plan of events.

6. Legal

a) Legal Details
The flying of a flag is treated as an advertisement in planning law and in some occasions requires planning consent. There is however no requirement for planning consent where up to two flags are flown in the grounds of a building subject to conditions being met. The proposal for a second flag pole will not therefore require planning consent.

It is important that with any Council policy this is regularly reviewed and kept up to date. By delegating responsibility to the Head of Communications to do so will ensure that this is done and such delegation is permitted by section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972.

b) Comments of the Assistant Director Corporate Governance
The Assistant Director Corporate Governance supports the recommendations

7. Value for Money
7.1 There are no value for money implications.

8. **Sustainability Impact Appraisal**

8.1 No appraisal is necessary.

9. **Risk Management**

9.1 There are no risks identified relating to this report.

10. **Links to Council Priorities**

10.1 This report has been presented to members in accordance with the Council’s priority to create an ambitious council which improves the lives of residents and works in a transparent way.

11. **Equalities, Human Rights and Community Cohesion**

11.1 The Council has to have due regard to its equalities duties and in particular that set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and eliminate any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act, advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The decisions in paragraph 1 will not have any adverse impact on anyone with one or more protected characteristics, namely age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. In considering this report and making its decisions Borough Council will be indicating that it is satisfied that the equalities duties are met.

12. **Staffing/Workforce and Accommodation implications**

12.1 There are no implications in relation to staffing and accommodation.

13. **Property and Assets**

13.1 There are no implications in relation to property or assets.

14. **Any Other Implications**

14.1 There are no further implications.

15. **Consultation**

15.1 No consultation is required for this report.

16. **Timetable for Implementation**

16.1 The dates for the different events and activities have been identified within the report itself.
17. Appendices

17.1 Appendix 1 lists the specific details of each proposed event and activity.

18. Background Information

18.1 None.

REPORT ENDS