

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 1 November 2007
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate & Policy
SUBJECT: Application for Twinning Grant
WARD(S): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to give details of 1 application being made to the Twinning Grant Fund.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the following grant be awarded to:

(a) £2500 to the Halton Swimming Club

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 In April 1996, Halton Borough Council set up a Grant Fund to assist in enabling all members of the community to access and gain benefit from the Council's International Links.

3.2 Since 1996, a number of groups have accessed the fund to undertake exchange visits to Marzahn-Hellersdorf in Germany; Leiria in Portugal; Usti-nad-Labem in the Czech Republic; and Tongling City in China, including the Halton Youth Service; St. Chad's School, Halton Junior Football Team and Fairfield High School who have hosted teachers and pupils from Tongling previously. These links have resulted in a number of reciprocal visits from each town.

3.3 Participants in previous exchanges have found that the benefits of learning about another culture and language are immense. A wide range of activity in the Borough has been facilitated by the provision of grant aid and has given an opportunity to those who would not otherwise be able to participate.

3.4 The application received from Halton Swimming Team, requests support for 25 members to visit Usti nad Labem between the 10th – 13th November 2007.

3.5 During the visit the members will compete in a swimming competition in the Ing. Vilem Protschke swimming pool in Usti nad Labem. A return visit from the swim team in Usti nad Labem is being planned for August/September 2008. The applicant has identified total costs of £6825. This is broken down into travel costs of £3875; accommodation

costs of £2250; insurance costs of £300 and other cost of £400. The applicant has requested £3000 from the town-twinning budget. This is the maximum allowable. However, a grant of £2,500 would be in line with previous grant awards.

3.6 This year's application has been received late and supporting documentation is missing. However, the club has a proven track record of representing the borough well and has provided good evaluation reports from previous visits. If Members were to approve the project the grant will be offered subject to the following conditions:

- that the Halton Swimming Team host a reciprocal event in Halton.
- that the Halton Swimming Team ensure each of the members involved in the visit had adequate travel insurance.
- that the Halton Swimming Team complete a risk assessment for the visit.
- that the Halton Swimming Team supply copies of the most recent financial statements or accounts.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The application is in line with the borough's European Strategy, in particular, the promotion of international links, which seeks to offer the opportunity to participate to the whole population of Halton.

4.2 The application will also make a major contribution to the Healthy Halton Local Strategic Partnership key priority.

5.0 RISK ANALYSIS

5.1 Measures are in place to minimise risks to the delivery of the project. For example, the as part of the terms and conditions of grant applicants are required to complete a risk assessment proforma.

6.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES

6.1 The project focuses on promoting transnational relations with 2 of Halton's Twin Towns.

7.0 REASONS FOR DECISION

7.1 The club has a proven track record of representing the borough well and has provided good evaluation reports from previous visits.

8.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 The option to reduce the grant has been considered. Given pressures on the town-twinning budget it is proposed that the grant awarded is in line with previous requests. If this request were to be approved, £5,390

would remain in the budget. This would represent a grant of £100 per participant.

9.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

9.1 10 – 13 November 2007

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of this Act.