

Agenda Item:

Report to: O&S Resources Committee

Date: 20th September 2006

Report from: Kevin Boorman, Marketing and Communications Manager

Title of report: **TWINNING WITH HASTINGS SIERRA LEONE**

Purpose of report: To advise O&S Committee on plans for twinning with Hastings Sierra Leone

Recommendations: That Overview & Scrutiny Committee note that, following consultation with the Hastings Sierra Leone Friendship Link it is intended to implement the Cabinet decision agreeing to a £5 000 supplementary estimate to twin Hastings with Hastings Sierra Leone by providing a cash grant of £1500, and in kind support to the value of £3 500.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its 27th March meeting, Cabinet agreed to formally twin Hastings East Sussex with Hastings Sierra Leone (HSL), granting an initial £5,000 in 2006/7 to establish the link, and £2,750 (at 2006 levels) in subsequent years to help support the work of a Hastings Sierra Leone twinning group. It was agreed that the £5,000 be met by a supplementary estimate from the contingency provision. A copy of the report presented to Cabinet on 27th March is attached.
- 1.2 At Full Council on 19th April, the Cabinet decision was 'called' for discussion. As a result of that discussion, the decision to twin with HSL and commit £5000 was referred to Overview and Scrutiny Committee ('OSC') for review and report.

2.0 DISCUSSION

- 2.1 The Borough Solicitor has advised that the decision to formally twin, made at the 27th March meeting was an executive decision made by Cabinet and is subject to call-in rules. Call-in would have suspended implementation of the Cabinet decision. As the call-in process was not instigated, the decision was effective and could be implemented three working days after publication of the decision. This was the position when the item was called at Council. All that Council can decide with an executive decision (made within the Council's policy and budget) is to refer back to Cabinet for review or to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review and report. That was moved and carried but the decision was already effective.

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- 2.2 Informal meetings have taken place with officers of the Hastings Sierra Leone Friendship Link (HSLFL) over the summer. They have indicated that they are not seeking £5000 cash from HBC – rather their key need is for help in preparing presentations, and general publicity for their work, as they move towards establishing a formal twinning link with HBC.
- 2.3 However, it is likely that costs will be incurred by the HSLFL for printing material, placing adverts, etc., and in sending a representative to Sierra Leone to take part in the formal twinning ceremony next year. It is also expected that the cost of a Council representative will be met from the budget identified for twinning with HBC.
- 2.4 The cost of the printed material, adverts, etc., is not expected to amount to more than £300; the cost of sending representatives from the HSLFL and HBC, to Sierra Leone for the formal twinning ceremony is expected to be in the order of £1200. This brings the total value of 'cash' funding sought to around £1500.
- 2.5 A considerable amount of help is expected from the Council's Marketing & Communications Department. This will be for preparing and producing presentation material, designing ads, and helping with publicity for the HSLFL. Officers of the HSLFL have indicated that they would be grateful for as much support as possible in this area, and it has been agreed that this type of in-kind support, up to the value of £3500, can be provided.
- 2.6 The Borough Solicitor has advised that it is within officers' implied delegated authority to make a cash grant up to the figure agreed by Cabinet and to provide the balance in kind.
- 2.7 It is intended to implement the Cabinet decision agreeing a £5 000 supplementary estimate to twin Hastings with HSL by providing a cash grant of £1500, and in kind support to the value of £3 500.

Report Prepared by: Kevin Boorman, Marketing and Communications Manager
Telephone: (45) 1123