

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board  
**DATE:** 10<sup>th</sup> April 2008  
**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 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the following grant be awarded:
- (a) £3,000 to the Wade Deacon High School

## **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 Swimming Team; Halton Youth Service; PHAB; St. Chad's School, 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 Wade Deacon High School, requests support for a visit to No' 12 Middle School in Tongling. 8 pupils, 4 teachers, a Headteacher and a Mandarin speaking School International coordinator will visit the Tongling school during 23<sup>rd</sup> March

to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008. They will examine the 2 rivers Yangtze and Mersey in the Music and English department. They will visit sites of cultural, historical and geographical interest in Tongling. They will also take 2 interactive whiteboards and teachers from Wade Deacon will train colleagues in Tongling in the use of this technology.

- 3.5 The visit will provide a platform for the students to cement relationships with their pen pals and create new friendships between each other.
- 3.6 The applicant has identified total costs of £20,260. This is broken down into travel costs of £4,490; accommodation costs of £3,800; insurance £280, Entrance fees £480 and Meals £500.
- 3.7 The team will be using club funds, contributions from participants and has been fundraising for the visit totalling £11,760 and £5,500 from the British Council.

#### **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 Local Strategic Partnership Key Priorities Children and Young People

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 In reaching a decision concerning the level of grant to be awarded, Members are requested to note that the twinning grant budget is frequently oversubscribed. Also, in preparation for a reduction in European funding after 2006, the Council is also placing emphasis on developing economic (transnational), as well as cultural and social twinning links, and as a result, there will be added pressure on the budget in this financial year.
- 5.2 Members are also advised that the guidance given to applicants is that any grant awarded will not usually exceed £3,000. Grants normally support up to a maximum 75% of the total costs of the project.
- 5.3 Wade Deacon was awarded a grant of £3,000 in May 2007 to visit Tongling No'12 Middle school in June 2007. They took 2 interactive white boards and taught the staff how to use the technology. The maximum grant that a group can be awarded each year is £3,000, this is why the applicant has waited until to the new financial year (2008/2009) to apply. The applicant is asking the board to make a special exception on this occasion and award retrospectively.

5.4 The financial involvement of the British Council will add value to the visit, and is the reason that retrospection is being recommended on this occasion.

## **6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 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.

## **7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 The project focuses on promoting the council's priority 'Healthy Halton' for people in the Halton; encouraging co-operation between people in Halton and China.

## **8.0 REASONS FOR DECISION**

8.1 The project supports innovative Town Twinning and working in conjunction with the British Council will move the generic Town Twinning agenda forward.

## **9.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

9.1 The option to reduce the grant was considered. However, the applicant is offering reasonable value for money and has identified match funding to support the application.

## **10.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

10.1 23<sup>rd</sup> March to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008.

## **11.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 N/A