

CABINET

Invitation to Twin Town Perpignan Urgent Business Decision

Report of the Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To consider an invitation from the Council's twin town, Perpignan, to participate in a seminar in 2007 with a view to being involved in a cultural and sporting event in July 2008				
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Referral from Officers
This report is public				

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the invitation to attend a seminar in Perpignan on 10th and 11th July 2007 be accepted in part and that one officer attends, with a view to considering how the Lancaster District can participate in any event to be organised in Perpignan in July 2008.
- (2) That the Chief Executive identifies an appropriate officer to attend the above seminar.
- (3) That consideration be given to the waiving of call-in in accordance with Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rule 17 to allow immediate implementation of the decision.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 An invitation has been received from the city of Perpignan, Lancaster's twin town in France to attend a seminar there on 10th and 11th July 2007.
- 2.2 Perpignan has been named as the Capital of Catalan Culture for the year 2008 and the purpose of the seminar is to discuss with their Department of International Relations and representatives of their other twin towns in Germany, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Israel and USA the organisation of a cultural and/or sporting event for young people in July 2008.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 The invitation is extended to 2 Councillors and 2 Officers with responsibility for twinning and/or youth, culture or sports. All costs will be covered whilst staying in

Perpignan and the City Council will be responsible for the cost of travel from Lancaster to Perpignan. Whilst the invitation is from the Mayor of Perpignan, the French Mayor is more akin to our Chief Executive and it has been made clear that this is a 'working' visit rather than a 'civic' visit and it would be more appropriate for the Council's Leader or relevant Cabinet Member to attend than our Mayor.

- 3.2 In considering this invitation, it is worth first of all considering whether Lancaster City Council would be interested in taking part in the proposed event in July 2008. Clearly if it is intended to refuse that invitation there is little purpose in attending the planning seminar.
- 3.3 Lancaster will be invited to take part in the International Youth Games to be held in Rendsberg in 2008, indeed preliminary planning for this event has been commenced by Rendsberg. Whilst it would not be possible for the Mayor to attend both events if they were at the same time, nor probably would it be feasible for officers in Cultural Services and Democratic Services involved in the organisation of attendance at the Youth Games to also be involved in a similar event in Perpignan during the same month, even if not on overlapping dates, it may be possible for the District to take part in other ways. The Twinning Society to whom a grant is paid each year to assist in maintaining twinning links could be asked to take this on, and/or individual organisations such as a sports club or musical group could take part and represent the district.
- 3.4 It is therefore suggested that it would be premature at this stage to completely discount any possible involvement in 2008 until details of the event have been determined.
- 3.5 Should Members feel that it is worthwhile taking part in the seminar in July 2007 it would not be necessary to accept the invitation for 4 people in full.

4. Options

- 4.1 Option 1 - To accept the invitation to attend the seminar in Perpignan in July 2007 in full and identify 2 officers and 2 Members with the appropriate responsibilities.
- 4.2 Option 2 - To accept the invitation to attend the seminar in Perpignan in July 2007 in part, identifying 1, 2 or 3 Members or officers with the appropriate responsibilities.
- 4.3 Option 3 - To refuse the invitation to attend the seminar in Perpignan in July 2007, but indicate that the City Council would still consider participation in any event being arranged in July 2008.
- 4.4 Option 4 - To refuse the invitation to attend the seminar in Perpignan in July 2007, on the basis that the City Council is unlikely to take part in any event being planned for July 2008.

5. Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 5.1 Officers' preferred option is Option 2 above reducing the level of participation to one officer who will be able to offer advice on how twinning events are organised in this District and to report back to members on the options for taking part in any event planned for 2008.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 Whilst the potential clash of events in 2008 is unfortunate and it is not suggested that the longstanding arrangements with other twin towns to hold the International Youth Games each year should be disrupted, there are other ways in which the District can take part in an event in Perpignan. By attending this seminar at minimal cost the relationship with Perpignan can be maintained and influence brought to bear on the type of event being planned.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The proposal supports the Council's commitment to support the twinning ethos.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability etc)

There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Attendance at the seminar in July 2007 will incur travel costs – flights are available from Blackpool to Gerona from where Perpignan has agreed to collect any visitors. The cost of flights is currently £60 per person.

Allocation of the budget for twinning and the Youth Games in order to meet the cost of attending the Youth Games in Aalborg in July 2007 was reported to Members in February this year and comprises £2000 for twinning and £17,600 for the Youth Games. There is every indication at the present time that costs for attendance at the Youth Games will be kept within the estimated budget and sufficient funds to allow for a visit to Perpignan are therefore available within existing budgets.

The cost in 2008/09 of any recommendations as a result of attendance at the seminar will be the subject of a future report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The deputy S151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legal Services have been consulted and have no observations to make on these proposals.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Deputy Monitoring Officer has prepared this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Invitation from the City of Perpignan

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