



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 12 OCTOBER 2021

SUBJECT: INFORMATION REPORT: TOWN TWINNING

BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of an approach about establishing twinning relations and suggested sectors for co-operation.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III(B)(6) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to any new policy matter which does not fall within the terms of reference of any other Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Committee note this approach and officers are looking into the suggested fields of partnership and co-operation and will report the outcome to the next meeting of this Committee.**

3. BACKGROUND

Introduction

- 3.1 An approach has been received from Jiaxing, a prefecture-level city under the jurisdiction of Zhejiang Province. It covers an area of 4,223 square kilometres and an ocean area of 1,559 square kilometres with a population of 5.4 million.
- 3.2 Jiaxing is the birthplace of Communist Party of China, the cradle of Jiangnan culture, and the permanent venue for hosting the world Internet Conference.
- 3.3 It is located in the northeast of Zhejiang Province and 30 minutes from Shanghai by train. Jiaxing ranks 37th among the top 100 cities in China in terms of comprehensive strengths and 40th in terms of economic standing and is home to 78 Fortune 500 companies. Jiaxing is the cradle of Jianguan culture. With 7000 years history of human civilisation, it has profound historic heritage and culture. The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal runs through the city. Jiaxing is home to the ancient water towns of Wuzhen and Xitang as well as the world wonder Qiantang Tidal Bore. The city spends over 3% of GDP on the investment of R&D. As a pioneer for the development of digital economy, Jiaxing has attracted the 4th largest number of mid-to-high-end talents in China.

3.4 **Existing Exchanges and Co-operation**

Jiaxing attaches great importance to international exchanges and cooperation. The city has 8 international sister cities, 26 cities with international friendly exchange relations, and 75 cities with international friendly engagement relations. These cities come from 34 countries on 5 continents. In terms of education, more than 10 universities, and 120-plus middle and elementary schools have paired with foreign universities and schools. Among them, the International Campus Zhejiang University has established joint laboratories and colleges in cooperation with Imperial College London, the University of Edinburgh and the University of Illinois.

3.5 Jiaxing suggests that there be cooperation in the following areas within the framework of a letter of intent to establish relations.

3.6 **Education**

Jiaxing has 153 primary schools and 165 middle schools, some of which are well-known such as Jiaxing No.1 Middle School. Both parties could conduct cooperation on education and establish friendly relations between schools through exchanges of teacher and students, language training, and curriculum development. Primary and secondary schools and vocational technical colleges can also carry out various forms of exchanges.

3.7 **Tourism**

It is suggested Jiaxing and Moray could carry out online tourism promotion exchanges, and cultural and tourism departments establish contact mechanisms to facilitate the establishment of contacts between travel agencies in the two cities, utilise the knowledge of both sides to promote tourism routes and attractions to both peoples.

3.8 **Economy, Trade and Industry**

This envisages information exchanges in the economic and trade fields, jointly facilitate going out and bringing in of enterprises, promote the import and export of specialty produces, jointly organise business forums, and participate in the development of each other's international industrial parks and high-tech parks, and help institutes related to business and facilitation of international trade build strategic partnerships.

3.9 **Cultural Events**

The introduction and joint cultivation of brands for international festivals and cultural exchanges, and organise seminars on scientific and technological innovation, conferences of business and investment, cultural tourism resources promotion, among others. This aims to push for cultural exchange activities between non-governmental organisations and institutions, promote exchanges between associations, experts and scholars in the fields of sports, music, drama, art, literature and architecture, and jointly organise international conventions, exhibitions, performances and events etc.

3.10 **Current Twinning Arrangements**

Moray has twinning arrangements with the following:-

- Landshut is twinned with Elgin
- Kronach is twinned with Keith
- Hersbruck is twinned with Lossiemouth

- Vienenberg, Germany and Mount Dora, Florida are twinned with Forres

There has from time to time been other interests, the most recent in 2019 from another Chinese province.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

It will be important for any initiatives like this to be evaluated against the priorities and outcomes of the strategic plans.

(b) Policy and Legal

There is no legal requirement to participate in town twinning.

(c) Financial implications

The current twinning arrangements are largely local, cultural and education exchanges limited to the particular town in question and promoted and supported by local interested groups and associated fundraising. Involvement in the activities envisaged would have significant financial implications in a time of continuing financial constraints and the response and recovery from covid. These are being assessed by Council Officers and public sector and other partners.

(d) Risk Implications

See (c) above.

(e) Staffing Implications

These are being assessed along with any potential financial implications. The current twinning arrangements are effectively voluntary.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

None.

(h) Consultations

Corporate Management Team.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Working with partnership bodies, council officers are assessing the implications of establishing twinning arrangements in the suggested sectors for co-operation.

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Background Papers:	
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