

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 24 March 2015

Florence Twinning Anniversary – Proposed Civic Visit

Item number	7.6
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	All

Executive summary

Beginning in 1965, Florence and Edinburgh have co-operated as twin cities along a broad range of areas. This is the 50th anniversary year of the twinning relationship. As reported to the Economy Committee on 19 November 2013 and 6 March 2014, Florence has been identified as a city for focus for 2015, with a number of project proposals being considered through the Partner Cities Anniversary Working Group. It is proposed that the Lord Provost travel to Florence in June 2015 to formally commemorate and support the twinning agreement; this would form part of an anniversary programme for the year which will form new links in both cities and support ongoing cooperation between them.

Links

Coalition pledges	P31
Council outcomes	C07, CO25 and CO26
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1

Florence Twinning Anniversary – Proposed Civic Visit

Recommendations

- 1.1 To approve acceptance of the invitation extended to the Lord Provost from the Mayor of Florence to visit the city in June 2015 in acknowledgement of the 50th anniversary of the twinning relationship and to launch a range of activities, including a literary event, film events, and a chef swap and showcase of Edinburgh food and drink products in the city.

Background

History and Context of the Florence Twinning

- 2.1 In 1965, a twinning agreement to promote cooperation between Edinburgh and Florence in the areas of culture and tourism was entered into. In recognition of the progress achieved between the two cities and to broaden relations this has also been extended to include a focus on festivals and world heritage.
- 2.2 To mark the 50th anniversary of the twinning several reciprocal projects are in development for 2015 with cultural, arts and tourism themes. These projects are being supported by sponsors and partners across both cities, for example, the Italian Consul General and Italian Cultural Institute in Edinburgh, our City of Literature and World Heritage offices, the British Institute in Florence and arts organisations in both cities.
- 2.3 There are various opportunities to work with Florence on future EU funded projects in areas of mutual interest, including heritage work, education and culture.
- 2.4 The Council is jointly supporting a project alongside the Italian Consulate, Italian Cultural Institute, Scottish Poetry Library, Edinburgh City of Literature Office, Florence City Council UNESCO office, Edinburgh College of Art and the Talbot Rice Gallery which celebrates the launch of a book of poetry thematically focussed around the First World War and Scottish-Italian relations. The book contains poetry from Scottish poets alongside Italian war poet Ungaretti.
- 2.5 During the proposed visit to Florence in June, it is anticipated that the Lord Provost would launch the book alongside Christine de Luca, the Edinburgh Makar and one of the book's contributors, who will deliver readings.

- 2.6 Activities around this programme would also bring together UNESCO heritage contacts from across both cities in order to work together, share learning and form new links for collaboration.
- 2.7 Efforts are also underway to deliver an exchange of film offerings, with numerous film screenings surrounding the proposed civic visits taking place in each city. This would offer the chance to promote local film festivals and film production opportunities in each city.
- 2.8 The programme would also include a chef swap and showcase of Edinburgh food and drink in Florence, to coincide with the residency of an Edinburgh chef in a Florentine restaurant, also tying in with the theme of the year of Food and Drink Scotland. The Lord Provost's attendance would give the event profile and attract media as well as help to promote Edinburgh's upcoming Restaurant Festival in October 2015.
- 2.9 Additionally the visit would bring together interests in heritage, and extend connections between the UNESCO offices in both cities.

Main report

- 3.1 As reported to the Economy Committee on 19 November 2013 and 6 March 2014, Florence has been identified as a city for focus for Edinburgh in 2015. In recognition of the potential to further strengthen the links and to deliver on the City of Edinburgh Strategy for Jobs, Investment Agenda and Coalition pledges, a Partner City Anniversary Working group was established in late 2013 with a number of Edinburgh-Florence bilateral project proposals being considered by the group for the 50th anniversary of the twinning relationship between the two cities.
- 3.2 Throughout the years, the twinning relationship between Edinburgh and Florence has been underscored by a number of reciprocal civic visits. The most recent civic engagement was in October 2013 when Councillor Richard Lewis was invited to Florence as a guest of the city to speak about Edinburgh's festivals. Last year the Lord Provost wrote to the previous Mayor of Florence Matteo Renzi to congratulate him on becoming the Prime Minister of Italy in February 2014.
- 3.3 The Mayor of Florence has extended an invitation to the Lord Provost to be his Guest of Honour in June 2015, at the "Calcio Storico" sports match which is a traditional celebration of cultural heritage and history in the city.
- 3.4 The Lord Provost has invited the Mayor of Florence to be his guest at the opening of the Edinburgh International Festival and Military Tattoo in August this year in a similar gesture of cultural sharing.
- 3.5 2015 marks the 50 years of twinning between Florence and Edinburgh. The Lord Provost's visit will offer the opportunity to:

- Formally recognise the anniversary;
 - Strengthen city relations between Edinburgh and Florence for future development and joint activities;
 - Promote both cities as partners for investment, business and tourism; and
 - Recognise the importance of the strong cultural and city heritage links that both cities share and value.
- 3.6 The Lord Provost would be accompanied in Florence by a City Officer and by a member of the External Relations team.

Measures of success

- 4.1 Raise the city's international profile.
- 4.2 Promote Edinburgh's expertise.
- 4.3 Learn from European good practice.
- 4.4 Strengthen links with European cities.

Financial impact

- 5.1 The cost of attendance depends on the time of booking. Travel options have been considered and the recommendation is air travel due to time commitments. It is estimated that travel and accommodation per person will be in the region of £350. Costs for the Lord Provost and accompanying City Officer and External Relations officer travel will be met from the External Relations budget 2015/16.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 There are no risks arising from this report.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 There are no equalities impacts arising from this visit.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 Travel arrangements will be made in accordance with the Council's Sustainable Travel Plan.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 External Relations have ongoing interaction with Florence as a Twin City and continue to work closely with the Municipality of Florence as well as the Italian Consulate and Italian cultural organisations and diaspora in Edinburgh in delivering Twin City projects in 2015.

Background reading/external references

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Links

Coalition pledges	P31 - Maintain our City's reputation as the cultural capital of the world by continuing to support and invest in our cultural infrastructure
Council outcomes	CO7 - Edinburgh draws new investment in development and regeneration CO25 - The Council has efficient and effective services that deliver on objectives CO26 - The Council engages with stakeholders and works in partnership to improve services and deliver on agreed objectives
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1 - Edinburgh's Economy Delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all
Appendices	None