

**The Highland Council**  
**City of Inverness Area Committee**  
**1 September 2016**

Agenda Item	13
Report No	CIA/41/16

**Augsburg Twinning Links: Economic Opportunities**

**Report by Inverness City Area Manager**

**Summary**

This report updates Members on the recent visit to Augsburg by the Provost and the Civic and Facilities Team Leader, accompanied by the Principal Economy Officer from the Development and Infrastructure Service.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 At the meeting of the City of Inverness Area Committee of 3 December 2015, it was agreed to send a small civic deputation to Augsburg in response to their invitation to Inverness to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of twinning link between the two cities.
- 1.2 As part of their commemoration activities, the City of Augsburg held a “European Week”. This featured a strong Scottish element, allowing the delegation to promote Inverness and the Highlands. A specially designed Inverness/Augsburg Leaflet was produced and a copy is included (**Appendix 1**) to accompany this report. A wide range of publicity materials were also distributed featuring Inverness and the Highlands, complemented by displays of Highland dancing and performances of Piping, from the Council’s “Official Piper”, supported by the Claymore Pipe Band from Munich.
- 1.3 At the same time, the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) was also engaging in positive dialogue with the [Hochschule Augsburg](#). The Principal of UHI, Professor Clive Mulholland, was in attendance and they signed a Memorandum of Understanding between both academic institutions. In addition, he received an honorary doctorate in recognition of the importance they invest in developing relations between the two universities. This was the culmination of a growing relationship between both institutions following a previous visit by UHI’s Professor of Pedagogy, Professor Smyth, to the Hochschule’s Pedagogy Conference. At this conference, the expertise that UHI has developed in terms of blended learning and in educational collaboration was very well received.

**2. Current Situation**

- 2.1 A key requirement for the city twinning process going forward, has been an obligation to develop economic ties to complement the strong social and cultural links that have developed.
- 2.2 Augsburg presents Inverness, and the Highlands, with a significant opportunity to promote economic development and to move the twinning link forward.
- 2.3 Preparatory work was undertaken prior to the visit to ascertain potential collaborative opportunities. As a result of this, an exploratory meeting was convened with senior representatives of the [Klinikum Augsburg](#). The Klinikum is a major medical facility based in the city, with significant research activities that could complement work currently being undertaken by the Centre for Health Sciences based at Raigmore, and at the UHI.
- 2.4 Inverness and the Highlands were represented by Professor Alasdair Munro of the Centre for Health Sciences, and Professor Clive Mulholland, Principal of UHI supported by Council officials, and the Chairman of the Inverness Town Twinning Committee. David Scrimgeour of DS Consulting, a Bavarian based Scot who has significant experience of fostering Bavarian-Scottish economic relationships and who has been instrumental in setting up the meeting with the Klinikum, was also present.
- 2.5 The Klinikum was represented by members of its Executive Board including the Head of its Emergency Ward, the Head of the Nursing Department and the Deputy Head of the Executive Board. A number of issues were discussed, and a number of areas of common interest identified. In particular, the opportunities around the area of Digital Health were recognised as common to both areas, with Bavaria also having a large rural hinterland.

### **3. Conclusions**

- 3.1 This report was originally intended to be presented to the City Committee on 2 June 2016. However, with the EU Referendum scheduled for 23 June, a decision was taken to postpone discussion of this item until after the vote had taken place. Due to the tight timescales involved it was decided to press ahead with the engagement of Munich based consultant, DS Consulting, to assist with the development of a number of potential healthcare sector related projects which can be implemented relatively quickly, and which could act as the basis for the development of a longer term strategy.
- 3.2 The initial meeting with the Klinikum was deemed a success in terms of identifying potential areas for collaboration. The key sector, in terms of future economic development opportunities, would seem to be in the area of Health Care, with a number of common areas of opportunity, such as the potential for digitalisation, and in the delivery of tele-medicine services.
- 3.3 The Klinikum has been invited to visit Inverness in September, at the same time as the planned reciprocal visit from the City of Augsburg. In the meantime it is important to examine in more detail, those areas of mutual

opportunity identified during the initial discussions.

- 3.4 DS Consulting visited Inverness early in July to highlight the opportunity that collaborative working with partners in Augsburg could bring. Positive meetings were held with a variety of people and organisations including UHI, the Centre for Health Sciences, the Diabetes Research Centre, and Highlands and Islands Enterprise's (HIE) Life Sciences team. HIE have undertaken to look at existing medical technologies, digital health and wearable tech companies in the Augsburg / Schwaben region, to understand the wider market opportunity. A very positive meeting was also held with Inverness Chamber of Commerce who clearly recognised the potential economic opportunity from fostering closer links with the City of Augsburg.
- 3.5 The consultant is now in the process of firming up with the Klinikum on who will be visiting Inverness in September to further progress economic twinning opportunities. At the same time UHI is developing links with the Hochschule in Augsburg and representatives from there will also be visiting Inverness in early September prior to the Town Twinning celebrations. There are two universities based in the city, [Augsburg University](#) has recently been given the approval to develop a medical school and this in turn presents opportunities for collaboration with the Centre for Health Sciences, where a number of Scottish Higher Education institutions including UHI deliver a range of graduate and post graduate medical education services using a wide range of digital learning techniques. It is expected that representatives from Augsburg University will also be visiting in September.
- 3.6 It is important to understand that this is not a well formed relationship at present but the start of a journey. There are relatively few examples of civic twinning links that have developed into meaningful economic relationships. One that we were able to identify is between the Cities of Nottingham and Karlsruhe. They successfully developed their economic links in the 1990's after Nottingham sought the advice of their twin city on how best to install a modern tram system. This led to German companies establishing bases in Nottingham, creating jobs and opportunities in both locations.
- 3.7 The national context, both in Germany and in Scotland is encouraging in relation to digitalisation and to the development of Life Sciences. The Bavarian Government has committed significant resources to digitalisation projects (£450m), while Healthcare and Life Sciences is a key Sector for the Scottish Government, and HIE's Economic Strategy.
- 3.8 The implications of 'Brexit' on the future of our relationships with Europe will also need to be considered. Town twinning with Augsburg was a result of the post war settlement in Europe and pre-dates our membership of the EU by almost 20 years, so EU membership was not crucial to the development of links. However, from a financial point of view, EU membership or a relationship with the EU is important if we want to carry on accessing funding. Currently we are able to tap into EU Budgets such as the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Framework as well as initiatives that facilitate educational links such as Erasmus. In the case of Norway, although they are

not a member of the EU they participate in Horizon Programme opportunities by contributing financially to specific projects. UHI remain positive about developing their links with Augsburg, and will still want to collaborate internationally. The Town Twinning link will also remain once the UK has formally left the EU.

#### **4. Implications**

##### **4.1 Financial**

The examination of the potential for the development of links with Augsburg in the area of Life Sciences/Health Care is expected to cost in the region of £10,000. The Development and Infrastructure Economic Initiatives Budget has paid 50% of the costs of engaging DS Consulting, with 50% being requested from the Inverness Common Good Fund Town Twinning Budget.

##### **4.2 Legal**

No legal Implications at this time.

##### **4.3 Equalities**

The arrangements will meet the criteria set by Council policy.

##### **4.4 Climate Change/ Carbon Clever**

No implications for Carbon Clever/climate change.

##### **4.5 Risk**

There are no known risk implications.

##### **4.6 Rural**

There could be some positive implications for the rural areas of the Highlands from potential developments in digital and rural health delivery.

##### **4.7 Gaelic**

There are no known Gaelic implications.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- approve the commitment of a maximum of £5,000 from the Inverness Common Good Fund Town Twinning Budget towards the costs of additional work to develop economic links between the cities of Augsburg and Inverness;
- note the detail of the initial meeting in Augsburg between the Council and its partners, the Centre for Health Science and the University of the Highlands and Islands, with the Klinikum Augsburg, as well as the proposals for further meetings in September in Inverness; and
- note also the shared interest in Blended Learning and in Collaborative working that has been developing between educational institutions in both cities, and the opportunity they present for future economic development opportunities.

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