

# CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

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REPORT OF: Democratic Services Manager

TO: Civic Affairs Committee

14/9/2011

WARDS: None directly affected

## **HONORARY FREEDOM OF THE CITY - CITY OF SZEGED**

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### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Cambridge City Council entered into a formal twinning link with the City of Szeged, Hungary, in 1987.
- 1.2 The Committee considered in January 2006 (Minute 06/CIV/5) whether the Honorary Freedom of the City of Cambridge should be conferred upon the City of Szeged to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of twinning. It was agreed to re-consider the matter in readiness for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary which will be February, 2012.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is requested to recommend that Council confer the Honorary Freedom of the City of Cambridge upon the City of Szeged to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning link with that City. (Nb. Granting the Freedom of the City will require at least two thirds of the Councillors present to agree to the recommendation).

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The twinning link with Szeged is strengthened particularly as a result of the support it receives from the Cambridge-Szeged Society (see [www.cambridge-szeged-society.org.uk](http://www.cambridge-szeged-society.org.uk)). The Society is made up of people whose aim is to promote and foster friendship and understanding between the people of Szeged and of Cambridge.
- 3.2 The Society instigates an extensive programme of cultural activities to take place in Cambridge each year to promote this link of friendship.

- 3.3 The Council gives a small grant to the Society (£1,300 in 2010/11) to assist with the promotion of its events. A similar level of grant is also given to the Cambridge-Heidelberg Partnership Association which supports the City's other twinning link with Heidelberg.
- 3.4 Cambridge City Council usually is represented at the annual Bridge Fair in Szeged and organises a display stand of promotional material relating to Cambridge. Civic guests from Szeged visit Cambridge on a, roughly, biennial basis.
- 3.5 By virtue of the Honorary Freedom of Boroughs Act 1885, and by Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009), the highest honour that a Council can bestow is the Honorary Freedom of a town or city. It is granted on "persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the City, Borough or Royal Borough". An Honorary Freedom carries with it no special privileges – it is purely an honorary title.
- 3.6 The last time Cambridge City Council awarded an Honorary Freedom was in 2005 – to the City of Heidelberg, with which Cambridge has been twinned since 1957 (with the formal Friendship Agreement being signed in 1965).

#### **4. CONSULTATIONS**

The Cambridge-Szeged Society has been consulted and is supportive of the proposal to award the Honorary Freedom.

#### **5. IMPLICATIONS**

##### **(a) Financial Implications**

The specific Twinning budget for 2011/12 is £10,000 with existing commitments of £3,400. The one-off costs associated with the Honorary Freedom will be approximately £8,000. Any shortfall will be met from the overall Civic Budget (which covers the Mayoralty and Twinning). The one-off costs will cover the transport, accommodation and hosting for civic representatives of Szeged City Council during which time the Honorary Freedom will officially be conferred (and a casket containing an illuminated copy of the Council's resolution presented). The Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources has been consulted and supports the approach to

resourcing this proposal. In light of considering the resources made available for twinning, officers will review the way the budget is allocated and report back to the Executive Councillor.

- (b) **Staffing Implications**  
None
- (c) **Equal Opportunities Implications**  
None
- (d) **Environmental Implications**  
None
- (e) **Community Safety**  
None

Background:

Civic Affairs Committee Agenda and Minutes - 25 January 2006

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Report file: N:\Members\Twinning\

Date originated: 05 September 2011  
Date of last revision: 05 September 2011