

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Educational Services

Culture Sub-Committee: 4 August 2008

**Subject: Antonine Wall World Heritage Site proposal:
Twinning/Partnering opportunities**

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report seeks to inform the sub committee of progress of the proposal to UNESCO from the U.K. Government to include the Antonine Wall as part of the 'Northern Frontiers of the Roman Empire' World Heritage Site and to seek approval for officers to investigate the potential of twinning/partnering arrangements for West Dunbartonshire, particularly between museums, schools and youth groups.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Antonine Wall, running eastwards from Old Kilpatrick, where a fort marked its western terminus, to the Forth, is the furthest north-west boundary of the Roman Empire and the most important surviving Roman monument in Scotland. At the beginning of 2003 Ministers announced that Scotland would be proposing the Antonine Wall as a World Heritage Site, an extension to the existing trans-national *Frontiers of Roman Empire World Heritage Site* which includes Hadrian's Wall and the Upper German Raetian Limes (Note: The upper German-Raetian Limes is Germany's largest archaeological monument. The artificial, in places wholly straight, demarcation line separated the Roman Empire from the Barbarian world between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD.)
- 2.2** Historic Scotland and the five local authorities along the line of the Wall – West Dunbartonshire, East Dunbartonshire, Glasgow, North Lanarkshire and Falkirk formed a Steering Group in 2004 to progress the nomination of the Antonine Wall and on 23 January 2007 the nomination was submitted to UNESCO. The decision will be made at the 32nd session of the World Heritage Committee, being held in Quebec, Canada, from 2-10 July 2008. During the session, the Committee will consider requests for the inscription of new sites, including the Antonine Wall, on UNESCO's World Heritage List, and this decision is expected on 6th/7th July 2008.
- 2.3** West Dunbartonshire council officers from HEED (Planning) and Educational Services (Lifelong Learning) attend the 'management plan' working group' chaired by Historic Scotland which has supported the proposal so far. Assuming a positive outcome, this group will continue in some form to ensure

the management plan is adhered to and take forward a number of issues related to conservation, improved public access etc.

- 2.4** A local working group involving local people and relevant local organisations (Local History Society and the New Fort Trust) has also been established and has held two meetings in advance of the UNESCO decision. Their first meeting at Clydebank Town Hall on 11th March 2008 was attended by the Provost and a number of elected members who expressed their support for the group and its main objective of raising awareness of the Antonine Wall and the World Heritage proposal. At their second meeting Peter Stott from Falkirk Council spoke of discussions at Bo'ness (the easternmost point of the Wall) regarding the possibility of a significance marker at eastern end of the wall and asked if there was interest locally for a marker at Old Kilpatrick. The general view of those present was that a significance marker would be desirable and there was agreement to future discussion with representatives from Bo'ness.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The conferring of World Heritage Status on the Antonine Wall, if confirmed, will be of major significance to the area, enhancing tourism potential and presenting opportunities to develop links both across Scotland and internationally.
- 3.2** The local working group at present consists of those individuals and organisations already aware of the Antonine Wall and its significance. There is a need to broaden this awareness to sections of the wider community and 'twinning/partnering' arrangements could be one way of achieving this.
- 3.3** There is the likelihood of significant media coverage of the announcement in July 2008 and it would be advisable to capitalise on the level of interest generated in the following months.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no immediate personnel issues related to this report

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** There are no immediate financial issues related to this report

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** There is a potential risk to the council of not seeking to maximise the potential of world heritage status being conferred on a local attraction. However, there may also be some risk associated with any potential twinning/partnering arrangements identified. Prior to any arrangements being formalised or confirmed a risk assessment would require to be undertaken.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1** The conferring of World Heritage status on the Antonine Wall will, if confirmed, have a substantial impact on a number of locations within the authority. There is a need to increase awareness of the wall and its environs amongst the local population and establishing links between existing agencies and organisations, both within Scotland and internationally is one way of addressing this in a sustainable manner.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Members are asked to:

- a) agree that, should the bid for World Heritage status be successful, the Manager of Lifelong Learning will initiate discussions with appropriate officers within West Dunbartonshire Council, partner local authorities/agencies on the Antonine Wall 'management plan' working group, relevant voluntary sector agencies and potential international partners with a view to maximising the benefits for West Dunbartonshire Council of the new status;
- b) agree that a further report containing proposals for the way forward should be presented to a future meeting of the Culture Sub-Committee;
- c) otherwise note the contents of this report.

Terry Lanagan
Executive Director of Educational Services

Wards Affected: All (but principally Clydebank Central and Kilpatrick)

Appendix: None

Background Papers: None

Persons to Contact: Ken Graham
Manager - Lifelong Learning
Educational Services
19 Poplar Road
Dumbarton
Tel: 01389 608047
ken.graham@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

