

# **CABINET**

**17<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2012**

Minute No. 55. - Review of Town Twinning

The Leader of the Council and the Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a joint report setting out a review of the current position of Town Twinning activities in and around Swindon and highlighting issues raised by members of the Town Twinning Network in response to the review.

The Chair commented on the importance of Town and Civic Twinning to Swindon. Councillor Kevin Small, a member of the Town Twinning Network, welcomed the report and highlighted the views of the Network on the merits of Town Twinning. He believed more could be done to link Town Twinning with the Council's economic development goals and, in particular, to secure access to European Union grant funding through utilising Twinning and Twinning links. He believed that more effort should be put into encouraging young people to become involved in Twinning activities. He felt that newer Councillors should also be helped to learn more about, and become involved in, Twinning activities and that Cabinet Members should act as ambassadors within their portfolio areas to promote Twinning opportunities and service involvement.

Councillor Stan Pajak, Leader of the Minority Group, welcomed the report and commented that he believed that Twinning was not often taken as seriously in the UK as it was by its international partners, where it was often seen as a matter of considerable civic pride. He referred to the Friendship Agreement with Torun in Poland and how this had developed over the years.

The Chair thanked Councillors for their thoughtful contributions and he endorsed the importance of international links to achieving a successful local economy.

Resolved – (1) That the Cabinet confirms its commitment to Town Twinning activities in and around Swindon and recognises the potential of twinning in promoting international links involving Swindon's citizens, groups and businesses.

(2) That the Cabinet records its recognition of the value of the Town Twinning Network in providing a forum for discussion and exchange of information, in addition to supporting the development of other international links.

(3) That the importance of the Civic and Mayoral roles in supporting and promoting Town Twinning activities and that formal recognition by the Mayor's Office would provide support to the development of important international relationships, be noted.

(4) That the Council be recommended that the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor be formally appointed as ex officio members of the Town Twinning Network.

(5) That Cabinet Members and Board Directors be asked to consider what further support could be provided to support Town Twinning activities such as promotional and marketing activities, through the use of existing Council services.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.