

Involvement of Schools and Young People in Twinning Activities

Town Twinning Network

Date: 5 June 2013

Author: Head of Commissioning: Economy and Attainment

Wards affected: All

Localities affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report is presented to the Swindon Borough Council Town Twinning Network in response to a request from the Network at its meeting on 27 February 2013 (Minute 15 refers).
- 1.2 The report describes a proposal to enable members of the Town Twinning Network to learn more about approaches taken by schools in Swindon to twinning. It also seeks to provide an opportunity for the Town Twinning Network to develop its approach to engagement with young people.

2. Recommendations

The Town Twinning Network is recommended to:

- 2.1 establish a task and finish group to visit three Secondary and three Primary schools in Swindon;
- 2.2 receive a report from the task and finish group on its learning from the visits and its recommendations for the future development of the Network.

3. Detail

- 3.1 Members of the Town Twinning Network received information at their meeting on 11 January 2012 about the number and range of international links established by schools.
- 3.2 As of January 2012, 54% of schools (42 schools) had links. There were 98 established international links to 33 countries. France was very clearly the most popular link (22 contacts), followed by Spain (8), Germany (7), Japan, South Africa, Italy (6) and Poland (5). There were 18 countries with one link to a Swindon school.

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- 3.3 12 Primary schools and three Secondary schools had achieved the full international school award in recognition of their work towards greater international understanding. Three further Primary schools were applying for the full award.
- 3.4 Schools establish links with schools in other countries for a range of reasons. These include:
- to meet the needs of the curriculum;
 - to enhance a particular aspect of learning, for example, foreign language and humanities;
 - personal contact;
 - charitable aims.
- 3.5 In both Primary and Secondary schools the curriculum need is frequently to support foreign language acquisition or, more likely in the case of Primary schools, driven by a desire to widen the perspective of the children. The links are sometimes enhanced by charitable giving.
- 3.6 In order to increase their understanding of the mechanics and the level of sustainability of schools' international links, members of the Town Twinning Network could establish a task and finish group to visit three Secondary and three Primary schools. The schools approached could come from the schools that had achieved the full international school award. The visit to each school could include discussions with the member of staff responsible for the links, a senior member of staff to understand the strategic importance of the provision and a group of students who have participated in a link.
- 3.7 A reasonable timeframe for the task and finish group to operate is from June until November 2013, with a report to the Network on 4 December 2013.
- 3.8 Officers of Swindon Borough Council are able to provide some support to the group, specifically around arranging the meetings and formulating a structure to help gather information.

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- 3.9 The discussions with students will be important to ascertain the impact of links and the level of enthusiasm of the young people. Such information would be very useful to help the Town Twinning Network to develop its future strategy to engage young people in a sustainable process of international links through twinning.

Alternative Options

Not applicable

Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

There are no direct financial or procurement implications relating to this report. Any future activity that has financial implications would be subject to a separate report.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

This report has no specific legal or human rights implications.

Links to Corporate Plans and Policies

The Council is committed to ensuring the right skills for the right jobs are in the right places. Town twinning activities contribute to the education and skills of young people and support efforts to compete for jobs in a growing economy.

Consultees

The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

Background Papers and Appendices

None