

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**CABINET MEMBER MEETING - JOBS, ECONOMY AND
TRANSPORT**

11 February 2014

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**TOYOTA CITY TWINNING – 15TH YEAR CELEBRATIONS AND
FUTURE ACTIVITY**

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To report on activity relating to the 15th anniversary of the twinning link with Toyota City and provide an overview of future activity for consideration and comment, to seek retrospective approval to Officer attendance at an Industry event and to update the budgetary position for the Twinning Programme.

(2) **Information and Analysis** During 2013, the 15th year of the formal twinning agreement between the County Council, Derby City Council, South Derbyshire District Council and Toyota City was commemorated. To mark the anniversary a programme of events and exchange activities was delivered.

Civic commemorations focused on the reciprocal twinning ceremonies in Toyota City on 1 November 2013 and County Hall, Matlock on 18 November which included the signing of a new twinning agreement to confirm continued commitment to the relationship.

A number of successful community and educational activities were also delivered, including the Toyota City Boys and Girls Choir visit to Derbyshire in early August and the City and County Youth Wind Band to Toyota in late October. In addition, a Schools Exchange Programme took place between September-October 2013 which included the Youth Eco-Conference in Toyota City which focused on environmental issues.

A third and new strand of activity undertaken as part of the programme focused on tourism promotion, economic development and investment. In May 2013, a delegation led by the Toyota Chamber of Commerce attended the Derbyshire Food and Drink Fair at Elvaston Castle. The Japanese Pavilion showcased both cultural and economic aspects of Toyota City and Japan in general and provided a popular focal point for the weekend which was

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attended by over 15,000 people. As a result of the visit, the County Council, City Council and South Derbyshire District Council agreed to reciprocate by sending a delegation to the Toyota Industry Festival which took place on 28 - 29 September 2013. The festival is a two day weekend event showcasing local industry and business as well as cultural offering, and is attended by an estimated 90,000 visitors.

In June 2013, partners agreed a proposal for the Civic led delegation which focused on tourism promotion, trade and investment, and included fact finding to consider future economic development and trade activity through the twinning relationship. The rationale for the proposal centred on the launch of the Japanese language website developed and hosted by Visit Peak District and Derbyshire (VPD&D) to encourage increased tourism from Japan.

The Cabinet Member – Jobs, Economy and Transport considered a report on 30 July 2013 that proposed that one officer should attend the Toyota Industry Festival as part of the delegation that would be led by an appropriate Member from Derby City Council and include representation from the three councils and VPD&D (Minute No. 39/13 refers).

A partner working group was established to prepare for the delegation's visit which would include all the relevant logistical and administrative tasks required, a programme of activities and the final confirmation of attendees. At an early stage, it was proposed that the County Council's Head of Economic Regeneration would be required to lead and consider potential economic activity resulting from the delegation. Other delegates included Councillor Sarah Bolton (Civic lead) supported by a Derby City Council Tourism Officer, the Economic Development Manager from South Derbyshire District Council and the Chief Executive of VPD&D. The working group proposed that the County Council's Twinning and Tourism Officer should also accompany the delegation to act as interpreter and lead co-ordinator of programmed activity with colleagues from Toyota City Council. It would also allow the Officer to meet with Toyota City colleagues regarding the forthcoming civic twinning ceremonies. Following discussion, the Cabinet Member – Jobs, Economy and Transport, agreed that this was acceptable. Formal approval to this, however, was not sought due to time constraints and therefore, retrospective endorsement to this is now being sought. Final costs for the delegation would be met from the existing Twinning budget but divided equally between the three councils.

The delegation visited Toyota City between 26 September - 1 October 2013 and included exhibiting at the Toyota Industry Festival. The visit attracted significant media coverage within Japan. The Derbyshire exhibition stall proved to be very popular with visitors to the event and included an interactive screen that showcased the new website and displayed video footage from across Derbyshire, visitors were interested to learn about the twinning link and

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very happy to sample the Derbyshire food and drink products available. Alongside the VPD&D stand, the delegation was joined by representatives from John Smedley Ltd and Royal Crown Derby, as well as the new model Toyota Avensis built at Burnaston.

The programme of activities also included:

- Formal discussions with representatives from Toyota City Council and partners regarding potential future activity in relation to economic promotion, tourism development and investment.
- A visit to the Toyota City Council “Ecoful Town” project which forms part of the Japan Smart City initiative set up to demonstrate the potential for a new approach to sustainable growth designed to encourage healthy economic activities that reduce the burden on the environment whilst improving quality of life.
- Site visits to Matsudaira-go and Asuke Gorge including exploratory discussions with local tourism promotion bodies.

Future Activity

The programme of activity to mark the 15th anniversary has reconfirmed all partners continued commitment to the twinning link and provided impetus to explore new ways of joint working. As part of his speech at the Civic twinning ceremony on 18 November 2013, Major Ota from Toyota City Council outlined a three point plan to take forward future activity focusing on Industry, Tourism and the Environment.

In addition, Toyota City Council has confirmed its intention to send a delegation to the Derbyshire Food and Drink Fair 2014 and proposed further officer exchanges following on from the visit of Mr Takashi Hirata last year.

As a result of the Toyota Industry Festival delegation, the Head of Economic Regeneration has outlined potential future initiatives for further exploration including:

- Trade Missions – for discussion with the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce and likely to focus on high quality consumer goods.
- Derbyshire Food and Drink Fair – assessing the viability of staging a mini Derbyshire Food and Drink Fair in Toyota focusing on existing export links and businesses looking to break into the Japanese market.
- “Ecoful Town” Demonstrator project – scope out the feasibility for delivering a similar project in Derbyshire, potentially within the National Forest.
- Tourism Partnership – building upon the launch of the Japanese language tourism website, establish a partnership protocol focusing

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on supporting the visitor economy and promoting increased tourism traffic between Derbyshire and Japan.

- Motor City regeneration – review the potential of forming a tripartite regeneration link between Derbyshire, Toyota City and Detroit (twinned with Toyota) to share best practice.

A de-brief session will shortly be scheduled with key partners to review the above and consider options for taking forward Major Ota's proposed plan. It is recommended that Derbyshire partners should nominate representatives from each council and relevant stakeholders to act as a "Twinning Development Team" to take forward the agenda.

(3) **Financial Considerations** All costs incurred as part of the Toyota City Twinning 15th Anniversary Programme will be met from the existing Twinning budget. The original estimated costs of the Programme of £8,000 as represented to the Cabinet Member in July 2013 have now been finalised and are £11,000 which will be shared equally between Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council and South Derbyshire District Council.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(4) **Key Decision** No.

(5) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(6) **Background Papers** All relevant papers are held by the Economic Regeneration Service. Officer contact details – Frank Horsley, extension 38348.

(7) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That the Cabinet Member:

- 7.1 Notes the content of the report including details relating to the Toyota Industry Fair delegation and proposed future activity.
- 7.2 Approves the establishment of a "Twinning Development Team" to develop future twinning agenda.
- 7.3 Retrospectively approves the attendance at the Council's Tourism and Twinning Officer at the Toyota Industry Festival for the reasons set out in the report.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment