

D2 JOINT COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

UPDATE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the D2 Joint Committee with an overview of the activity and immediate outputs following a recent visit to Toyota City, Japan.

2.0 DISCUSSION/ DECISION REQUIRED BY THE COMMITTEE

- 2.1 **The report is for noting. A more detailed report is proposed to be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Committee outlining the potential for further developing the Toyota City partnership and deepening the opportunities for greater cultural, educational and business exchange.**

3.0 CONTEXT

- 3.1 The three local authorities of South Derbyshire District Council, Derby City and Derbyshire County Council have been party to a 'twinning' relationship with Toyota City Council since 1998. The arrangement was developed following the major investment of Toyota Manufacturing (TMUK) at a new plant in Burnaston in 1993 and has primarily focused on cultural and civic exchange until recent years, when greater emphasis has been given to business, environmental and educational activity.
- 3.2 TMUK currently employs over 3000 people at Burnaston with a further 3,300 engaged in the local supply chain. The value of the relationship with both the company and Toyota City Council is an exceptionally valuable one, particularly following the Brexit vote.
- 3.3 2018 marks the 20th anniversary of the international relationship with Toyota City and the significance of the occasion has been marked by a number of events:
- Joint presentation at Westminster in September by local authorities and TMUK to the DCLG Minister, James Brokenshire MP, the Japanese Ambassador and six leading MPs from the Derbyshire region
 - Representation from Derbyshire at the Toyota Industry Fest in September
 - Hosting a delegation of 14 civic and business delegates from Toyota, including Mrs Akiko Toyoda and Mayor Ota during late October
 - Return visit by eight elected members and four officers from across the three Derbyshire councils to Toyota City during mid-November.
- 3.4 The purpose of the exchange primarily has been to celebrate the important relationship and recognise the value of the investment from TMUK 20 years ago. However, it has also served as a platform from which to showcase Derbyshire

products to a major international market, initiate business to business dialogue to encourage trade and export and identify develop further opportunities for tourism education and environmental exchange to mutual benefit.

4.0 SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIVITY

- 4.1 The Toyota City Partnership Development Board (TCPDB) has been set up to provide direction and oversight to the continued development of this important international relationship. Membership of the Board is constituted of: South Derbyshire District, Derby City and Derbyshire Council councils; University of Derby; Burton and South Derbyshire College; Derby College, Marketing Peak District and Derbyshire, Marketing Derby, the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce, TMUK and the National Forest.
- 4.2 The TCP Board is chaired by Councillor Tony King of Derbyshire County Council and is currently supported by a small officer group from each of the councils.
- 4.3 A five year plan is being drafted that sets out a number of key areas of common interest with TMUK and Toyota City, including work around the Rugby World Cup in 2019 and the Tokyo Olympics in 2020. The areas of mutual co-operation are:
- **Education:** including increased activity around student exchange at secondary, further and tertiary levels, collaboration in research and competitions, scholarships and awards. There is potential to extend the benefit of school exchange and liaison with schools across the County
 - **Business:** facilitating greater international trade, supporting and encouraging business to business relationships and promoting the visitor economy so that local businesses can expand.
 - **Environment:** sharing good practice to support healthy lifestyle choices. This strand is far reaching and includes the nurturing of the natural environment and our own personal resources to live well.
 - **Cultural understanding:** building on our existing knowledge and understanding from the 20 years of active involvement. Greater activity in this area will support other strands, particularly business relationships, 'global citizenship' in schools and the visitor economy by ensuring the County welcomes/ is prepared for international visitors
 - **Sport:** the Rugby World Cup in 2019 and Olympics in 2020 provide an exceptional platform for wider sporting connections – through schools and local clubs across all sports. Related business opportunities will also be identified and promoted as part of this strand
- 4.4 The Five Year Plan was promoted by the Derbyshire authorities during the November delegation and has secured the support of Mayor Ota. It will provide the platform for concerted, joint work going forward with agreed outputs and targets aligned to its delivery, particularly around 'clean' and 'good growth' where Toyota City has an exceptional track record of delivering low carbon solutions for residential development and transport infrastructure. This presents a great opportunity for learning and developing leading practice in construction and infrastructure here in Derbyshire, helping to support economic advantage and growth.

- 4.5 Overall, the visit to Toyota City was a huge success; the value of the economic and cultural relationship between the two regions was fully recognised and there was a clear commitment from the highest level to continue to maintain, promote and develop the relationship over the long term. Within the scope of the Five Year Plan, there is opportunity to maximise the potential impact of this relationship – which also has the tacit support of the Japanese Ambassador and Government departments such as DiT.

5.0 FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES

- 5.1 There is a growing level of activity supporting international economic relations across the D2 area. Currently, significant work is being undertaken to promote inward investment and support business to business activity in China, Japan, India, Spain and other areas. This is a critical area of work in supporting economic growth and prosperity in Derbyshire.
- 5.2 At the moment, much of this work is undertaken either within individual authorities or under the wider umbrella of the Midlands Engine, often on a bespoke basis. There is potential to share experience and align local authority activity across the region to greater effect, helping ensure Derbyshire maintains a global profile and benefits from its great opportunities as a place to live, work, visit and invest.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 It is recommended the Joint Committee notes the report and success of the recent visit to Japan.
- 6.2 It is recommended the Joint Committee undertakes a strategic discussion at the next meeting to explore the wider impacts and potential of a joined up approach to international relations and trade.