

REPORT

To: BELLSHILL AND DISTRICT AREA COMMITTEE		Subject: TWINNING: AREA COMMITTEES
From: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION		
Date: 24 November 1998	Ref: CC/MR	

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Within the terms of reference for Area Committees there is included a requirement to assist in the development of town twinning links. The General Purposes Committee is required to consider the establishment of twinning links and all other related matters.
- 1.2. At a meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 26 August 1998, it was agreed, amongst other things, that the Area Committees of Bellshill, Motherwell, Shotts and Harthill and Wishaw and Newmains be the appropriate Committees for the twinning link with Schweinfurt, Germany and that where practical, the advice of the appropriate Area Committee(s) be obtained to assist the decisions of the General Purposes Committee on twinning matters.
- 1.3. Having considered a report dated 11 August 1998 by the Director of Administration entitled "Twinning: Area Committees", the Area Committee, at their meeting on 10 September 1998, agreed to continue consideration of the matter for a further report to include information on the benefits which the twinning link with Schweinfurt had brought to local groups and businesses within the Bellshill and District area.
- 1.4. This report provides a background to twinning, the twinning link with Schweinfurt and summary information on the involvement between Schweinfurt and the local community, including Bellshill and District.

2. Background

- 2.1. The concept of town twinning originated over 40 years ago and developed rapidly in the UK following the second World War as many communities wished to consciously build up contact, friendship and co-operation with communities and other countries, mainly in Europe with France and Germany. Since then, the concept of twinning has undergone a series of changes as communities re-evaluated the content of their twinning relationships towards the educational, economic and technical aspects of twinning. Practical examples of such links include school/university exchanges, new markets and the co-operation of local authorities on projects of a technical nature in which skills are exchanged or transferred from one partner to another.

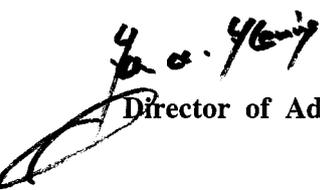
- 2.2. Links with Schweinfurt were formalised in 1962 by a predecessor authority and took account of the similarities in environment, working life and culture with the area of North Lanarkshire around Motherwell and the surrounding villages. Then, both areas had been affected by industrialisation. Now, in this post industrial era, both are actively trying to attract commerce and industry to create employment.
- 2.3. Since 1962, links with Schweinfurt have included a number of exchanges at several levels of activity. In addition to official delegations there have been reciprocal exchanges with schools, clubs, disabled groups, technical students, business people and individuals, many from within the Bellshill and District area. Those recorded on file as having participated in links with Schweinfurt include, Alba Youth Exchange Group, Brannock Youth Exchange, Cardinal Newman Youth Club, the Clottie Dumpling Company, Hunter Street Work Centre, New Stevenston Activity Club, Newarthill Youth Exchange Group (involving young people from Newarthill, Carfin, Holytown, New Stevenston and Cleland), Sacred Heart Primary School, Scot Trout, students on a work experience programme (undertaken in Schweinfurt's SKF Ballbearing Factory), United Neighbours Youth Group and Viewpark International Contact Group.

3. Conclusion

Twinning links with Schweinfurt have enabled the exchange of knowledge, skills and working practices with potentially far reaching consequences not easily quantifiable. They have provided access to another culture and created the opportunity for co-operation and the expansion of contacts, friendships and networks at individual, group and business levels. In these terms it is suggested that as town twinning evolves in conceptual and practical ways, the link with Schweinfurt will continue to be of value to the Bellshill and District area.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. It is recommended that,
- (a) the Committee note that the official link for the Bellshill and District Area Committee is Schweinfurt;
 - (b) where practical, the advice of the Area Committee be sought to assist the decisions of the General Purposes Committee on twinning matters, and
 - (c) the Committee otherwise note the report.


Director of Administration

For further information on the contents of this report please contact Carol Cluggie, Principal Administrative Officer on Extension 2241.