

Agenda item 9

For decision - International work experience project

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Summary

This report proposes to establish an Earmarked Reserve of £2000 to enable young people in Frome to travel to our twin towns as part of an International Work Experience Project. The proposal is to pilot the scheme involving Frome and Murrhardt in the first instance. The work placements would be for 1-2 weeks starting in 2018/19.

It is proposed that the money used to create the bursary be taken from the £3000 surplus obtained following the refund by the European Commission of expenditure incurred during the Thematic Networking Project that ended in 2016.

It is proposed that the remaining amount of £1000 is allocated to the Frome Twinning Association to cover expenses incurred during the Thematic Networking Project.

Objectives and scope

Background

From 2014-16, Frome took part in a Thematic Networking Project. This project involved a series of events that brought together delegations from Frome, Château-Gontier (France), Rabka-Zdrój (Poland) and Murrhardt (Germany). The purpose of the Thematic Networking Project was to exchange ideas and expertise on topics of mutual interest. Examples of these topics were how to build more resilient towns, improve young people's preparation for the world of work and improve health and wellbeing.

The project was funded by the European Commission, but initial expenses (£26,000) were underwritten by Frome Town Council. This decision was agreed by Council in 2013. We have now received the grant and due to the exchange rate between the pound and the euro the grant we received was £3000 more than expected.

International Work Experience Pilot

One of the practical things to emerge from the Thematic Networking events was a commitment to pilot an International Work Experience Project in Frome and Murrhardt. To date, this has involved three young people from Murrhardt coming to Frome and taking part in 2-week work placements with DNA Worldwide, The Old Bath Arms and Harris & Harris. This was part-funded by Murrhardt Council and the young people themselves. We have identified a number of businesses in Murrhardt that would be prepared to take part. In addition, other businesses in Frome are showing interest in being involved.

These international work experience placements would have practical advantages for businesses that would like to strengthen their global reach and build professional relationships

overseas. Offering a placement would provide positive branding for the businesses whilst creating the opportunity to introduce diversity and a new perspective to a workforce.

Next steps

The proposal is to use £2,000 of the £3,000 surplus from the European Commission to set up an Earmarked Reserve (EMR) to enable young people in Frome to obtain some work experience in our twin towns.

To ensure that appropriate placements are found, young people from Frome would be matched with businesses that complement their skill-sets and training. Ideally, these young people would be in either further/higher education or currently working and would be paired with a business within their chosen field. This would allow the employer to benefit from previously unavailable skills while helping a young person develop their experience and C.V.

In the first year (2018/19), the project would involve Murrhardt and Frome. Following each completed work placement, a report would be created that contains detailed feedback from the employer and the participant. If the first year proves to be a success, then consideration would be given to involving the other twin towns.

It is recommended that the objectives and scope of the project would be:

- To provide international work experience opportunities for 18–25 year olds living in Frome
- To help develop language skills and help participants experience different cultures
- To help businesses develop links between the twin towns
- Placements would be for 1-2 weeks
- Host families to provide accommodation in each town
- The bursary would go toward the participants' travel expenses with participants paying for some of their living expenses during their stay

Murrhardt Council intend to mirror this arrangement for young people from Murrhardt and have set up a fund to enable their young people to travel.

The project would be coordinated by Charlie Orr, Project Officer.

It is proposed that the remaining £1000 from the windfall be allocated to the Frome Twinning Association to cover expenses incurred during the Thematic Networking Project.

Recommendations

1. Allocate £2000 from the European Commission refund to set up an EMR to be used to enable young people to gain work experience in our twin towns with a focus on supporting 5 young people to travel to Murrhardt, Germany in 2018/19.
2. Approve the objectives and scope of the International Work Experience Project as set out above
3. Allocate £1000 from the European Commission refund to repay expenses incurred by the Frome Twinning Association over the course of the two-year Thematic Networking Project.

