

South Ayrshire Council

Corporate Services Directorate

Town Twinning Policy and Practice

1. Introduction

- 1.1 South Ayrshire Council recognises the value of Town Twinning as a means for developing relations between individuals and groups in different countries and the people of South Ayrshire and in promoting social interaction and cultural exchange.
- 1.2 The Council recognises that the way it would wish to see Town Twinning take place is through a network of Town Twinning Associations which have been established in the major towns in South Ayrshire. The Council recognises Associations as independent organisations, made up of individual members, which will work within the confines of their own constitutions and objectives.
- 1.3 Each Town Twinning Association must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and ensure that its constitution and practices are in accordance with the Act.

2. Recognition

- 2.1 The Council acknowledges that communities in South Ayrshire are welcome to establish educational, economic, sporting, social and cultural links with other areas and that Town Twinning Associations are fully responsible for such activities. It cannot be assumed, however, that the Council will provide support to all such activities. The Council reserves the right to investigate proposals for international links and to agree or withhold recognition at its discretion.
- 2.2 The Council shall apply the following criteria to assess its involvement in, and support of, Town Twinning and other international linkages:
 - (1) Potential twinning partners shall require to respect and reflect the views and policies of South Ayrshire Council.
 - (2) Potential twinning partnerships should demonstrate actual or possible economic and/ or educational and/ or cultural and/ or sports benefit for South Ayrshire residents or businesses.
 - (3) The number of twinings in which the Council shall become involved shall be dependent upon the overall resource position of the Council.
 - (4) Proposed twinning partnerships must be approved by the Council. Similarly any proposed dissolution of a twinning partnership must be approved by the Council.

3. Support

- 3.1 **General:** The Council will provide support to those Town Twinning Associations and Twinning arrangements which it has agreed to recognise (see paragraph 4 below). This support may, at the discretion of the Council, be provided by separately approved grant, or by civic hospitality from the office of the Provost and by appropriate help-in-kind from Council staff.

- 3.2 **Administration Support:** The Council shall reimburse Associations a sum for expenditure on administrative and related costs of up to £500 per annum. Funds will be made available to each Association in the financial year following that in which expenditure has been incurred. The Council shall require confirmation of expenditure in the previous year in the form of audited (or independently examined) annual accounts approved by the Association in terms of its constitution.
- 3.3 **Civic Hospitality:** The Council may on occasion provide appropriate hospitality to support Town Twinning events. All decisions on provision of hospitality shall be at the discretion of the Council.
- 3.4 **Help-in-kind:** Notwithstanding any other relationships with Council staff which are developed by Town Twinning Associations, the primary contact within the Council for Town Twinning Associations shall be the Service Planning and Election Manager, Corporate Services Directorate, South Ayrshire Council, County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr.
- 3.5 **Town Twinning Forum:** The Provost, whom failing, the Depute Provost, shall convene regular meetings of a Town Twinning Forum to allow Associations to exchange views and information. These meetings shall normally be held in the County Buildings in Ayr, although may on occasion be held elsewhere in South Ayrshire. There shall be at least two such meetings each year with no longer than nine months between meetings.
- 4. Other International Activities**
- 4.1 While encouraging and supporting the concept of Town Twinning, Associations shall acknowledge that there are clear and significant differences in the role of the Council and that of Town Twinning Associations. The Council has or may develop international activities which are based on educational, economic, civic, political, cultural or other relationships. Town Twinning Associations shall have no automatic locus in any of these activities.
- 5. Reciprocal Visits by the Provost or Depute Provost**
- 5.1 Where it is the practice for the equivalent of the Provost to visit the twinned town in South Ayrshire, the Provost, whom failing, the Depute Provost, may reciprocate such a visit. The Provost may accept an appropriate invitation from the equivalent postholder of a twinned town to visit, provided authorisation to travel has been agreed by the Council. It is also recognised that in different countries the equivalent of the Provost may exercise considerable personal influence over certain local affairs than is permissible in Scotland by Provosts. Any person representing or acting on behalf of the Council must have regard to the provisions of the Bribery Act 2010 at all times.
- 6. Courtesy Calls**
- 6.1 Visits by the equivalent of the Provost and courtesy calls by the president of a town twinning association should be arranged through the Provost's Office.
- 7. Change of Policy**
- 7.1 The Council, having regard to changing circumstances and to any representations made to it, shall from time to time review this policy statement, and where it considers that the statement should be amended, shall proceed in consultation with Town Twinning Associations and any other interested parties to effect such amendment.