

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday 29 March 2022

Petition for Consideration: Twinning Edinburgh with Gaza City

Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All
Council Commitments	

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To consider the terms of the petition 'Twinning Edinburgh with Gaza City' as set out in Appendix one.

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Report

Petition for Consideration: Twinning Edinburgh with Gaza City

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Policy and Sustainability Committee is asked to consider a petition - Twinning Edinburgh with Gaza City.

3. Background

- 3.1 The City of Edinburgh Council at its meeting on 22 June 2017 agreed the Petitions Committee be discontinued and that petitions would be considered by the responsible executive committees.
- 3.2 At the meeting, the committee can:
- a) request a report on the issues raised by the petitioner and the committee;
 - b) agree that the issues raised do not merit further action; and/or
 - c) agree to take any other appropriate action.
- 3.3 The petition set out at appendix 1 was due to be considered at the Policy and Sustainability Committee in June 2020 but was paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The petitioner would now like the petition considered by committee.

4. Main report

- 4.1 A valid petition entitled 'Twinning Edinburgh with Gaza City' has been received. The petition received 362 signatures.
- 4.2 In June 2021, the Policy and Sustainability Committee agreed the [Edinburgh International Framework](#) setting out a refreshed approach for international collaboration between Edinburgh partners.
- 4.3 The framework articulates joint aims and objectives for Edinburgh city partners in international relations, and five core themes for delivery of actions:
- 4.3.1 Take a Team Edinburgh approach to encouraging international trade and investment;
 - 4.3.2 Support the recovery and resilience of Edinburgh's visitor economy;

- 4.3.3 Promote Edinburgh as a destination for international talent, students, and skilled workers;
 - 4.3.4 Enhance Edinburgh's status as an international capital for research and innovation;
 - 4.3.5 Protect and support Edinburgh's unique assets and heritage to promote the global sharing of ideas, arts, and culture.
- 4.4 This framework built on the [2019 Edinburgh International Framework](#) which was clear that 'no more new twinning activity should take place' and resources should focus on collaboration with our international partners based on tangible activity and projects that are mutually beneficial.
- 4.5 The Council has not entered into any formal twinning arrangements since 1995.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The committee will determine next steps at this meeting.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Any proposals would be required to be fully costed, including any legal implications and agreed through the annual budget process.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Any proposals would require full community consultation.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [Minute of the City of Edinburgh Council 22 June 2017](#)
- 8.2 [Edinburgh International Activity Report](#), Policy and Sustainability Committee, 6 August 2019
- 8.3 [Edinburgh International Framework](#), Policy and Sustainability Committee, 10 June 2021

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Petition – Twinning Edinburgh with Gaza City

Appendix 1 - Twinning Edinburgh with Gaza City

Date made available for signatures	Date closed for signatures	Petitions Title and Petitions Statement	Wards affected
30 April 2019	31 January 2020	<p>We call upon Edinburgh to twin with Gaza City in the same way we are currently twinned with Munich, Xi'an, Vancouver, Santiago, Nice, Krakow, etc. Twinning could give joint economic development arrangements which Gaza City, in its current impoverished state, would clearly benefit from. At present Gaza City is twinned with Tel Aviv, Israel; Dunkirk, France; Turin, Italy; Tabriz, Iran; Tromsø, Norway; Cascais, Portugal; Barcelona, Spain; the most recent being Cáceres, Spain in 2010. However, Britain, having been to some extent the architect of the Palestinian's misfortune by having gifted the beginnings of what is now Israel to Zionists through the 1917 Balfour Declaration, surely owes the Palestinians some recompense. Edinburgh, as the home university of Arthur Balfour, can play its part in helping acknowledge Britain's historical responsibilities in the Holy Land. For Edinburgh Council to take this step to help the refugees of Gaza City could be the beginning of the UK beginning to take responsibility for the situation it helped create in the Middle East. The majority of Palestinians living in Gaza City are refugees who had to leave their homes when Israel was established. All they want is to be able to live in freedom and to return to the land their families came from. We can offer joint civil undertakings to help develop opportunities for the people living through terrible conditions there. By twinning, the City of Edinburgh can show the people of Gaza City they are not alone, and that Scottish people see their pain and care for their future wellbeing.</p>	All