

MEMO RE: GALWAY CITY - TWINNING AND SISTER CITIES

To: Members of Economic, Community & Cultural Development SPC

**From: Gary McMahon, Senior Executive Officer (acting),
Corporate, Community & Communications**

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Galway City, as a connected, internationally competitive city, collaborates with international partners through its twinning programme to:

- leverage economic opportunities
- create education, tourism and cultural programmes
- exchange best practice.

The twinning (or Sister Cities as it is more widely referred to in the USA) function of Galway City Council should support international initiatives, and manage international enquiries, official and diplomatic visits, study delegations, and outbound business missions. Based in Corporate Services Department but linking with Economic & Cultural Development, we work to maintain existing viable relations with twin cities. We achieve this through a budget which covers general twinning activities and city-specific measures and events.

Many of the existing relations are, unfortunately, underused. The value of the connection into the Mayor's offices of major US cities, for example, is not exploited sufficiently. Several years ago, the former Mayor of Chicago, Rahm Emanuel called the Galway Chicago Sister City agreement the best and most effective of their relations – that is 'pure gold'.

Prior to any proposed or suggested Twinning activity with existing or new cities, there should be an evaluation, using the criteria in the 2007 policy (on the following pages) and the three points above, to determine the value of the activity

A number of key points should be borne in mind in relation to twinning activities:

- Review each twinning activity soon after completion
- Avoid travelling for the sake of travelling.
- Link with official channels (City or Municipal bodies) as much as possible in twin/Sister Cities while supporting ad hoc and voluntary groups.
- Categorise and prioritise different types of relations from full 'Sister City', to friendly relations to cultural agreements, etc.
- Be mindful of the resources – especially of staff time – available to carry out activity.

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Gary McMahon

Policy for the Twinning of Galway City with other areas.

Legislative Background:

Section 75 of the Local Government Act 2001 provides that a local authority may enter into arrangements for the twinning of its administrative area or part of it or establish other similar links with any other area whether within or outside the state. The act also states that the local authority shall not enter into a twinning arrangement unless it is satisfied that the arrangement is justified having had regard to the following guidelines:

- (a) The benefits likely to accrue to its administrative area and the local community.
- (b) The social, cultural and general interests of its administrative area and the local community and
- (c) The total cost involved.

The decision to enter into such an arrangement is a reserved function of the council.

Twinning Proposals:

Any proposal or request to enter into a twinning relationship will in the first instance be brought before a meeting of the City Council's Corporate Policy Group and on a recommendation from this group, the City Council will assess the proposal further.

The City Council will be guided in its assessment of a twinning proposal under the above guiding principles by reference to the following guidelines.

(a) The benefits likely to accrue to its administrative area:

- I. The potential learning experiences to be gained by the City & the City Council through the exchange of information on policies, procedures, and expertise at official & council level.
- II. The potential for collaboration with the proposed twin city on pilot projects which may be of benefit to both cities.
- III. The economic benefits, which are likely to be gained by the city in terms of trade, commerce and tourism.
- IV. The benefits to be gained from political co-operation & interaction.
- V. The benefits to be gained from exchanges between non-governmental organisations/ bodies linked through the proposed twinning process.

(b) The social, cultural and general interests of its administrative area and the local community:

- I. The possibilities which the proposed twinning relationship may present for the City and its residents to learn about other cultures in terms of the arts, music, heritage & history and the opportunities for exchange in these areas.
- II. The possibilities for real exchange between the people of both cities through interaction of schools, community and voluntary groups, sporting organisations.

(c) The Total Cost:

- I. Costs associated with travel & subsistence and in particular long distance locations.
- II. Costs in terms of hospitality gifts etc
- III. Costs of assisting groups & organisations in developing exchanges & travelling to the other city.
- IV. Costs in terms of assisting & facilitating twinning committees which may be set up to develop the relationship.
- V. Staff costs involved.
- VI. Any project costs.

Other issues to be taken into account in the decision:

- The existing twinning relationship in the Country or region from which the twinning proposal is received.
- The similarities between the cities in terms of size, geographical location & historic links.
- The practicality of the relationship in terms of distance.
- The overall number of twinning relationships to which the City is committed.

Twinning Committees:

This policy recommends that twinning committees be established to help develop the twinning relationship between the City and the chosen twin City and that a policy be prepared on the formation, membership and activities of such committees.

CURRENT TWINNING / SISTER CITIES ARRANGEMENTS

Galway is twinned or has full sister-city status with 9 cities around the world. .

They are:

- City Name: **Lorient, France**
Year of Twinning: 1975
Website: [La Ville de Lorient](#)
- City Name: **St. Louis, Missouri, USA.**
Year of Twinning: 1977
Website: [City of St. Louis](#)
- City Name: **Seattle, Washington, USA.**
Year of Twinning: 1986
Website: [Seattle City Council](#)
 - City Name: **Bradford, England**
Year of Twinning: 1986
Website: [City of Bradford](#)
 - City Name: **Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA**
Year of Twinning: 1994
Website: [City of Massachusetts](#)
- City Name: **Chicago, Illinois, USA.**
Year of Twinning: 1997
Website: [City of Chicago](#)
- City Name: **Aalborg, Denmark**
Year of Twinning: 1997
Website: [City of Aalborg](#)
- City Name: **Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA.**
Year of Twinning: 2001
Website: [City of Milwaukee](#)
- City Name: **Menlo Park, California, USA.**
Year of Twinning: 2015
Website: [City of Menlo Park](#)

Galway City also has a number of **Friendship Agreements** with cities:

- City Name: **Qingdao, China.**
Year of Friendship Agreement: 1999
Website: [Qingdao City State Council](#)
- City Name: **Auckland, New Zealand**
Year of Friendship Agreement : 2002
Website: [City of Auckland](#)
- City Name: **Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada.**
Year of Friendship Agreement : 2002
Website: [City of Moncton/Ville De Moncton](#)
- City Name: **Stirling, Scotland.**
Year of Cultural Agreement: 2012
Website: [City of Stirling](#)
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- City Name: **Wuhan, PR China**
Year of Friendship Agreement: 2019
Website: <http://english.wh.gov.cn/index.html>

L.E. Aisling / L.E. William Butler Yeats Adoption

On the 28th September 1996, Galway Corporation (now Galway City Council) on behalf of the citizens of Galway City formally adopted the Irish Naval Ship, L.E. Aisling and resolved to develop a special relationship with the ship and crew and promote awareness of the role and functions of the naval service.

The LE Aisling was decommissioned in June 2016. A similar process of adoption took place in 2018 with its replacement naval vessel, the LE William Butler Yeats.