

Mayoral Advisory Committee



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Mayoralty Protocol – The Financing of Twinning Events	
Report No:	MAC/SE/16/003	
Report to and dates:	Mayoral Advisory Committee	31 March 2016
	Council	28 June 2016
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Purpose of report:	To make recommendations on the future financing of twinning events and to therefore make appropriate amends to the Mayoralty Protocol.	
Recommendations:	<p>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that subject to the approval of full Council:</p> <p>(1) the adoption of the practices outlined in (a) to (g) below, be approved; and</p> <p>(2) the changes required to the Constitution, working practices and the Mayoralty Protocol as a consequence of the recommendations be made as detailed and tracked on the revised Mayoralty Protocol, attached as Appendix A to Report No: MAC/SE/16/003.</p> <p>(a) That the Council continues to support the twinning relationships financially (from the appropriate budgets available to the Mayoralty) until 1 April 2018.</p>	

	<p>(b) To support the 50th Anniversary of the twinning with Compiegne in 2017 within current Mayoralty budget (civic functions) as well as accommodating 2016 delegates visiting Bury St Edmunds.</p> <p>(c) To continue with current arrangements with Kavelaer until the end of 2017 within current Mayoralty budget.</p> <p>(d) That from 1 April 2018, the Mayor does not automatically and annually accept and fund invitations to visit twin towns abroad nor hosts delegates from the civic budget.</p> <p>(e) That the Twinning Associations start to contribute to the twinning costs between 2016 -18.</p> <p>(f) That the Head of HR, Legal and Democratic Services be given delegated authority to make the required changes to the Mayoralty Protocol, Sections 2.2 -2.7.</p> <p>(g) That a letter be written to the Friends of Compiegne and the Kavelaer group explaining future arrangements and continuing commitment to supporting twin towns whilst reducing the annual expense to the Council.</p>
Consultation:	<p>Friends of Compiegne because it has a direct impact.</p> <p>With regard to the Kavelaer group, the Mayor receives an invitation to visit bi-annually and will be the decision of the Mayor to accept the invitation and expenses will be met from the Mayor's personal allowance.</p>
Alternative option(s):	To make no changes and continue to fund the twinning activity as at present.
Implications:	
<p>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current costs of twinning cannot be met from the Mayor's Personal Allowance as detailed in the Mayoralty Protocol and the civic budget has reduced by £5,000, so continued funding will impact on the remaining civic events.

Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Change to Mayoralty Protocol which is held in Part 5 of the Constitution	
Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Poor relationship with twinning associations	High	Consultation and discussion with the Friends of Compiègne, where most impact will be felt, has taken place and agreement reached to the recommendations	Low
Ward(s) affected:		None directly	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>			
Documents attached:		Appendix A: Mayoralty Protocol (with proposed changes tracked) Appendix B: Mayoralty Protocol (with proposed changes incorporated to assist the reading of the document)	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendations

- 1.1 The Mayoralty Protocol details the constitutional arrangements, guidance and authority for ensuring the Mayoralty budgets are spent appropriately.
- 1.2 The Mayoral Advisory Committee undertook a Mayoralty Review in 2013 ([Report D328](#) refers) and subsequently the Mayoralty Budget was reviewed as part of the budget setting process for 2015/2016, (Council Report No: [COU/SE/15 /002](#) refers). As a result the budget for the Mayoralty was reduced by £5,000 from 1 March 2015.
 - 1.2.1 The Mayoralty Review considered the events that the Mayor attends and supports. The primary purpose of the Mayoralty was agreed to be the promotion of community engagement, the economic vitality of the Borough and the democratic process. This should inform decisions about the acceptance of invitations to attend events and the choice of invitees to events hosted by the Mayor.
 - 1.2.2 It is also agreed that the diary of the Mayor has to reflect the resources available, and in practice events and invitations would be informally assessed with a view to determining which events align most closely with the priorities of the Council (economic growth, business development, healthy and active communities etc)
 - 1.2.3 The involvement of the Mayor in twinning events has therefore been reconsidered and meetings have taken place with the Friends of Compiègne, who are impacted by the change proposed. The Council works more closely with the Friends of Compiègne than with the Kevelaer twinning group.
- 1.3 Bury St Edmunds is also twinned with Kevelaer in Germany, so any approach taken with Compiègne needs to be congruent with those for Kevelaer although expenses for twinning trips and visits are treated differently. The Borough also has a Charter of Friendship with Huy in Belgium and Ehringhausen (also in Germany).
- 1.4 It is recommended that the Council and the Mayor continue to support the Twinning Associations until 1 April 2018, whilst working towards reducing the costs to the Council, giving time to review the twinning events and the annual funding for twinning visits.
- 1.5 The twinning with Compiègne commenced in the 1960's, before modern technology revolutionised the way we work and can communicate with other communities and countries; and before the partnerships were in that evolve into what is now the European Union.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council has been twinned with Compiègne in France since 1967. Each year the Mayor either visits Compiègne or hosts a visiting delegation from Compiègne. In 2017, the 50th Anniversary will be celebrated.

- 2.2 Under the Mayoralty Protocol, the Mayor is authorised to attend civic events in 'twin' towns with the cost funded through the Mayor's Personal Allowance. The Personal Allowance is currently £4,300; in recent years this has not been used to pay for twinning events as there has not been enough funds available. The costs therefore have been funded from the Public and Civic Functions budget.
- 2.2.1 The protocol authorises the Mayor to accept one invitation to visit a twin town per annum, and the convention has been to alternate visits between Compiègne and Kevelaer.
- 2.2.2 Invitations extended to visit St Edmundsbury to delegates from any of the borough's twinned towns are also funded from the civic budget.
- 2.2.3 In 2015, the Mayor was invited to Compiègne – the costs of the trip would have been paid by the French group, which has been custom and practice for many years. In 2016, it would be the turn of the delegates from Compiègne to visit Bury St Edmunds at the cost of the Council.
- 2.2.4 The Council has typically paid for hotel accommodation, a reception, visits around the area, restaurants etc. The cost in 2014 was £1,787.
- 2.2.5 In 2015, following consultation with the Mayor and the Twinning Association, the Mayor did not travel to Compiègne (saving the Council costs of the travel and the Compiègne Twinning Association the costs of the hotel) and instead a video message was made and sent which was well received and showcased Bury St Edmunds for schools and other interested parties in the town. Offers were also made to use modern technology to share information with interested groups such as youth groups or the town hall. This was done with a view to reviewing our invitation arrangements, which would be at our cost, to the Compiègne group in 2016. A letter was also written to Compiègne explaining the Council was reviewing its overall budget in order to ensure best value for spend. The cost in 2015 was just under £90.
- 2.2.6 It was also agreed with the Friends of Compiègne that they would meet 50% of the cost of the 2016 Mayor's Reception in Bury St Edmunds, a contribution of around £150, but the cost of the visit will still be at the expense of the Council as in 2014. It was agreed there would be a celebration of 50 years of the twinning in 2017 but after that there would be no council budget available to host twinning visits, nor travel annually to twin towns, although the Mayor would continue to support the friendships in alternative ways if invited to do so.
- 2.3 From 2018 therefore, the proposal is that twinning visits will only take place if the Twinning Associations/Friends are able to raise their own funds and they will not be funded by the Council's civic budget. There is therefore three years (2015 – 2018) during which the Twinning Association can start to build up funds of their own, probably through fund raising activities to pay for the twinning events, or choose to review the activities in which they are involved.
- 2.4 The recommendations have been discussed with the current Mayor and if agreed will need to be reflected in the Mayoralty Protocol, as attached as Appendix A (with proposed changes tracked)/Appendix B (with proposed changes shown incorporated into the document).