

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE		Subject: TOWN TWINNING
From: WORKING PARTY ON TWINNING		
Date: 13 October 1997	Ref: JMP/MB	

1. Background to establishment of Working Party

- 1.1 The Council agreed to establish a Working Party in order to examine the whole issue of twinning on the basis that the Working Party would report to the Council through the General Purposes Committee.
- 1.2 The membership of the Working Party, as constituted, comprises Councillor Craig (Convener), Provost Mathieson and Councillors Combe and Russell. A subsequent decision of the General Purposes Committee added Councillor J Martin, the Committees' Vice-Convener. Officers appointed to assist the members as and when required were the Director of Administration, Director of Leisure Services, Director of Education and Director of Planning and Development or their nominated senior officials.
- 1.3 The Council also agreed that the Working Party should involve as appropriate the relevant former members of staff of predecessor authorities and representatives of Twinning Associations.

2. Historical Background to Twinning

- 2.1 The initial concept of Town Twinning originated over 40 years ago and developed rapidly in the UK following the second World War when many communities wished to consciously build up contact, friendship and co-operation with communities in other countries. With the arrival of the Single Market there was a further surge in twinning activity as some communities extended their links, secured additional partners and formed multi-lateral relationships.
- 2.2 Twinning links between communities exist in many different ways and much valuable work is done by church, youth or other community groups which may not involve local authorities. Where local authorities are involved they can play a leading role or help to facilitate the activities of local groups.

- 2.3 The UK is a leading protagonist in the twinning field and hundreds of communities have friendship partnerships or twinning links mainly in Europe, particularly France and Germany. The last decade, however, has seen a growth in the number of twinning links with countries further afield, in central and eastern Europe, and the concept of twinning and international co-operation has undergone a series of changes as communities re-evaluated the content of their twinning relationships towards the economic and technical aspects of twinning.
- 2.4 Economic twinning describes non-traditional forms of twinning activity, although training and education remain major factors. Some examples are joint ventures, city promotions, trades missions and representation at Trade Fairs. The twinning movement has now been joined by an increasing number of trans-national partnerships between towns, cities and regions as the potential benefits of building on existing relationships to serve mutual economic advantage has been realised throughout Europe.
- 2.5 Technical twinning defines the co-operation of two local authorities on projects of a technical nature connected primarily with the functions of local government in which skills and knowledge are transferred from one partner to another. They extend to professional co-operation in institutional building, technical projects, local government services, training and occasionally to economic development.

3. **Twinning Links within North Lanarkshire**

- 3.1 The Council previously considered an audit document detailing the background to the twinning arrangements and exchange links operated by the constituent authorities of North Lanarkshire. A copy of that document is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.2 In May 1996, a letter was sent to each of the seven twin towns referred to advising of reorganisation of local government in Scotland and of the new North Lanarkshire Council and its area.

4. **Twin Town Visits**

- 4.1 The Council considered various formal invitations for representatives from North Lanarkshire to visit certain of the twin towns in 1996. As a result, visits were made to Bron in June, Schweinfurt in July and Gatchina in September 1996.
- 4.2 The Council also authorised the issue of a formal invitation to representatives of St Denis to visit North Lanarkshire. This visit took place between 9 and 13 April 1997 for which an appropriate programme of events was arranged by the Council.
- 4.3 Other visits to North Lanarkshire involving elected representatives and arranged via the appropriate Twinning Association in each case took place earlier this year with representatives from Bron visiting in March and representatives from Meulan in May 1997. A delegation from Schweinfurt also visited North Lanarkshire in May 1997 and again an appropriate programme of events was arranged by the Council.

5. Assistance to Exchange Groups undertaking Town Twinning Visits

- 5.1 In response to various requests for financial assistance towards exchange visits to established twin towns overseas, the Council agreed that the level of such financial assistance be established at £60 per capita.
- 5.2 The Council also agreed on an ad hoc basis to provide financial assistance as part of exchange visits to North Lanarkshire by representatives of certain of these twin towns overseas in addition to the provision of appropriate civic hospitality in each case.

6. Twinning Associations

- 6.1 For the most part, the towns involved in twinning within North Lanarkshire have established formal contacts with twin towns overseas via a Twinning Association whose membership includes individuals interested in the matter and in participating in and encouraging twinning links and activities generally. The twinning links between Motherwell and Schweinfurt have largely involved the two local authorities although other less formal community links have also been established and developed between the two areas.
- 6.2 The objects of the Twinning Associations include the promotion of interest and participation in twinning within the town, the co-ordination and encouragement of twinning activities of various organisations both generally and in relation to specific projects, the maintenance of contact with the appropriate authorities in the twin town overseas and the exchange of cultural and sporting events and activities, the advancement of educational facilities and exchanges and the promotion of economic opportunities between the citizens and businesses within the two municipalities.
- 6.3 The Twinning Associations maintain close contact with the local authority in order to exchange information on twinning activities and for the purposes of financial assistance associated with twinning exchange visits.

7. Meetings of Working Party

- 7.1 The Working Party held a preliminary meeting on 10 April 1997 when the general issues to be addressed during the course of its remit were determined. The Working Party also agreed to involve in its future meetings the relevant individuals with personal knowledge and experience of twinning related activities and representing the established Twinning Associations/Groups connected with each of the twin towns within North Lanarkshire. Representatives from MEDCO, which had expressed an interest in becoming involved in twinning related activities, would also be involved in future meetings of the Working Party with the overall aim of assisting the Council in formulating its future policy on twinning.
- 7.2 The Working Party held further meetings on 16 May, 4 June, 1 July, 14 August and 2 October 1997 which were attended by representatives from the established Twinning Associations/Groups connected with each of the twin towns within North Lanarkshire. Representatives from MEDCO attended the meetings on 4 June, 1 July and 14 August 1997.

- 7.3 During the course of these meetings, the Working Party heard reports from each of the representatives of the established Twinning Associations/Groups on their personal knowledge and experiences of twinning and twinning related activities. Each of the representatives advised the Working Party that it was imperative for the future success of twinning within North Lanarkshire for the Council to play a full and constructive role. The Working Party also heard the views of these representatives on how best the Council could assist and support twinning activities in order to maintain, promote and develop the established twinning links with the various twin towns overseas.
- 7.4 The Working Party were also advised of the various initiatives which MEDCO had established involving business links between Motherwell District and Schweinfurt with the potential for development of these initiatives throughout North Lanarkshire. In addition, MEDCO had, at the Council's request, also organised a Burgerreise trip to Schweinfurt in 1997.

8. Recommendations of the Working Party

- 8.1 As a result of its various meetings and bearing in mind the firm and positive views on the future of twinning and related activities within North Lanarkshire expressed by the various representatives of the established Twinning Associations/Groups, the Working Party would recommend that the Council should continue to have twinning links with towns overseas and that the undernoted issues and recommendations be considered by the Council as its initial policy and practice in relation to twinning activities in future, subject to review in light of experience and to further reports to the Council at the appropriate time:-
- (1) that the future of the twinning arrangements and exchange links inherited from the predecessor authorities of North Lanarkshire Council be the subject of a further detailed review on the basis that it was for the Council rather than the Working Party to determine which twinning links should be continued and fostered;
 - (2) that the established Twinning Associations/Groups considered it essential for the maintenance, encouragement and development of twinning links for the Council and its elected members to play a full and constructive role in twinning activities and that an appropriate elected member or members of the Council should be nominated as a member to each Twinning Association/Group;
 - (3) that the Council's current policy and practice on financial assistance towards the costs of exchange visits to twin towns overseas be revised to £50 per head for the first five days or part thereof of any such visit plus £5 per head per day thereafter;
 - (4) that the Council's current practice on financial assistance towards the costs of exchange visits to North Lanarkshire from twin towns overseas be revised to the provision of a bus or buses as required for a period of up to two days, together with appropriate civic hospitality which would normally involve a civic reception and buffet lunch. This was the majority view of the Twinning Association representatives, the minority view being in favour of the level of financial assistance contained within recommendation (3) above;

- (5) that the Council should consider the areas in which it could assist Twinning Associations/Groups in sourcing and accessing available EU funding for twinning activities, bearing in mind the difficulties, timescales and resources required in dealing with such matters;
- (6) that the Council should investigate the potential for the establishment and development of links with the various business communities of the twin towns overseas and the possibility of accessing available EU funding for such activities;
- (7) that each Association should send to the Council a copy of its Constitution for comparative purposes with a view to the subsequent establishment and adoption of an appropriate model North Lanarkshire Constitution for the various Associations;
- (8) that each Association should send to the Council details of the current Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and any other office bearers of the Association;
- (9) that the Twinning Associations/Groups should send to the Council's Director of Administration at the Civic Centre, Motherwell, minutes of their meetings and brief reports on the details of the visits undertaken to twin towns overseas and of the visits to North Lanarkshire by representatives from the twin towns, particularly those for which the Council had provided financial assistance towards the costs involved;
- (10) that consideration be given as to the possibility of establishing a Twinning Association in connection with the Motherwell/Schweinfurt Twinning link and that the existing arrangements for financial and other assistance associated with the Twinning link should remain for a period of up to two years to allow for the establishment of a Twinning Association;
- (11) that the Council should consider the options available for the future display of known civic gifts which had been received from the twin towns overseas, including utilising any future exhibition space which might be developed as a result of refurbishment of the main entrance of the Civic Centre, Motherwell and any other alternatives for public display within the other areas of North Lanarkshire;
- (12) that Guidelines be drafted on behalf of the Council incorporating the standards of care, supervision and responsibility which the Council would expect from groups of adults/children visiting twin towns overseas;
- (13) that the Council should investigate the possible availability of hostel accommodation within North Lanarkshire for use by twin town visitors;
- (14) that the Council should assist where possible Twinning Associations/Groups in the provision of Council accommodation for meetings of the Associations/Groups, for welcome of arriving twin town visitors and for departure points;
- (15) that the Council should investigate the possibility of access to Council leisure facilities on a discounted basis for twin town visitors bearing in mind the financial constraints facing the Council at this time;

- (16) that the Twinning Associations/Groups, in conjunction as appropriate with any similar Associations/Groups within the twin towns overseas, should be encouraged to consider providing any reasonable assistance were possible in any future community based initiatives which sought to help third world countries; and
- (17) that the Council should consider allowing discretion to the Provost to accept invitations to visit twin towns overseas without the need for prior Committee approval where the timescale for such an invitation precluded such prior approval and on the basis that the details of any such visit would be reported to the first available meeting of the appropriate Committee thereafter.

9. **Committee Recommendations and future action**

- 9.1 The Committee is asked to consider the above recommendations by the Working Party, a number of which, if accepted, would involve further reports to the Committee at the appropriate time.


Director of Administration on
behalf of Working Party

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL AUDIT
SERVICE AUDIT - TOWN TWINNING**

Cumbernauld & Kilsyth

Monklands

Motherwell

1.

<u>Town</u>	<u>Twin Town</u>	<u>Date Twinned</u>
Cumbernauld	Bron in France	1974

<u>Town</u>	<u>Twin Town</u>	<u>Date Twinned</u>
Monklands	St Denis in France	1964

<u>Town</u>	<u>Twin Town</u>	<u>Date Twinned</u>
Motherwell	Schweinfurt in Germany	1962

General
Both towns have many similarities in that they are new towns with similar populations of approximately 56,000. In addition, Bron has a local airport for light aircraft, various sports complexes and youth centres which has enabled both towns to develop strong sporting exchanges over the years.

General
Longest established link of Monklands District Council, 1994 being 30th anniversary.

General
Similarities in environment, working life and culture. Motherwell was the centre of the steel-making industry in Scotland and Schweinfurt is the centre of the ball-bearing industry in Germany. Both towns are similarly actively involved in trying to attract more industry and commerce to create jobs.

Exchange Links

People to people exchanges, particularly between the Twinning Associations.

Sporting exchanges, particularly between the towns' two rugby clubs.

Cumbernauld has developed a strong association with Bron's other twin towns in Germany, albeit not on an official basis.

Exchange Links

Exchanges with Children's Groups
Senior Citizens Groups

Sporting exchanges
Cultural exchanges

Exchange Links

Official delegations from District Council every two years and on special anniversaries.

School and Club exchanges

Sports and disabled groups exchanges

Industrial links - trade fairs, exhibitions, business and commerce fact finding visits.

Burgerrise visits are trips by citizens of the two towns.

<u>Town</u>	<u>Twin Town</u>	<u>Date Twinned</u>
Kilsyth	Meulan in France	1968

<u>Town</u>	<u>Twin Town</u>	<u>Date Twinned</u>
Monklands	Camp Bisenzio in Italy	1988

General
Following a United Nations' Initiative in the early 60's, the town of Kilsyth was twinned with Meulan in France in 1968. 1993 saw the 25th Anniversary of the twinning links between both towns.

General
The Twinning Committee for the Camp Bisenzio exchange have been very active locally and enjoy considerable support from local Italian community.

Exchange Links

As with Cumbernauld, the town of Kilsyth has a similar infrastructure in terms of people to people exchanges, school exchanges, club and twinning association exchanges with Meulan.

Exchange Links

Yearly exchanges of youngsters
Exchanges by local Police and local Ramblers Club.

<u>Town</u>	<u>Twin Town</u>	<u>Date Twinned</u>
Monklands	Gatchina in Russia	

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APPENDIX 1

Continued

<u>Town</u>	<u>Twin Town</u>	<u>Date Twinned</u>
Monklands	Gatchina in Russia	-

General

Exchanges with Gatchina have become more problematic since the changes which have occurred in the former Soviet Union. Particularly since there is considerable difficulty in the local people of Gatchina obtaining sufficient hard currency to fund exchange visits.

Exchange Links

Variety of exchanges, primarily of young people
 Visit of local businessman to Gatchina in 1994 which resulted in £4000's worth of industrial equipment being sent to local technical college in Gatchina to assist in training of young engineers.

<u>Town</u>	<u>Twin Town</u>	<u>Date Twinned</u>
Monklands	Airdrie, Alberta in Canada	1987 (formal signing)

General

Linked with Airdrie, Alberta informally for nearly 10 years but the formal Twinning Treaty was only signed in 1987. Exchanges limited given the tremendous distance involved.

Exchange Links

Youth Group exchange
 Canadian Army Cadet exchange in 1993
 Monklands Army Cadet exchange in 1995

2.

FUNDING

District Council annually set aside funding for twinning activities which incorporates direct funding to both twinning associations and funding which is allocated to District Council organised activities.

1994/95 Budget

Town Twinning General	£7,500
Town Twinning Anniversary Events	£4,500

FUNDING

The budget maintained by the District Council is £40,000
 Sub-divided as follows:

Grant Aid to the Twinning Association	£20,000
Twinning Purposes Including Entertainment & Civic Hospitality	£20,000

FUNDING

The District Council allocate a budget of £26,000 per year for twinning links.
 All visits are subsidised by the District Council, normally £60 per person travelling to Schweinfurt and a grant to an organisation acting as host to visitors from Schweinfurt.

Cumbernauld & Kilsyth

Monklands

Motherwell

3.
DISTRICT COUNCIL DEPARTMENT
RESPONSIBLE FOR TOWN TWINNING
Recreation & Leisure Department

DISTRICT COUNCIL DEPARTMENT
RESPONSIBLE FOR TOWN TWINNING

DISTRICT COUNCIL DEPARTMENT
RESPONSIBLE FOR TOWN TWINNING
Public Relations and Members Services Department