

The Highland Council

Caithness Committee
13 January 2016

Agenda Item	10.
Report No	CC/06/16

Twinning – Wick- Klaksvik

Report by Head of Policy and Reform

Summary

This report seeks to consider the current twinning status between the towns of Wick in Caithness and the town of Klaksvik in the Faroe Isles

1. Background

- 1.1 The twinning link between Wick and Klaksvik was set up by Caithness District Council in March 1995. The catalyst to the link was through fishing and a ferry link which was running at the time between Scrabster and Tórshavn.
- 1.2 Since the twinning arrangements were put in place there has been limited contact between the two areas. The last formal visit took place in 2001 when a delegation from the Caithness Partnership visited the islands
The ferry link running at the time of the twinning was discontinued in the late 90s and fishing links between Wick and Klaksvik have all but vanished since Wicks removal as a designated fish landing port. Links do remain however at the port of Scrabster which is a designated fish landing port.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 Local members have been approached by a number of their constituents regarding the status of the twinning of Wick with Klaksvik. Representations have also been made to members from individuals from around the world. Concerns have been raised regarding the recent slaughter of whales which took place in Bøur and Tórshavn. On the grounds of animal cruelty Wick Ward Members do not support this practice and as such do not wish that the town of Wick is associated with these practices.
- 2.2 Local members have written to the mayor of Klaksvik voicing their opposition to the practice, called "grindadráp" which are non-commercial and are organized on a community level. They do not feel that this practice is acceptable and accordingly wish to discontinue the twinning under the current circumstances.

3. Options

- 3.1 Town twinning is a concept whereby towns or cities in geographically and politically distinct areas are paired, with the goal of fostering human contact

and cultural links. No formal contact has been made between the areas in the last 10 years.

Members may wish to consider various options open to them regarding the current twinning status

1. Do nothing leave the existing but largely inactive arrangement in place.
2. Leave the twinning arrangements in place but actively re-energise the arrangement and enter into dialogue regarding shared values and possible conflicts.
3. Suspend the twinning arrangement until such time as the two communities have closer shared values.
4. Discontinue twinning status between the two communities.

4. **Implications**

4.1 Legal Implications

There are no known legal implications associated with options in this paper.

4.2 Risk Implications

Risks to Highland Council are restricted to reputational risk and the options should be considered with this in mind.

Recommendation

1. Members are invited to discuss the current concerns raised by the Wick Ward Members.
2. Members are asked to decide on the twinning status between Wick and Klaksvik.

Designation: Head of Policy and Reform

Date: 29 December 2015

Report Author:

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