

Edinburgh council rejects bid for Capital to twin with Gaza

Councillors have rejected a bid to twin Edinburgh with the Palestinian city of Gaza.

By Ian Swanson Edinburgh Evening News 31st Aug

A petition [calling for the link](#) – which would have been on the same basis as the twinning with cities like Munich, Xi'an, Vancouver and Nice – attracted 362 signatures.

But after legal advice the council's policy and sustainability committee declined to hear deputations, including from the [Mayor of Gaza](#) City, who wanted to speak in favour of the move.

And it also agreed not to allow the petitioner Pete Gregson, founder of the Edina-Gaza Twinning Association (EGTA), to address the committee.

Council leader [Cammy Day](#) said the council had agreed in 2019 that there should be no new twinning arrangements.

And the committee instead backed his proposal to ask the [Edinburgh](#) Partnership – which brings together the council, police, NHS, the Chamber of Commerce, Edinburgh University and others – to consider whether there were any activities or projects its members may wish to work with the people of [Gaza](#) on.

The committee also accepted a call from Lib Dem group leader Kevin Lang that the question of any new twinning agreements should be considered again as part of a wider review.

Green councillor Alex Staniforth wanted a report from officials on how a twinning with Gaza or some similar arrangement might work. He said: "We are looking at a situation in Palestine and Gaza that is completely unacceptable. This month 16 children died as a result of the siege on Gaza. I understand the nervousness about getting involved and that this is a nuanced and difficult situation, but when children are dying what we say matters and what we should say is we will not support a state of apartheid." But his call was defeated.

Afterwards, Mr Gregson said he was sad at the decision and believed the councillors had been fearful of the repercussions of the proposed link.

But he said the EGTA would carry on working with the people of Gaza anyway. He said: "We are currently engaged in providing English classes on Zoom to Gazan postgraduate students and disadvantaged children; we are also getting websites built in Gaza for Scottish traders. The work will go on."

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