NORWICH
City Council

Committee name: Council

Committee date: 22/11/2022

Report title: Establishment of a Friendship Link

Portfolio: Councillor Alan Waters, Leader of the Council

Report from: Councillor Alan Waters

Wards: All wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

To consider the establishment of a Friendship Link between Norwich City Council and the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau, Brazil

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Council agree to the establishment of a Friendship Link between Norwich City Council and the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau, Brazil

Policy framework

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
- Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.
- Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
- The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish.
- Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

This report addresses the following priority or action in the Corporate Plan: 'Norwich as a Connected City'

Report details

1. The proposed Friendship link between the Norwich City Council and the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau, has its origins in academic work being undertaken at the UEA with this indigenous community from the region of Brazil. The salience of the issues around the future of the Amazon and the vital work undertaken by the indigenous communities across Brazil who inhabit and defend the

forest, is of global concern and an important topic as part of the work of COP 26 and 27.

2. This is a timely issue. The hostility of the outgoing Bolsonaro Government, over the past four years, to legally protected forests and the rights of Brazil's 900,000 people to inhabit and defend the forest have seen an undercutting of environmental protections that have resulted in massive swathes of deforestation and legally protected forests being permanently destroyed by mineral prospecting, mining, logging and ranching. Murdering with impunity rainforest defenders is a sinister dimension.

3. This has been the experience of the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau. The award winning film," The Territory", is partially shot by the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau people and filmed over the course of several years. The film offers an authentic portrait of an Indigenous community's daily life and struggles. All city councillors have been sent a link to the film, to watch before we discuss the proposal to set up a friendship link at the November meeting of Council.

4. The introduction to the film, sets out starkly the challenges faced by the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau since they were first contacted by the Brazilian government in 1981. "Their territory has become an island of green rainforest surrounded by denuded farms and ranches — the results of four decades of unchecked deforestation. The community has faced environmentally destructive and often violent incursions into their sovereign territory by non-natives seeking to exploit the land. Illegal logging and land clearing incursions have become more frequent and more brazen over the years".

5. "Inside Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau territory, there are fewer than 200 people, including elders and children, to defend nearly 7,000 square miles of rainforest. On the edges of the protected lands, a network of farmers organizes to stake their claims through official channels, while individual land-grabbers begin clear-cutting swaths of rainforest for themselves. With the community's survival at stake, Bitaté Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau and Neidinha Bandeira — a young Indigenous leader and his female mentor — must find new ways to protect the rainforest from encroaching invaders. But rather than rely on others to tell their story, the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau take control of the narrative and create their own news media team to bring the world the truth".

6. Hopefully a Friendship link would give visibility and a higher profile to the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau and their fight to protect their territory and the precious rainforest. There is cause for optimism with the election of President elect Lula. But that is no guarantee in the near future that illegal incursions will not continue. If Council agrees to establish a Friendship link, one of the first tasks will be to write to the Brazilian government, including the Brazilian Embassy in the U.K, and the regional tiers of government to inform them of the connection between Norwich and the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau.

7. There have been Zoom meetings with Bitaté Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau and Neidinha Bandeira to begin to explore the benefits and possible areas of collaboration. Initial ideas include:
   - Support programmes relating to tackling deforestation.
   - Working with a number of village schools to promote the learning English. Seen as a priority.

- More broadly, the ambition would be exploring linkages and connections to share practical strategies for tackling climate change. Norwich 2040 Vision partnership and the work of the Norwich Climate Change Commission could make productive connections in Brazil, through the Friendship link, guided by Ari Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau colleagues. It is important to stress that this is a Friendship link of equals. A reciprocal relationship of mutual understanding & learning.

8. Discussions with the Norwich Dedza Partnership (Malawi) has provided very helpful ideas about how the Friendship link could potentially develop.

   "The Norwich-Dedza Partnership has been established to enable organisations and individuals in and around Norwich to assist in the development of the District of Dedza in Malawi. Norwich has many resources in its education institutions, schools, local government, health agencies, voluntary sector, commercial companies and individuals. If these are applied in a combined effort over a period of years in collaboration with the people of Dedza, it could make a considerable difference to their lives.People and organisations in Norwich also benefit from such a partnership. It provides an opportunity to learn about a different culture, to understand development and environmental issues and to work together in inter-disciplinary teams"

9. A recently completed project was helping female students at a secondary school in Dedza by providing dormitories for girls from rural areas to replace very run down off-site facilities. Through crowd funding and support from individuals and UK based trusts this project was successfully completed in 2022. For further information: http://www.norwich-dedza.org/partnership.html

10. If the recommendation to set up the link is agreed, a steering group of volunteers will be established to begin the work of developing the Friendship link. It is expected that the Norwich -Ari-Uru-Wau-Wau Friendship link will attend and report on progress to the City Council's Twinning Committee.

Implications

Financial and resources

Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan 2022-26 and budget.

11. Each twinning partner receives a small allocation of budget each year to support them with costs of administering their association, or the offer of meeting rooms at Council premises (in kind support). Once established, the Council will confirm which form of support the friendship link would appreciate. If the group would prefer a small budgetary allocation that can be achieved from the existing twinning budget without compromising on the support provided to existing twinning partners.

Legal

12. There are no specific duties or requirements for authorities to establish

twinning or friendship links. However, the general power of competence provided by the Localism Act 2011 provides authority with the ability to do so if they wish.

Statutory considerations

Consideration	**Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:**
Equality and diversity	There are no specific implications arising from this report
Health, social and economic impact	Not applicable
Crime and disorder	Not applicable
Children and adults safeguarding	Not applicable
Environmental impact	The ambition of the link would be exploring linkages and connections to share practical strategies for tackling climate change. Norwich 2040 Vision partnership and the work of the Norwich Climate Change Commission could make productive connections in Brazil, through the Friendship link, guided by Ari Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau colleagues.

Risk management

Risk	**Consequence**	**Controls required**
Failure to establish the link could lead to loss of focus for those developing the link and reputational damage to the authority	The friendship link is not established and relations with the group do not develop	Establishment of the link, to be monitored through the work of the Twinning Committee

Other options considered

1. No other options have been considered.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

2. A Friendship Link between Norwich and the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau would give visibility to their fight to protect their territory. The Norwich 2040 Vision partnership and the work of the Norwich Climate Change Commission could make productive connections in Brazil, through the Friendship link, guided by Ari Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau colleagues.

Background papers: None

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