



SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL Report to Council

Report of: The Executive Director, City Futures

Date: 14 December 2022

Subject: Establishing a Twin City relationship between Sheffield and Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine

Author of Report: Nik Hamilton, Investment Team Manager

Purpose of Report:

Sheffield has been approached by city officials from Khmelnytskyi in western Ukraine expressing an interest in developing closer relationships between the two cities to include civic, cultural and educational exchange and to explore future business and trade opportunities.

The proposal is that the two cities enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Twin City relations and cooperation, for the purposes of exploring potential opportunities.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Khmelnytskyi are scheduled to visit Sheffield in the week commencing 12 December 2022.

Recommendations: That:-

1). The Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Khmelnytskyi are invited to address this Council meeting to present a brief overview of their city, their city's situation in respect of the current conflict in Ukraine and their desire to establish Twin City relations with Sheffield; and

2). The Lord Mayor is asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the city of Khmelnytskyi on behalf of the City Council and the citizens of Sheffield.

Background Papers: Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Establishing Twin City Relations and Cooperation between Khmelnytskyi and Sheffield.

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial & Commercial Implications
NO – Cleared by Liz Gough
Legal Implications
YES – Cleared by Andrea Simpson
Equality of Opportunity Implications
NO – Cleared by Adele Robinson
Climate impact
N/A
Tackling Health Inequalities implications
N/A
Human Rights implications
N/A
Economic impact
N/A
Community Safety implications
N/A
Human Resources implications
N/A
Property implications
N/A
Area(s) affected
NONE
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
YES
Press release
YES

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Worldwide, significant impetus has been given to establishing formal and informal international links between cities, especially following the Second World War, as a means of developing friendship and mutual understanding, together with the prospect of deriving economic benefit.

Sheffield has historically fostered international relationships through a number of Twin City arrangements or Friendship Agreements, in Europe, USA, Nicaragua, China, Japan, Pakistan and Zambia. The arrangements may reflect similarities between the cities, promote trade or other co-operation, or express solidarity and support in times of conflict. Some of these have been in place for many decades. Given that we no longer have a dedicated International Relations team, some of these relationships are less active than they were previously.

Sheffield City Council is also a member of EuroCities, a network of more than 200 cities in 38 countries, representing 130 million people, formed as a mechanism to encourage collaboration and the sharing of best practice.

- 1.2 Sheffield City Council is not actively seeking to develop new Twin City relationships and may review existing arrangements. In June, however, the Khmelnytskyi Mayor's Office contacted Sheffield City Council showing an interest in developing closer relationships between the two cities to include civic, cultural and educational exchange and to explore future business and trade opportunities. Responding positively to this approach presents an opportunity to show solidarity and support for the city, which is currently affected by the war in Ukraine.

Khmelnytskyi, located in the west of Ukraine is an important industrial city with a population of approximately 270,000. According to a 2017 survey, 84% of the population are ethnic Ukrainians and 13% are Russians.

The city is home to businesses operating in the chemical and petrochemical industries; food processing and construction industries. The city's manufactured output includes machinery, transformers and transformer substations; thermoplastics and automotive and tractor parts, metal-stamping and pressing equipment. Other manufactured products include: rubber and plastic products; preforms for the production of PET bottles; special equipment for radar and aviation; safety devices, and medical equipment. The city is keen to develop waste management expertise and could potentially learn from Sheffield's knowledge in both district heating and energy from waste.

The city is currently working on the creation of the Khmelnytskyi Industrial Park as a powerful innovation and technological entity that will stimulate investment and production activities in the local area and increase the investment attractiveness of the city of Khmelnytskyi – this development may well have parallels to the establishment of our own

Innovation District, here in Sheffield.

Located in the city are a total of 18 Higher Education Institutions, including the Khmelnytskyi National University; Khmelnytskyi University of Economics, and Khmelnytskyi University of Law and Administration. The city has a total of 30,000 students.

The city sees itself very much as a 'green city', again, there are similarities here with Sheffield.

Sheffield is already twinned with Donetsk in eastern Ukraine, a relationship that began in the 1950s. That region has however been occupied by Russia for a number of years and there has been no recent engagement between the two cities. Sheffield's bid to host the Eurovision Song Contest was in part based on this longstanding relationship and its expression of solidarity with Ukraine.

The minutes of the meeting of the Strategy and Resources Urgency Sub-Committee on 8th August note both the twinned city status with Donetsk and the opportunity of civic Sister City twinning with Khmelnytskyi. In establishing a new twinning relationship with Khmelnytskyi, we need to be respectful of the prior twinning relationship with Donetsk and when the conflict is over the intention would be to seek to renew relations when deemed appropriate.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The proposal is that a Twin City relationship is established through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Khmelnytskyi and Sheffield, which signifies the mutual intention to explore collaboration opportunities. The Lord Mayor as Chair of the City Council and First Citizen of the city is asked to sign the MoU on behalf of the Sheffield City Council and citizens of Sheffield. The MoU, and the proposals therein, will be reviewed in 12 months' time in December 2023.

The MoU does not contain any financial commitment on either city. Each city will be responsible for any of their own costs that they incur. Given that Ukraine is currently at war, and there are significant restrictions on movement in and out of the country, the majority of initial engagement will likely take place remotely, though the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Khmelnytskyi are present at this meeting and hope to address the Council to present a brief overview of their city, their city's situation in respect of the current conflict in Ukraine, and their desire to establish Twin City relations with Sheffield. Once the war in Ukraine is over it is hoped that there will be further opportunities to collaborate.

3. RISK ANALYSIS & IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Legal Implications

- 3.1.1 The proposed Memorandum of Understanding to establish the Twin City arrangement is a symbolic declaration of support, solidarity and co-operation and is a not legally enforceable agreement. Any consequential proposals, such as allocating funding to further the relationship or entering into more formal agreements, will require future Policy Committee decisions in accordance with the Council's Constitution and the legal implications will be considered at that time. Any future formal legal agreements between the two cities resulting from the Twin City relationship would, after being the subject of such a committee decision, be signed or sealed in accordance with the Constitution.

3.2 **Financial and Commercial Implications**

- 3.2.1 Each Party to the MoU will be responsible for bearing their own financial expenses related to developing this new Twin City relationship.

At the present time, there are minimal financial implications envisaged. Ukraine is currently at war, which significantly restricts activities. The current circumstances present an opportunity to share information and explore potential areas for future collaboration – to this end, the majority of costs associated with this will be in staff time, with a small amount of money potentially being required for hosting the Mayor and Deputy Mayor during their visit to Sheffield, for example refreshments in the Lord Mayor's Parlour.

All associated travel and accommodation costs in respect of the visit of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to Sheffield in December 2022 will be covered by the city of Khmelnytskyi.

Once the war in Ukraine is over, there may be economic opportunities presented in respect of rebuilding the country and also in developing trade and investment opportunities. The financial and commercial implications will be considered as part of the decision-making process at that time.

3.3 **Equality of Opportunity Implications**

- 3.3.1 As a Public Authority, we have legal requirements under Section 149 and 158 of the Equality Act 2010. These are often collectively referred to as the 'general duties to promote equality'.

To help us meet the general equality duties, we also have specific duties, as set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011. We have considered our obligations under this Duty in this report, but we do not feel there will be any disproportionate impact on any protected characteristics, so at this stage we do not feel a full equality impact assessment is required.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 We could choose to refuse to engage with Khmelnytskyi and decline their request to develop a twinning relationship. With the strength of support expressed towards Ukraine in the current climate and given the significant numbers of Ukrainians that have sought refuge in Sheffield and South Yorkshire, declining this approach is felt to be inappropriate. The proposed Memorandum of Understanding provides parameters to explore potential opportunities further, with a suggested 12-month review point in place.

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 As the UK's first City of Sanctuary, it feels natural to want to build upon the existing strong ties that we have with the Ukrainian community living in Sheffield and South Yorkshire.