



Report on the Friendship Agreement with City of Seoul, Republic Of Korea

An e-mail was received on 7th February 2023 from the International Cooperation Division at Seoul Metropolitan Government advising of an upcoming visit by the Mayor of Seoul and a request to establish a Friendship Agreement between Dublin and Seoul.

They were advised of the new Dublin City Council protocols in relation to Friendship Agreements and on 9th February 2023 responded outlining areas where collaboration between the two cities may lead to a successful relationship.

The response was assessed in the Matrix agreed by this Protocol Committee. It outlined a number of areas where the objectives of Dublin City and the City of Seoul aligned. Following consultation with senior staff within Dublin City Council the following areas have been outlined as areas where collaboration could begin:

- **Transportation** policy exchange including building on the recent signing of a Letter of Intent between the Transportation Departments of both cities through the European Union's International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC) Programme with a focus on shared challenges around mobility specifically walking and cycling. The challenges faced by both cities are similar including private car dominance/dependence/preference, behaviour of drivers, the need to make both cities more child friendly and making our cities resilient to climate change.
- **Housing** Dublin City Council has an ambitious housing retrofit programme that is focused on energy efficiency and we will also need to consider the climate resilience and adaptive capacity of housing and building stock. Retrofitting and the construction of energy efficient homes is an area where Dublin City Council has very good expertise. The Council has recently delivered new NZEB homes at Sean Foster place, has a strong pipeline of work to retrofit our existing housing stock and has completed a digital twin model for climate resilient housing on our de-tenanted housing on Dominick St. West. There is value in the sharing of knowledge and learning from Seoul in the area of housing retrofitting and energy efficient homes.
- **Climate Action Plan:** Knowledge exchange on climate action with other cities is critical to addressing our shared global challenge. From the perspective of the Climate Action team, Seoul's high level policy vision, goals and objective are what Dublin City should be/ is striving for with the revision of our current Climate Change Action Plan. The policy vision is clear, easily understood, and flexible/adaptable to the city's needs and responds to science. It is also focused on quality of life in the city by insuring equitable access to nature and its health and well-being benefits. Seoul's use of maps would be beneficial to climate action planning, as maps are also used to engage citizens.

- **Low Carbon City and Climate Resilience:** Both cities face similar challenges in engaging citizens around climate action, from encouraging citizens to reduce their energy use, water use, and waste, to preparing the city for climate impacts, such as temperature extremes and weather extremes and in the housing retrofit programme focused on energy efficiency as outlined above.
- **Circular Economy:** In the UCAP action from the IURC Partnership identified under Transportation above “Upcycling and Recycling of Bicycles” was included to align with circular economy projects that are underway and support social enterprises. For example, the Circular Economy Hotspot 2023 and the Shared Island Fund projected “A Connected Circular Economy” with Belfast City Council, both projects will look at how circular economy principles can benefit the transport sector, i.e. re-use of bike tires. This action was also proposed to better understand the financial model created by the Wright Brothers in Seoul to drive demand for refurbished high-end bicycles, and how it might be replicated in Dublin to support SMEs in this sector. Dublin has a strong example of a social enterprise, Front Line Bikes that works to train and support those coming from addiction and conviction backgrounds, who train as bike mechanics and improve the circular economy by upcycling and refurbishing old bicycles. Beyond transport both cities are signatories of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and are committed to reducing food waste, there is an opportunity to share ideas in this area. Further Invest Seoul may provide valuable insights for Dublin’s circular economy and social enterprise sector.
- **Data Analytics/Smart City/E Government:** Seoul is a leader in data, smart cities and e-government. Dublin would benefit greatly from understanding how Seoul is using technology and data in an equitable manner to improve how they serve the public. Through the Urban Cooperation Action Plan, Dublin will be learning how TOPIS integrates transport data to improve mobility in Seoul. Expanding beyond transport would be beneficial, for example, Dublin City has recently completed a project using a digital twin to assess retrofit options for social housing. Seoul has deployed digital twin technology on public realm projects. Learning how digital twins inform decision making and monitoring impacts of projects, policies and programmes, would be beneficial to housing retrofit, the development of decarbonisation zones and the development plan more broadly. We could learn from experiences in delivering digital connectivity and telecoms 5G as well as how Seoul is managing the exponential growth of new and emerging technologies. Dublin has also been invited by the City of Seoul to apply for the Seoul Smart City Prize.
- **Culture** The cities of Dublin and Seoul are both members of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and the World Cities Culture Forum. Dublin is a UNESCO City of Literature and Seoul a UNESCO City of Design. Bucheon, a satellite city of Seoul and located 25km away, is a UNESCO City of Literature and has been involved in a translation project called Seoda with the Dublin UNESCO City of Literature Office and Literature Ireland in 2022 and is active in nominating books by Korean writers for the Dublin Literary Award.
- **Festivals** The Embassy of the Republic of Korea and the Korean Community in Dublin are involved in the Dublin Lunar New Year Festival, Dublin International Literature Award and Culture Night and a City to City relationship could build on this.

Other areas of potential collaboration may arise following more detailed conversations with City of Seoul. If the members have any suggestions of other areas which would be beneficial to Dublin City, I would welcome their comments.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and the Irish Embassy in Seoul are very supportive of the establishment of a Friendship Agreement and commented that 2023 marks the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Ireland and Republic of Korea. The Embassy of Republic of Korea in Dublin is supportive of the establishment of a Friendship Agreement.

Recommendation

Following consideration of the objectives of Seoul I am satisfied that any new Friendship Agreement would align with the Dublin City Council's Mission Statement *To drive the sustainable development of the City through strong civic leadership and delivery of effective services that promote the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities.*

I would recommend the establishment of a Friendship Agreement between Dublin and the City of Seoul, Republic of Korea for a 4 year term. Areas of co-operation to include Transportation, Housing, Climate Action, Low Carbon City and Climate Resilience, Circular Economy, Smart Cities, Social Economy and Culture. Other areas may be considered following more in depth conversations with City of Seoul.

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International Relations

Culture, Recreation and Economic Services