



Friendship Agreement with City of Ramallah, Palestine – 29th June 2023

At the meeting of the Protocol Committee held on Thursday 26th January 2023, a Motion proposed by Councillor Daithí Doolan and seconded by Councillor Mannix Flynn was agreed “*Organising a delegation from Dublin City Council to Ramallah, Palestine*”. This was agreed by Dublin City Council at its monthly meeting held on 6th March.

In December 2022 Chief Executive Owen Keegan met with Palestinian Ambassador to Ireland Dr. Jilan Wahba Abdalmajid to discuss potential for cooperation between the two cities. Following this meeting the Chief Executive wrote to Ramallah Municipality to ascertain the interest in developing the connection between Dublin City Council and the Municipality of Ramallah at both political and official level, based on sharing of knowledge / expertise in areas of mutual interest and benefit. The Chief Executive spoke to the Director of Ramallah Municipal Authority Mr. Ahmed K. Abulaban on 11th April and Mr Abulaban confirmed that Ramallah Municipal Authority were appreciative of the on-going political links with Dublin City Council, would be keen to develop the connection with Dublin City Council to cover areas of mutual interest and would be keen to enter into an agreement with Dublin City Council.

Areas of mutual interest discussed included:

- **Climate Action**
- **Sustainable Transport / Active Travel**
- **Municipal Services in particular waste management**
- **Smart Cities**

Consultation with senior staff within Dublin City Council was undertaken and it was agreed the areas identified above were suitable for collaboration to begin.

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

A number of visits to Palestine by Councillors and staff from Dublin City Council have been held over the past ten years including in 2017 by Lord Mayor Brendan Carr, in 2018 by Ardmhéara Mícheál Mac Donncha and in 2022 by Lord Mayor Alison Gilliland.

The Department of Foreign Affairs are supportive of the establishment of a Friendship Agreement as is the Embassy of the Palestinian Authority in Ireland.

Recommendation

Following consideration, 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 Ramallah Municipal Authority for a 4 year term. Areas of co-operation to include Climate Action, Sustainable Transport / Active Travel, Municipal Services and Smart Cities. Other areas may be considered following more in depth conversations with Ramallah Municipal Authority.

If the members of the Protocol Committee agree to the establishment of this Friendship Agreement, planning will commence on a visit by a delegation of Elected Members and staff from Dublin City Council to Ramallah in Autumn 2023. The delegation to be led by the Lord Mayor of Dublin (or nominated representative) and Chairs or nominated representatives of the Climate Action, Environment and Energy SPC, Economic Development and Enterprise SPC and Traffic and Transport SPC.

Fanchea Gibson

International Relations

Culture, Recreation and Economic Services

22nd June 2023