

Agenda Item	11
Report No	HC/10/26

The Highland Council

Committee: The Highland Council

Date: 27 March 2026

Report Title: Memorandum of Understanding between the Highland Council and the Ivano-Frankivsk Regional State (Military) Administration, Ukraine

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - Corporate

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides information on a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (see **appendix 1**) between the Highland Council and the Ivano-Frankivsk Regional State (Military) Administration, Ukraine.
- 1.2 The MoU recognises a mutual desire to promote relationships based on the bonds of friendship between the Ivano-Frankivsk region and the Highland Council. It is also guided by the objectives and principles set out in the agreements between the United Kingdom and Ukraine, namely the [One Hundred Year Partnership Agreement](#) signed on 16 January 2025, and [Political Cooperation, Free Trade and Strategic Partnership Agreement](#) signed on 8 October 2020.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to **approve** the signing of the MoU.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** – There are no direct resource implications arising from this report, however opportunities arising from this MoU in the future may lead to a resource requirement.
- 3.2 **Legal** - There are no legal impacts arising directly from this report. This MoU is not intended to create any legally binding obligations
- 3.3 **Risk** - There are no risk implications arising directly from this report
- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** - There are no Health and Safety risk implications arising directly from this report
- 3.5 **Gaelic** - There are no Gaelic implications arising directly from this report.

4 Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is a summary report that presents the current position which may lead to further activity. Should this be the case then impact assessments relating to that activity will be undertaken.

5 Background

- 5.1 In early 2025 an approach was made by the First Secretary at the Embassy of Ukraine in the UK to the Convener of the Highland Council about the potential around a cooperation agreement with a Ukrainian region. Several other such agreements are in place with several other councils in the UK.
- 5.2 Following on from this, the First Secretary suggested that the Ivano-Frankivsk Regional Administration would be a good match with Highland Council. This resulted in a preliminary meeting with the First Secretary and representatives of the Ivano-Frankivsk Regional Administration to discuss potential opportunities for collaboration.

6. MOU with Ivano-Frankivsk Region

- 6.1 The Ivano-Frankivsk region is positioned in the west of Ukraine and borders Romania to the south. A map showing the location is attached at **appendix 2**. The population of 1.37 million is majority rural with strong economic activity around agriculture and forestry as well as a recognised potential around renewables. It is a leading tourist destination with several ski resorts and a number of sites of cultural and historic interest. Further detail on the Ivano-Frankivsk region can be found at [Ivano-Frankivsk – Platform for Cooperation](#).
- 6.2 Based on this and after further engagement, the main areas of interests, centred on wider economic cooperation and development, education, energy and tourism. These were the areas that were seen as being of mutual benefit with the aim of achieving knowledge transfer, educational and trade exchanges, and encouraging investment opportunities between Ivano-Frankivsk region and the Highlands
- 6.3 In terms of wider economic cooperation & development, Highlands & Islands Enterprise have indicated they would be willing to act as first point of contact. Likewise, the University of the Highlands & Islands are willing to explore opportunities around forestry and distance learning.
- 6.4 The Council will provide the initial lead on opportunities around energy (including solar, biomass, hydrogen, pump storage and onshore wind).

- 6.5 Tourism is seen as a longer-term prospect but could potentially look at areas such as whisky, golf, outdoor sports, cultural, heritage and natural attractions as well as bonds around the Gaelic language, culture and musical traditions.
- 6.6 This list does not preclude the potential for future cooperation in other areas.
- 6.7 This MoU would be in effect for five years from the date of its signing, unless it is terminated early. The term may be extended, amended or terminated by mutual written consent.

7. Recent Engagement

- 7.1 The Convener recorded a short video that was played at an International Forum held in the Ivano-Frankivsk region in October 2025 which aimed to promote international co-operation, communication and investment.
- 7.2 In December 2025, the draft MOU was approved by both the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Ukraine.

8. Wider Engagement

- 8.1 Several other local authorities in the UK have already signed MoUs with other regions in Ukraine, these include: -
- Derbyshire County and Khmelnytskyi region
 - Gloucestershire County and Zaporizhzhia region
 - Buckinghamshire and the Kyiv region
 - Cornwall and the Zakarpattia region
 - Lincolnshire and Kherson region
 - Norfolk and Lviv region
 - Kent and Chernihiv region

6 Next Steps

- 6.1 Should the MoU be approved by the Council, then arrangements will be made for an official signing. The relevant parties will exchange information on their interests and capacities regarding the areas of cooperation set out in the MoU. When specific projects are identified and objectives, priorities, and conditions have been agreed upon by the parties, these projects may be the subject of separate memorandums.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Corporate

Date: 16 February 2026

Author: Angus MacLeod, Policy Officer, Corporate

Background Papers:

[One Hundred Year Partnership Agreement between the United Kingdom and Ukraine](#)
[UK-Ukraine political, free trade and strategic partnership agreement - GOV.UK](#)
[Ivano-Frankivsk – Platform for Cooperation](#)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Memorandum of Understanding between the Highland Council and the Ivano-Frankivsk Regional State (Military) Administration.

Appendix 2 – Location Map of Ivano-Frankivsk Region

DRAFT

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN:

**IVANO-FRANKIVSK REGIONAL STATE (MILITARY)
ADMINISTRATION, IVANO-FRANKIVSK REGION, UKRAINE**

AND

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL, THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT
BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND**

Ivano-Frankivsk Regional State (Military) Administration and the Highland Council, the UK (hereinafter referred to as the Parties), guided by the objectives and principles of the One Hundred Year Partnership Agreement signed on 16 January 2025, and Political Cooperation, Free Trade and Strategic Partnership Agreement between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Ukraine signed on 8 October 2020, recognizing a mutual desire to promote relationships based on the bonds of amity between the people of Ivano-Frankivsk region and the people of the Highland Council area, have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter referred to as MOU) on the following.

1. Objective and cooperation priorities

Acknowledging the bonds of friendship between the people of Ivano-Frankivsk region and the Highlands, the purpose of this MOU is to promote the knowledge transfer, educational and trade exchanges, and encourage investment opportunities between Ivano-Frankivsk region and the Highlands, as well as the interaction of the Parties in the following areas.

- Economic cooperation and development (including interaction with Highlands & Islands Enterprise).
- Education (including forestry and distance learning, as well as interaction with the University of the Highlands & Islands).
- Energy (including solar, biomass, hydrogen, hydropower storage systems and onshore wind).

- Tourism.

2. Coordination and implementation

After the signing of this MOU, the Parties will exchange information on their interests and capacities regarding the areas of cooperation listed above, including providing the lists of individual contacts in Ivano-Frankivsk Regional State (Military) Administration and Highland Council.

Representatives of the Parties will undertake further discussions to get familiar with the prospects for cooperation and will organize the corresponding visits.

The Parties will facilitate contacts between the respective representatives of the Parties in order to identify, develop, and implement joint projects for cooperation.

When specific projects are identified and objectives, priorities, and conditions have been agreed upon by the Parties, these projects may be the subject of separate memorandums.

During the Term of the MOU, opportunities may allow for the Parties to encourage the private sector, public institutions, municipalities and territorial communities to take part in activities, which will be mutually beneficial to Ivano-Frankivsk region and the Highlands.

The Parties will have meetings if it is required in order to sum up the achievements of cooperation and planning of future collaboration.

The coordinating bodies for this MOU will be the Department for International Cooperation and European Integration of Communities of Ivano-Frankivsk Regional State (Military) Administration and Corporate Governance at the Highland Council.

3. Costs

Each Party shall individually take the necessary measures to implement the provisions of this MOU.

4. Nature of the Memorandum

The Parties consider this MOU as a declaration of intent that does not create any legal or financial obligations for either of them.

5. Term

This MOU enters into force on the date of its signing by the Parties and will be in effect for five (5) years.

This MOU shall be terminated early three months after one Party receives written notification from the other Party of its intention to terminate this MOU.

Termination of this MOU shall not affect the implementation of any ongoing arrangements, unless the Parties agree otherwise in writing.

If the term of this MOU expires and neither Party has notified the other of its intention to terminate it, its term shall be automatically extended for the next five-year period.

Amendments and/or additions to this MOU may be made only by mutual written consent of the Parties and shall be formalized by additional agreements, which shall form an integral part of this MOU.

Amendments and/or additions shall be made in the same manner as its conclusion.

Differences regarding the interpretation or application of the provisions of this MOU shall be resolved through negotiations and consultations between the Parties.

Done _____ on _____ in two copies, each in Ukrainian and English, both having equal legal force.

**Ivano-Frankivsk Regional State
(Military) Administration,
Ukraine**

**The Highland Council, the United
Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland**

Svitlana ONYSHCHUK
Head of Ivano-Frankivsk Regional
State Administration – Chief of
Regional Military Administration

Bill LOBBAN
Convener
The Highland Council

Appendix 2

