Strategy and Resources Committee
10 November 2026

UPDATE FROM THE TOWN TWINING WORKING GROUP

Head of Service:	Piero Ionta, Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer
Report Author	Piero Ionta, Tim Richardson
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Appendices (attached):	None

Summary

This report provides updates from the Town Twinning Working Group and other recent developments. It proposes the closure of the Town Twinning Working Group following notification that the Bucha Epsom Association does not wish to proceed at the present time.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

(1) Note the update.

(2) Agree that the Town Twinning Working Group be dissolved.

1 Reason for Recommendation

1.1 The Strategy and Resources Committee agreed to create a Town Twinning Working Group at its meeting on 17 March 2026. The Working Group was requested to consider and explore the issues surrounding a proposal to establish a twinning agreement with the City of Bucha, Ukraine.

1.2 The Committee received an update from the Working Group at the meeting of 14 July 2026 and invited a further update for this meeting.

2 Background

2.1 Since the last meeting of this Committee, the Town Twinning Working Group held meetings on 23 July and 24 August 2026.

2.2 An update on the matters considered by the Working Group and further developments are provided below,

Withdrawal of proposal to twin with Bucha, Ukraine at the present time.

2.3 On 8 September 2026 the council was notified that the Bucha Epsom Association does not wish to proceed with the proposal to twin with Bucha, Ukraine at the present time. The Association expressed its thanks to the Working Group and officers for their time considering the proposal and indicated that it wished to wait until the vesting of East Surrey Council for the twinning arrangement to be explored.

Continuation of Twinning arrangements post 1 April 2027.

2.4 At its meeting of 24 August, the Working Group noted that it was hoped that the creation of Charter Trustees for Epsom and Ewell would enable the twinning arrangements between Epsom and Ewell and Chantilly to continue after the dissolution of the Council. An update from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG) was awaited to provide clarity on whether transitional arrangements to transfer twinning agreements to Charter Trustees would be provided within mopping-up legislation.

2.5 At time of writing this report, a response is still awaited; officers are of the view that whilst the existing arrangements will not automatically transfer into an arrangement with East Surrey Council, the area of Epsom and Ewell has sought Charter Trustees to be created after vesting day. Should a Charter Mayor be appointed, they will be able to continue to support the relationship and attend future visits if required.

Proposal to dissolve Working Group

2.6 Following notification that the Bucha Epsom Association does not wish to proceed with the proposal to twin with Bucha at the present time and that the arrangements for twinning with Chantilly post vesting day are not a decision for this Council, there is no business for the Town Twinning Working Group to consider. It is therefore proposed that the working group is dissolved. This has been shared with members of the Working Group who have expressed their support for this.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

3.1.1 None.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 None.

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 None.

3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 None.

3.5 Other

3.5.1 None.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

4.2 **Section 24 considerations:** There are no Section 24 implications in relation to the current town twinning arrangements and it is not anticipated that there would be any implications if arrangements continue as set out in this report.

4.3 **Section 151 Officer's comments**: There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any future expenditure will be subject to the identification of appropriate funding and the Council's established approval processes.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 **Legal Officer's comments**: None arising from the content of this report.

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council's Key Priorities**: The following Key Priorities are engaged:

- Effective Council

6.2 **Service Plans**: The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations**: None.

6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications**: None.

6.5 **Partnerships**: The Working Group recognised the vital role that community groups provide in ensuring the success of town twinning arrangements and their potential to secure their future continuation.

6.6 **Local Government Reorganisation Implications**: Town twinning agreements held, managed or administered by the Council will end on 1 April 2027 unless they are adopted by a community group or East Surrey Council, directly or via Charter Trustees, as the borough area to which they relate along with the predecessor Council will cease to exist on that date. Twinning agreements that do not involve the Council should not be affected by vesting day.

7 Background papers

7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- Report to Strategy and Resources Committee, 14 July 2026.