



Agenda item:

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<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Culture Leisure & Sport Briefing Meeting
<b>Subject:</b>	Portsmouth 2013: Home of Great Writing
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> October 2012
<b>Report by:</b>	Head of Cultural Services
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All wards
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Full Council Decision:</b>	No

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet Member of the development of activities to celebrate Portsmouth as the Home of Great Writing in 2013.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 For the Member to note the contents of the report.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 Culture, and in particular literature contributes to the promotion and understanding of Portsmouth's unique character and diverse heritage; to celebrating local cultures, heritage and history; and to developing a strong sense of identity, belonging and community. Portsmouth has always been a city of great stories and great characters. Portsmouth 2013 – Home of Great Writing is about getting everybody in the city reading, writing and sharing stories.
- 3.2 Portsmouth 2013 – Home of Great Writing will build out of this identity, in the same way the celebrations of Charles Dickens's bicentenary did – a unique and diverse year-long programme of events, coordinated by the City Development and Cultural Services team working in partnership with the independent cultural sector as well as other services and organisations.

Portsmouth 2013 – Home of Great Writing will be brought to life through a strongly connected partnership of many organisations locally and further afield, including schools and higher education, local government organisations, publishers and booksellers, libraries and other cultural groups and organisations.

- 3.3 Overall, the aims of *Portsmouth 2013 – Home of Great Writing* will be the same as those laid out in the *Literature Development Strategy 2011-2016*, namely:

- To place literature at the heart of the community, available and accessible to every citizen of Portsmouth
- To mark Portsmouth out nationally and internationally through improved creation and promotion of our unique literary assets
- To support the continued development of the literary sector as a means to improving the creativity, prosperity and well-being of the city

3.4 The year-long calendar of events and projects will build on the success achieved by the *Dickens 2012* project, highlighting the city's literary heritage locally, nationally and internationally; engaging and enthusing communities across Portsmouth with reading and writing; and developing a robust and sustainable environment for those working with and promoting literature to grow and to contribute to Portsmouth's regeneration.

3.5 As with the *Literature Development Strategy 2011-2016*, the key points of the City Council's Corporate Priorities that are of concern to *Portsmouth 2013 – Home of Great Writing* are to:

- Improve efficiency and encourage involvement
- Raise standards in English and Maths
- Regenerate the city

3.6 *Portsmouth 2013 – Home of Great Writing* will support the Local Strategic Partnership's "*Vision for Portsmouth: Priority 8* – to enhance Portsmouth's reputation as a city of culture, energy and passion, offering access for all to arts, sports and leisure." It is also a key contributor to the wider perspectives and goals set out in the Cultural Services Outcome Objectives:

- *Objective 2:* Cultural Services continues to act as a stimulus for regeneration, investment and prosperity to the city
- *Objective 4:* A city where residents feel listened to and are empowered to become participants in the cultural agenda and to be involved in the life of their community.
- *Objective 5:* A city in which all residents have access to high quality formal and informal learning opportunities
- *Objective 6:* A city with a distinctive culture established as a major tourist destination

3.7 Alongside those named above, *Portsmouth 2013 – Home of Great Writing* will also support and contribute to the outcomes of documents such as Library Reading Strategy, Museums Learning & Access Strategy, Seafront Strategy 2010-2026, Cultural Services Volunteer Strategy, Shaping the Future of Portsmouth, as well as any work produced by a Portsmouth Destination Marketing Partnership.

3.8 Initial proposals for Portsmouth 2013 include:

- Observe Portsmouth: The marquee event of 2013. A series of open-ended questions would be distributed to residents across the city. Their

responses would be sorted by ward and each “ward of answers” would be used as the starting point for 14 writers/artists commissions over the course of the year.

- Portsmouth First Novel Award: an adult companion to Portsmouth Book Awards for an author’s first published work of full-length fiction. Reading groups in the city select winner from shortlist. Winner announced at Portsmouth BookFest 2013.
- Portsmouth Reads...: Building on 2012’s distribution of *Oliver Twist* we will continue to work with Random House Group in 2013, distributing 1000+ copies of *The Light Between Oceans* in April/May 2013.
- Portsmouth Poet Laureate: this position will be become a biannual appointment announced on National Poetry Day (6 October). The current incumbent will therefore hold the position until October 2013. In addition, the Portsmouth Young Poet Laureate position will be replaced with a Portsmouth Young City Laureate. This position will be appointed annually on 21 April, the anniversary of Portsmouth becoming a city.
- Anniversaries: We will continue to celebrate the city’s literary heritage, especially Dickens Day (7 February) and Sherlock Day (24 June). Following 2012, Dickens activity will be limited, although the Tale of One City website will continue and supports 2013’s objectives. 2013 will feature the Conan Doyle Collection throughout the year – four ‘seasons’ of activity, culminating in a commissioned mini-comic by graphic artist ILYA called *A Christmas Carol Conan Doyle*.
- TEDxPortsmouth: A “local-level” version of the international TED conference. TEDxPortsmouth would focus on writing, reading and a sense of place, especially in relation to the city’s ongoing regeneration. Other conferences and fairs will also be looked at, especially those that reflect activity already in the city: arts books; translation; digital media.
- Twin City events: Linking up the Portsmouth BookFest and Caen’s Salon du Livre.
- Monthly Events: A regular series of author events will continue to provide opportunities for audiences to engage with authors. A series of lectures by notable Portsmouthians is also being looked at.

3.9 The current Literature Development budget will provide initial funding for certain elements of the programme. This covers the financial year up until March 2013 after which we have to assume that the majority, if not all funding will have to be sought externally, whether through grants, partnership working or commercial sponsorship. Each individual element will be budgeted for in advance along with preparation of the relevant grant applications.

**THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

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Signed by  
**Stephen Baily**  
**(Head of Service)**

**Appendices:                      None**

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>None</b>	