

**Title of meeting:** Cabinet Member for Resources  
**Date of meeting:** 9 October 2018  
**Subject:** Twinning Report  
**Report by:** Director of Culture & City Development  
**Wards affected:** All  
**Key decision:** No  
**Full Council decision:** No

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**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To seek authorisation to develop a comprehensive strategy detailing the aims and objectives of the PCC twinning relationships including a clear procedural process by which potential twin cities are identified and the benefit to the city outlined.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That officers be required to develop a comprehensive strategy to clearly outline the aims and objectives for the city's twinning process so they closely link to the Council Corporate Priorities to ensure they are maximising the benefit for Portsmouth.**

**3. Background**

- 3.1 Historically Portsmouth City Council has supported and maintained a number of relationships with other cities throughout the world as part of a twinning, sister and friendship city process.
- 3.2 Whilst the rationale for the establishment of the of the relationships between cities has varied in recent years the key elements of our oldest link with Duisburg originated out of a desire for the UK Government to foster improved relationships between UK and German cities following the Second World War.
- 3.3 The range of cities Portsmouth has subsequently connected with has then varied in their rationale and the benefit to the city such as the twinning link with Caen being forged as a result of the establishment of the International Port with economic development being the key driver.

- 3.4 A recent Audit report highlighted the lack of a clear strategy determining the desired outcomes from the twinning relationships overall and furthermore there are no defined boundaries for the roles that friendship groups, officers and Members have in respect of the activity linked to the cities.
- 3.5 Consideration is also needed to look at a potential re-definition of the relationships to ensure that they are all on an equal footing as we believe our partner cities do not fully understand the difference we place on the terms friendship, sister and twin city as often they do not themselves make such distinctions.
- 3.6 The timing for the development of this strategy will also enable officers to reflect on the current and developing position in regards to the Brexit process and how this will affect currently our active relationships in particular with both Caen and Duisburg. The ramifications are already being felt as our most successful recent projects with Caen had utilised EU funding which it has not been possible to bid for since the Brexit vote and we do not believe we will be able to bid for in the future but this is currently unknown.

#### **4. Reasons for recommendations**

- 4.1 The Audit report highlighted a number of areas for consideration which need to be addressed. The delivery of a formal strategy will enable these elements to be fully considered and an appropriate strategic direction to be established which clearly identifies the benefits of maintaining the twinning relationships to maximise the return in a measurable way to Portsmouth.
- 4.2 There are currently reputational and financial risks associated with the lack of clear procedural guidance on the process by which potential twins are chosen. The European Commission provided a revised Twinning Manual in 2017 and although non-EU arrangements do not fall within its remit, the manual is clear that the best practice for twinning relationships and projects should be built around jointly agreed policy objectives with a signed work plan and specific operational results identified at the outset which reflect the local strengths of each city.
- 4.3 Although we currently have a summary of each city relationship the agreements are general and do not state specific objectives or measures by which to achieve them. Additionally evaluation of activities needs to be directly linked to the new Corporate Priorities in order to demonstrate meaningful measures of success.

#### **5. Equality impact assessment**

- 5.1 An equality impact assessment is not required as the recommendation does not have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics as described in

the Equality Act 2010. This will be considered again when the full strategy is brought back for consideration by Resources Committee.

## **6. Legal implications**

6.1 At this early stage Legal considerations can only be identified as Heads. When the picture is clearer as to the intended objectives, strategy, the type of intended future projects and the stream of funding to support those is identified, a more detailed legal assessment can be provided.

In the meantime some legal considerations to keep in mind are:

- a) Any procurement implications in respect of goods or services procured on behalf of the twin cities
- b) Any Data Protection implications in the process of exchange of information with the twin cities. It must be examined who will be the Data controller and who the Data Processor.
- c) If EU funding is the source, the terms for the provision of such funding should be scrutinised as compared to the Authority's standard Terms and conditions and Contract procedure rules.
- d) The objectives as well as the strategy adopted to realise them must be in line with both legal regimes of the two legal systems, therefore it is advisable that these are reviewed by legal teams in both countries.
- e) In respect of financial risks, adequate insurance cover enforceable in the English Courts (where applicable) should be in place for actions and undertakings by the twin cities.
- f) If the scheme (or part of it) is funded by a pooled fund whereby both cities contribute financially, the terms must be clear and set in stone in a written Agreement to which the Law of England and Wales will apply (Twinning Grant Contract).
- g) If the scheme (or part of it) is funded by central government, it is important to observe the terms of the relevant Department's framework under which this funding has been approved.
- h) Reputational risks can be mitigated if the selection process prescribed within the revised Twinning Manual (2017) mentioned in the "Reasons for recommendations" section above is followed.
- i) In legal terms Brexit will not have any impact until the 31 December 2020 being the end of a proposed Transition Period (subject to the UK and EU being able to agree on a Withdrawal Agreement). Should such an Agreement not be reached, it is open to speculation as to what the legal implications may be overall and how these may affect the relationships between twin cities from the 30 March 2019 onwards.

When more detail is available as to the objectives and strategy, additional and more thorough legal advice can be obtained on the specifics of the arrangement.

**7. Director of Finance's comments**

7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation of this report. It should also be noted that there is no specific revenue budget provision for twinning activities.

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Signed by:  
**Stephen Baily**  
**Director of Culture and City Development**

**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:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

.....  
Signed by:  
**Cabinet Member for Resources**