

Title of meeting:	Cabinet Meeting
Date of meeting:	4 th February 2020
Subject:	Proposed Sister City Links with Halifax, Canada and the Falkland Islands
Report by:	Director Culture, Leisure & Regulatory Services
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision	No

Purpose of report

- 1.1 To consider a request to establish a formal Sister City link between Portsmouth and Halifax in Canada and the Falkland Island as has been proposed and to request that the Leader of the Council be formally asked to write to the Mayor of Halifax, Canada and the Legislative Assembly of the Falkland Islands with a request to establish Sister City relationships.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **To recommend that the Leader of the Council write to the Mayor of Halifax, Canada and the Legislative Assembly of the Falkland Island with a request that Portsmouth be able to enter into Sister City relationships with both Halifax and the Falkland Islands to mark the long relationship between the City of Portsmouth and Halifax, Canada and the Falkland Islands.**

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 The oldest links we have were established out of a desire for the UK Government to foster improved relationships between UK and German cities following the Second World War. The rationale for Portsmouth to have such links has changed with the more recent emphasis being to support economic development and business development via trade, investment and education initiatives.

- 3.3 The critical feature for many new city relationships has been to support economic development. Halifax is the provincial capital of Nova Scotia in Canada, the Halifax regional Municipality has a population of 400,000. It is home to the Royal Canadian Navy with a major naval base and has had a link with Portsmouth's Naval Base since 1759. It is therefore one of the cities in the world that we have one of the oldest relationships with. The recent sale of the Type 26 Frigate to the Royal Canadian Navy and the decision by the Canadian Government to build the ships in Halifax has presented a huge trade and inward investment opportunity. The contract to build 15 frigates is worth £20B with many companies in Portsmouth either already involved or wishing to obtain supply chain contracts. In addition there is great potential for a future trade, investment and educational mission to include not just Halifax but also Toronto.
- 3.4 Halifax has also gained great prominence due to the recent visit by HMS Queen Elizabeth and the red Arrows. Department of International Trade and the British High Commission in Canada have a strategy to increase trade between the Maritime area of the Atlantic coast of Canada and hence this sister city link will build on this and bring economic benefits to Portsmouth. The British High Commission in addition to the Canadian High Commission in London are both very supportive of the proposed sister link with Portsmouth.
- 3.5 The UK is Canada's largest European trading partner with huge scope to boost this further. The trade treaty with Europe called CETA has helped to boost this and currently the UK government is working on ensuring post BREXIT that CETA is maintained either in the current form or in a new bilateral agreement.
- 3.6 There are great potential educational benefits that will flow from this sister city link. There are two universities in Halifax Dalhousie and St Marys who are both keen on working with the University of Portsmouth. In addition the University of Portsmouth already has links with Ryerson University in Toronto. So there are great opportunities to recruit more students from Canada and also to foster exciting research collaborations particularly in the area of sustainability and the environment. Teacher recruitment is another area of interest as Canada has surplus of qualified teachers who could be interested in moving to Portsmouth to teach. There qualifications are recognised in the UK and there are no visa restrictions.
- 3.7 Intense work has already started to organise a trade, investment and education mission in July 2020. Partners on board include the University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth Football Club, Department of International Trade, the Solent LEP and many local companies in the sectors of aerospace, advanced manufacturing, defence, digital and creative industries, engineering and marine and maritime.
- 3.8 Now turning to the Falkland Islands; in this case it is very much about a relationship that is based more on an element of a common shared history. This proposal is therefore wishing to establish a formal link with the Falkland Islands, a part of the world the city has an intrinsic relationship with primarily through the armed forces particularly focused on the 1982 Falklands War but the relationship was established long before that and indeed has continued in the 37 years since.

- 3.4 With the first recorded landing by English navigator, Captain John Strong in 1690 in his ship the 'Welfare' the original naming of the Islands came about through the naming of the channel dividing the two islands 'Falkland Sound' after Viscount Falkland, the Treasurer of the Royal Navy and one of the co-owners of the 'Welfare'. The name was formally adopted with the islands were claimed for Britain by Commodore John Byron who landed on West Falkland in 1765.
- 3.5 As a distant territory of the United Kingdom the Falkland Islands and other South Atlantic territories have long required support from the Royal Navy. Equally as a far-flung outpost the South Atlantic dependencies have long been a strategic location for the navy with Port Stanley in particular being used as an anchorage by the Royal Navy for centuries.
- 3.6 As the last islands before the Antarctic the Falkland Islands and South Georgia have often been the last port of call for explorers, such as Captain Scott and Ernest Shackleton. Many of these explorers were naval officers, and voyages often started from Portsmouth.
- 3.7 A further tangible link between Portsmouth and the Islands occurred through the Battle of the Falkland Islands in 1914 which involved thousands of sailors on Portsmouth based ships, including ships that were sunk at the Battle of Jutland less than two years later. So involved was the city that two Portsmouth sailors killed on the cruiser HMS Kent in 1914 were men from Shearer Road and Clarkes Road in Portsmouth and they are buried in Port Stanley War Cemetery. Following their important role during the Second World War the British Government decided to maintain a small Royal Marines presence on the Falkland Islands, known as Naval Party 8901. As a result hundreds of Royal Marines will have served in the islands, no doubt including many from Portsmouth.
- 3.8 More recently Portsmouth played a prominent role in the Falklands War of 1982, including Dockyard personnel working round the clock to ready the Task Force. The city hosted several high-profile departures, including the aircraft carriers HMS Hermes and HMS Invincible and as is well known several ships based from Portsmouth were sunk during the conflict. In total 20 sailors were killed when HMS Sheffield was hit by an Exocet missile on 4 May 1982 with a further 19 crew of HMS Coventry being killed when she was sunk by air attack on 25 May 1982. A further Portsmouth based-ship, HMS Glamorgan, was seriously damaged on 12 June 1982 resulting in the loss of 10 of her crew. Despite these tragedies the seafront witnessed the high-profile homecomings of the warships returning after the end of the conflict.
- 3.9 Since the end of the 1982 conflict the Royal Navy has maintained a permanent presence on and around the Falkland Islands. This has included an Antarctic Patrol Vessel - for many years the Portsmouth-based HMS Endurance, which was the city's adopted ship - and in more recent years HMS Clyde, which was built in the Dockyard. Since the conflict the Royal Navy has also maintained a standing South Atlantic presence, usually consisting of a Frigate or Destroyer on a six

month rotation. Many of these have been Portsmouth ships, and hence thousands of Portsmouth sailors will have visited the islands.

- 3.10 As can be seen from this long shared history Portsmouth and the Falkland Islands are intrinsically linked and this proposal to seek to establish a formal Sister City Link will bring formal recognition to that relationship. We are aware of a number of business interests in Portsmouth by Falkland Island Businesses along with a group of Islanders who have settled here but strategically the commitment by Portsmouth City Council to support veterans who remain in the city through the Armed Forces Covenant is a significant factor in our asking for the recognition of this link at the current time.
- 3.11 A visit by Falkland Islands Legislative members Leona Roberts, Roger Spink and Mark Pollard in 2019 to the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth also expressed their strong interest in developing and having a formal link between the islands and the city.
- 3.11 Whilst the geographical distance between the Falkland Islands and Portsmouth is considerable it is hoped that this proposal to establish a new Sister City link will bring closer working ties which can be facilitated through both the military and business links already established.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 Portsmouth needs to ensure that the twin, sister and friendship links it has are working to support new avenues for economic development in the form of trade, investment and education. Historically we have had a focus on working with European countries and establishing a new link with Halifax in Canada and the Falkland Islands will reflect both the shared common history and would acknowledge the considerable links that businesses and the two naval bases and veterans located in Portsmouth have with both Halifax and the Falkland islands.

5. Integrated impact assessment

An Integrated Impact Assessment is attached.

6. Legal implications

There is no fixed or formal definition of a sister city link but generally this comprises a long term and reciprocal commitment by the relevant civic authorities to foster cultural, social and economic, trade, investment and educational relationships between the two areas and their communities.

7. Director of Finance's comments

There is no specific budget provision to support twinning and international arrangements. Any costs arising from the recommendation will have to be met from existing budgets or from Portfolio reserves (subject to agreement by S151 Officer and the Portfolio holder) and time resources found from within existing staff time.

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Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Appendices:
 Appendix 1: Integrated Impact Assessment

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

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Signed by:
Leader of the Council