



Title of meeting:	Communities and Central Services Meeting
Date of meeting:	4 th November 2022
Subject:	Proposed Sister City Link with Cape Town
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 formal Sister City link between Portsmouth and Cape Town and to request that the Leader of the Council be formally asked to write to the Mayor of Cape Town, South Africa with a request to establish a Sister City relationship.
2. **Recommendations**
 - 2.1 **To recommend that the Leader of the Council and the Lord Mayor write a joint letter to the Mayor of Cape Town, South Africa with a request that Portsmouth be able to enter into a Sister City relationship with Cape Town, South Africa.**
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 Post Brexit we are keen to ensure that we have links and opportunities for working with other parts of the world and not rely solely on our established European links. Establishing a new link with a Commonwealth country in a post Brexit period would help to balance out any challenges with European trade in the short term.

Currently, we have twin, sister and friendship links in Europe, Asia, America and Australia but do not have any in Africa.

- 3.4 South Africa, a member of the Commonwealth, is Britain's largest trade partner in the African continent and the UK was South Africa's fifth top trading partner in terms of its export sales in 2021. We therefore wish to establish a link with South Africa to support new relationships, encourage business growth through partnership routes and ensure our city links reflect both Portsmouth and the university's communities of growing diversity.
- 3.5 Cape Town is a port city on South Africa's southwest coast and Simon's Town, adjacent to Cape Town, is South Africa's main naval base. It is one of South Africa's three capital cities and has the seat of parliament located there. Cape Town is a major cruise destination as well as being on one of the world's busiest trade routes. The Royal Navy has a long history with Cape Town and is still a regular port of call to conduct maintenance, stores, personnel transfers and R&R. In 2006 the Commanding Officer of Gold Rover, a small fleet tanker of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary commented that it was with a high degree of sadness that they departed Simons Town for the last time. He said they were genuinely humbled by the warm reception they received each time they called.
- 3.6 Links to Africa and Portsmouth go back in history, it was found that some of the crew on the Mary Rose that sank in 1545 were probably of African heritage following recent DNA analysis of some of the remains found.
- 3.7 In 1917, SS Mendi was transporting more than 800 members of the South African Native Labour Corps to the Western Front to assist the Allied Forces. It was tragically rammed by a larger cargo frigate, the Darros in thick fog off the coast of the Isle of Wight. A government inquiry found that no lifeboats were lowered to save the men. It was the worst maritime disaster during the war in British waters, but was mainly forgotten in the UK until recently.
- 3.8 In South Africa, commemorations of the SS Mendi were discouraged by white led governments creating a symbol of racial injustice. However, a plaque was unveiled in Portsmouth in 2017, commemorating 100 years since the tragic event and services have been held allowing the families of the South African soldiers to pay tribute. There are nine graves in Milton cemetery where wreaths have been laid since this time. Theresa May returned the shipwrecked bell when she visited Cape Town in 2017.
- 3.9 Cape Town, like Portsmouth is home to South Africa's Naval Museum. It is located in the city's historic West Dockyard of Simon's Town in the former Royal Navy Mast House that dates back to 1815 and the adjacent Dutch Store House (1743). Exhibitions include their historic clock tower and sail loft, the history and functioning of the Submarine, Divers and Weapons branch and other displays including the General Botha, Hydrographic Printing and Russian Arctic Convoy.
- 3.10 A more recent link between the two cities is the modelling of Gunwharf Quays on the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town. The Portsmouth scheme was

developed in partnership with Lordland Holdings, the company that set up the Cape Town development. Both design elements of the building and the original events programme at Gunwharf Quays were based on the successful Cape Town waterfront scheme.

- 3.11 Cape Town does not currently have any links with any other cities in the UK. Sister city agreements in place with Cape Town include: Dubai, UAE and Monterrey, Mexico.
- 3.12 It has Cooperation Agreements and Protocols and Memorandum of Understanding with: Accra, Ghana, Buenos Aires, Argentina, Atlanta, Houston and Miami Dade County, USA, Malmo, Sweden, Hangzhou, Shenzhen and Wuhan, China, Munich and Aachen, Germany, Izmir, Turkey, Bujumbura, Burundi, Varna, Bulgaria and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

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 Cape Town will not only reflect the shared common history but would support new relationships, encourage business growth through partnership routes and ensure our city links reflect Portsmouth and the university's communities of growing diversity.

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: IIA Cape Town Sister City proposal

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

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Signed by: