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**(Please note that 'Information Only' reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)**

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Central Services Decision Meeting
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	4 October 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Twinning Activity update
<b>Report by:</b>	Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All

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**1. Requested by Central Services Chair**

Councillor Chris Attwell

**2. Purpose**

- 2.1 To provide the chair and the members of Central Services with an overview of the activities which took place with all our twin and sister cities through the previous year.

**3. Information Requested**

- 3.1. This report contains a summary of all the activities which occurred between the City of Portsmouth and our twin and sister cities through the last year. The reactivated Twinning Advisory Group has received updates and an outline of the forward programme and has supported the proposed programme of works.
- 3.2. **Activity with the City of Caen:** Reciprocal groups of runners from the European Cities Twinning Committee (ECTC) and Caen City Council took part in both the Great South Run in October 2023 and the Courants de la Liberte in June 2024. The ECTC and Friends of Portsmouth groups arranged host families for the runners in both cities.
- 3.3. Deputy Mayor Cécile Cottenceau visited Portsmouth for the Mayor Making ceremony. During her day, she met Dominic Jones from the Mary Rose to discuss an opportunity for a touring exhibition about the ship to go to Caen and had a guided tour of the museum. In addition, she met with the Solent Languages Hub (Admiral Lord Nelson School, Priory, Trafalgar and Springfield) who discussed how languages are taught in Portsmouth's schools and how school links could be initiated with potential exchanges in the future. A meeting was also held with Head of Visit Portsmouth to discuss opportunities using both the ferry and recently introduced flights from Southampton airport.

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- 3.4. The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress represented Portsmouth at ceremonies in Caen and at the International Heads of State D-Day ceremony on 6<sup>th</sup> June.
- 3.5. The European Cities Twinning Committee continued to meet regularly to both consider and explore new initiatives between residents. They successfully hosted their largest group of guests from Caen in June for a number of years. The group enjoyed a varied programme including a trip to the Isle of Wight and a visit to meet the Lord Mayor.
- 3.6. **Activity with the City of Duisburg:** The Portsmouth Friends group from Duisburg visited Portsmouth and met with the Lord Mayor in August 2023 on their annual visit to the city. They were given refreshments in the Guildhall Banqueting Room, had a Q&A with the Lord Mayor before being given a tour of the silver in the corridor.
- 3.7. An introduction was made between City of Portsmouth College (CoPC) and The Sophie-Scholl-Berufskolleg in August 2023. Since then, the Principal and four other members of staff from the vocational college visited Portsmouth in May 2024. They incorporated attending the Mayor Making ceremony and held meetings with the college at the Highbury campus. The Assistant Principal from CoPC is looking to visit Duisburg later this year.
- 3.8. Duisburg Deputy Mayor Klabuhn, Lydia Steinhauer, Head of Education and Head of Climate Change visited for Mayor Making in May 2024. Meetings held with Cllr Horton and Mike Stoneman to discuss education in the city, separate meeting held with language teachers from Solent Languages Hub - ALNS, Priory, Trafalgar and Springfield to discuss links with schools, Southsea Coastal Scheme and Portsmouth International Port to discuss environmental issues. Portsmouth International Port were keen to do a reciprocal visit to learn more about the Duisburg port and how they use hydrogen.
- 3.9. The Economic Regeneration team has been holding regular meetings with the Duisburg Innovation and Business team who offer support to businesses looking for connections and exploring ideas.
- 3.10. The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress visited Duisburg in September 2024 for meetings with Mayor Link and visits to several key events over the two days of the visit. These included attending the Haniel Open Air Festival, meeting with the Duisburg/Portsmouth friends group to mark their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the Sophie-School-Berufskolleg who are forging relationships with the City of Portsmouth College.

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- 3.11. **Activity with the City of Haifa:** The Portsmouth Haifa Friendship Twinning Committee were meeting regularly however, following events in October 2023, their activities have been temporarily put on hold in the current circumstances.
- 3.12. **Activity with the City of Halifax:** Maritime UK Solent offered three grants of up to £500 to Solent-based maritime SMEs and businesses to join a delegation to Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada from 25-28 September 2023.
- 3.13. The Head of Economic Development and Leader of the Council joined representatives from Portsmouth International Port, Portico and Solent LEP / Maritime UK Solent were all part of the delegation.
- 3.14. Economic Development launched the first international online business networking event for maritime businesses for Halifax and Portsmouth on 4th March 2024, to enable business connections and collaboration.
- 3.15. Economic Regeneration team continue to have regular Teams meetings with the Halifax Partnership team. Some positive connections have been made for businesses in both cities which continues to be supported by officers.
- 3.16. **Activity with the City of Maizuru:** As part of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sister city link, funding was awarded by the Great British Sasakawa Foundation for the filming of a Portsmouth tourism video by children at St John's Primary and at St Edmunds. Solent Sky Services lead the project and delivered three films, one each from the respective schools and a further one with highlights from both. The films were shared with Maizuru to give their children a better insight into the city and it is hoped a video of Maizuru will be shared in a similar format in return.
- 3.17. In February 2024, Mayor Kamoda, Chairman Ueba and two Officers visited Portsmouth as part of the 25th anniversary. A full itinerary was put together to meet their specific requests which included the unveiling of donated books as part of a mutual exchange in Southsea Library and a new stone in the Japanese garden commemorating the visit and anniversary.
- 3.18. The book exchange, again funded by The Great British Sasakawa Foundation allowed over 100 books relating to Portsmouth and Portsmouth's authors, such as Dickens and Conan Doyle to be sent to Maizuru for use in their schools and libraries. In return, books relating to Maizuru and the Kyoto region, Japanese culture, cuisine, fashion, origami and manga graphic novels were sent to be held in the Portsmouth Library Service.
- 3.19. The Mayor and Chairman addressed the Full Council, visited the Naval Base including a visit on HMS Victory and Mary Rose, had a talk from James Daly re the historical links with Admiral Togo in Portsmouth, visited Southsea Coastal Scheme

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to learn about the defences being put in place, had a hovercraft experience and met Charles Dickens' great grandson, visited the Central Library to see the Conan Doyle Collection and have a talk from the Archivists and visited Portsmouth Language School to re-establish sending their young people for language courses. They also met with the Chair and Deputy Chair of Governors at Mayfield School to re-ignite the links that had been enjoyed pre-Covid.

- 3.20. **Activity with the City of Sylhet:** Economic Regeneration hosted a visit on 22 May 2024 for the Commercial Counsellor, Bangladesh High Commissioner to understand how we engage and support businesses particularly with regard to exporting; and Solent Freeport opportunities at the Port / Portico and Dunsbury Park.
- 3.21. **Activity with the City of Zhanjiang:** The Lord Mayor received a visit from the Vice-Chancellor of Lingnan University in May 2024 which is the main university of Zhanjiang in China
- 3.22. **Activity with the City of Zhuhai:** A delegation from Zhuhai visited Portsmouth for the Clipper event in September 2023, Mr. Lin Rituan, Deputy Secretary-General of Zhuhai Municipal People's Government, Ms. Tong Man, Director of Zhuhai Foreign Affairs Office, Ms. Cao Fengyun, Director of Zhuhai Overseas Chinese Affairs Bureau, Mr. Lin Xiaojun, Deputy Director of Zhuhai Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television, Tourism and Sports and Ms. Zhang Wenya, Section Chief Zhuhai Foreign Affairs Office. The delegation met with the Lord Mayor, Cllr Tom Coles and Cllr Vernon-Jackson before the start of the race at Gunwharf Quays.
- 3.23. An annual online greeting was held just before Christmas by the Lord Mayor and brought together representatives from Halifax, the three Portsmouths in the US, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Virginia, Caen, Duisburg and the Falkland Islands. In addition, the Chair of the ECTC and a representative from the University of Portsmouth's International office were invited along with Officers and Members at PCC.

**4. Outline Future Activity**

- 4.1. The next section of this report contains a summary of the scheduled activities which are due to occur between the City of Portsmouth and our twin and sister cities throughout the remainder of 2024-25. It should be noted that some planned activities are still being worked up or are dependent on securing external funding.
- 4.2. **Planned Activity with the City of Caen:** A further group of runners from Caen will visit Portsmouth to participate in the Great South Run in October 2024. They will be

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hosted in the city with support from the European Cities Twinning Committee members.

- 4.3. 2025 will be Caen's 1000<sup>th</sup> anniversary and it is hoped that Portsmouth can contribute to their celebrations in some way. Further to the meeting held with Visit Portsmouth, opportunities are to be followed up with regards visiting Portsmouth for Christmas shopping, the Victorious Festival and cycling.
- 4.4. The Council is continuing to develop more links with schools in Portsmouth via the newly affirmed connection with key teachers from the Solent Languages Hub with those in Caen and we are aiming to support representatives from Portsmouth schools to attend the International Young Persons D-Day ceremony in June 2025.
- 4.5. Economic Development has been working with Lesley Coutts (independent consultant in Normandy) on a pilot project to enable local producers to sell their products in a supermarket, close to Caen. If this is successful, the project will be expanded to more branches of the supermarket chain which is prolific across Normandy and Brittany.
- 4.6. **Planned Activity with the City of Duisburg:** 2025 will mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning of Duisburg and Portsmouth. A variety of commemorations are being looked at including: an exhibition at the City Museum 'From Enemy to Friendship', flowerbed to highlight the anniversary, Book exchange, an online series of lectures from the Duisburg Freunde, Dragonboat race/water sports. External funding is being sought by both Portsmouth and Duisburg to support these activities.
- 4.7. The Council again hopes to initiate links with schools via the Solent Languages Hub and support the City of Portsmouth College link with the Sophie-School Berufskolleg although we appreciate the number of schools learning German is very small.
- 4.8. Assistance has been given to a youth football team in Duisburg, who are making tentative plans to visit Portsmouth. Enquiries have been made to assist with accommodation, visiting Portsmouth Football Club and playing against a local team.
- 4.9. The Economic Development team are continuing their regular dialogue with partners in Duisburg, exploring commercial opportunities for small and medium size businesses.
- 4.10. **Planned Activity with the City of Halifax:** Monthly virtual meetings held with partners in Halifax exploring commercial opportunities and business events planning, with support from Maritime UK Solent.

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- 4.11. A second virtual business event is scheduled for 19 November 2024, focussing on "Exploring International Maritime Collaboration: greening your marine operations"
- 4.12. **Planned Activity with the City of Maizuru:** Maizuru has recently been sent a series of paintings by pupils from Mayfield school which will be exhibited in their Children's World Art Exhibition in October 2024. This is the first project to refresh the relationship between the school and Maizuru which fell into abeyance during the pandemic.
- 4.13. In 2025, Maizuru are keen to arrange for some of their young people to restart annual visits to Portsmouth, have English lessons at the Language College and meet with contemporaries from Mayfield School.
- 4.14. **Planned activity with the City of Sylhet:** Economic Development are working with partners in Sylhet to focus on highlighting the opportunities we have here for growing trade, investment and tourism.

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

**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
International Relationship strategy	<a href="https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/International-Relationship-Strategy-Report.pdf">International Relationship Strategy Report.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)</a>