

**Title of meeting:** Cabinet and Council

**Date of meeting:** 3 and 7 July 2015

**Subject:** Friendship Agreement with Zhuhai

**Report by:** Michael Lawther, City Solicitor

**Wards affected:** All

**Key decision:** No

**Full Council decision:** Yes

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**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1. To seek the Cabinet's views on the friendship agreement entered into between Portsmouth (1) and Zhuhai (2) on 25 March 2014.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1. Cabinet ask Council to approve the friendship agreement with Zhuhai.

**3. Background**

- 3.1. On 25 March 2014 the City of Portsmouth entered into an agreement with the City of Zhuhai that a relationship of friendship would be established.
- 3.2. At Full Council on 10 February 2015, a notice of motion proposed that the Council ratify the friendship agreement signed by Cllr Lynne Stagg, the then Lord Mayor, between the city of Portsmouth and the Chinese city of Zhuhai, Guangdong Province.
- 3.3. It was also proposed that the Council records its appreciation of the work of the Chinese community of Portsmouth in developing the friendship of the two cities to the benefit of the people of both.
- 3.4. Following the notice of motion, it was resolved by Council that this matter be referred to Cabinet for full discussion.
- 3.5. The agreement for Zhuhai provides that:
- 3.5.1. The two sides will carry out, in accordance with the principles of equality and mutual benefit, exchanges and co-operation between the two cities in various forms in the fields of economy, trade, science and technology, education, culture, tourism etc. to promote common prosperity and development.

- 3.5.2. The city leaders and relevant departments of the two sides shall maintain regular contact, promote exchange visits and further co-operation, to facilitate consultations on the exchanges and co-operation as well as matters of common concern.
- 3.5.3. The two sides shall promote project co-operation between social organisations and businesses to facilitate tangible results.
- 3.5.4. The two sides are responsible for their own expenses incurred in the activities of exchanges and co-operation, unless it is agreed

3.6. Existing relationships

- 3.6.1. Currently, Portsmouth benefits from relationships with the following cities:

Twin cities:

Caen (France);  
Duisburg (Germany);  
Haifa (Israel)

Sister cities:

Maizuru (Japan);  
Portsmouth (Virginia, USA);  
Sydney (Australia)

Friendship cities:

Lakewood (Colorado, USA);  
Portsmouth (New Hampshire, USA);  
Zha Lai Te Qi (China).

- 3.6.2. There are now over 2000 friendship links between the UK and other countries including France, Germany, China, the USA, Africa, the Caribbean and India.
- 3.6.3. Friendship agreements are not binding on either party but seek to encourage mutual understanding and co-operation for the benefit of all concerned. The relationships do not have fixed objectives but seek to foster co-operation, in a flexible manner, both at the level of large-scale funded business projects and community development.

**4. Reasons for recommendations**

Set out in paragraph 5 below are the benefits and objectives which can be achieved through friendship agreements. The agreement with Zhuhai clearly provides such benefits and should therefore be endorsed by the Cabinet.

**5. Existing and ongoing benefits**

5.1. Any activities which promote understanding between the nation states and their constituent parts must be of overall benefit. Portsmouth's existing friendship links have already increased understanding between partners, with useful exchanges of ideas, skills and cultural understanding taking place together with business development in existing and new markets.

5.1.1. *Tourism markets*

Friendship Agreements promote existing tourism and open up new opportunities thereby having a direct positive effect on the local economy via visitor market growth.

5.1.2. *Unlocking funding for business*

Friendship arrangements provide a potential source of funding partners to progress working projects and develop opportunities for growth in new business markets.

5.1.3. *Increasing international awareness for economic growth*

As the Council is increasingly required to operate in an interconnected and interdependent world, friendship links increase our awareness of European and international standards and enable authorities to look outside traditional structures for opportunities for economic growth.

5.1.4. *Improving service delivery and problem solving*

Overseas links enable the Council to learn from best practice by improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of our services. It enables Portsmouth to compare both the approach and resolution to problems and fosters ongoing learning between staff.

5.1.5. *Staff development*

Resolving issues in a different environment produces a unique training opportunity for all levels of staff in different departments across both front line services and support staff. It also helps officers work more effectively with ethnically diverse constituents within their own local context.

5.1.6. *Member development*

International relationships offer personal development opportunities to members as they gain insights from their international counterparts.

5.1.7. *Promoting tolerance*

Local authority friendship agreements bring different countries and cultures together promoting mutual respect and understanding, both on an international and local community level.

**5.1.8. *Social cohesion***

Portsmouth is a multi-cultural community. International friendships can be used to increase involvement of ethnic minorities, young people and other disadvantaged groups who would not always be involved in the work of their local council.

**5.1.9. *Youth experience***

Young people can gain vital practical skills from their involvement in exchange programs and increase their experience and preparation for the workplace. They also grow in self-esteem as they explore social and political issues outside their immediate environment.

**5.1.10. *Community well-being***

Sharing policy on difficult issues such as unemployment and drug and alcohol addiction has the potential to bring breakthrough at a local level.

**5.1.11. *Education***

Friendship agreements bring a real-life context for learning, both formally and informally and activities can be developed in conjunction with the National Curriculum framework.

**5.1.12. *Global difference***

Friendship Agreements can have a direct impact on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Post-2015 Development Agenda (scheduled to be adopted September 2015) in areas of public health and education.

**6. Equality impact assessment (EIA)**

6.1. Please refer to comments within section 5 of this report.

**7. Legal Implications**

7.1. The City Solicitor's comments are incorporated within this report.

**8. Finance Comments**

8.1. Not applicable.

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Signed by: City Solicitor

**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>