



Coventry City Council

# 4.2

## Public report

### **REPORT BACK ON CONFERENCE/SEMINAR**

**REPORT TO:** Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee  
**REPORT OF:** Councillor Ken Taylor  
**TITLE:** Visit to China 2006  
**DATE:** 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2006  
**VENUE:** Jinan, Shandong Province, China

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#### **1. Recommendation**

The Scrutiny Board is recommended to note the report on, and the positive outcomes of the Leader's visit to Jinan, China 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October 2006.

#### **2. Background**

The delegation from Coventry was invited to Jinan by the Mayor of Jinan to underline the Council's support to the ongoing business relations between Jinan and Coventry. It was agreed during the last civic visit to Jinan in a Memorandum of Understanding that Coventry and Jinan would pay biennial visits to each other and the visit is part of this understanding.

The China Trade Liaison Office (CTLO) within Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce organises regular Trade Missions to China and works very closely with the Jinan Municipal Government. In recognition of the great importance that Chinese culture attaches to official government representation, the Chamber of Commerce strongly recommended a delegation from Coventry City Council visit Jinan, in order to raise the profile of the Chamber's work and to show Coventry City Council's ongoing commitment to the cooperation in this area.

While the main purpose of the visit was to represent Coventry and the importance of the twin city link, the visit also allowed the delegation to learn about the recent urban redevelopment of Jinan.

#### **3. Cost of attending**

The total costs for the Leader, John McGuigan and Phil McGrahan visiting Jinan are as follows:

Flights	£6,237.00
Insurance	£89.10
Expenses	£75.00
Parking at Birmingham Airport	£43.40
Gifts	£44.55

**Total** **£6,489.05**

All of the above costs have been covered by the International Budget. Accommodation, hospitality and transport in Jinan was covered by Jinan City Administration.

#### **4. Benefits**

##### Memorandum of Friendship

As mentioned above, Coventry City Council agreed in 2002 to visit Jinan every two years and this visit allowed the Leader to visit Jinan and to promote the twinning link between the two cities.

##### Local Authority

Agreement was reached on areas of interest for both short and long term co-operation between Coventry and Jinan including school exchanges and a potential project along with Jinan's twin city of Rennes in France, one of Coventry's partners in the European city network the Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities.

##### Business Link

The visit also emphasised Coventry's commitment to the relationship between the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce's China Trade Liaison Office (CTLO) and Jinan Municipal Government. Although the visit did not coincide with a delegation from the CTLO, it did support the strategic goals of the Chamber by demonstrating Coventry City Council's interest in maintaining the link.

##### Urban Development

Discussions were held with Mr Lu Jie, Vice Director of the Jinan Municipal Bureau of Urban Planning. This meeting allowed the delegates to gain a useful insight into Chinese urban development and how greatly it differs from that in the UK.

Discussions took place exploring a number of common issues. Beijing will be hosting the Olympics in 2008 and the delegation were interested to learn how Jinan were planning to benefit from this as Coventry will similarly be looking to benefit from the London Olympics in 2012. Mr Lu explained that Jinan will not be hosting any specific events and that they had not bid to act as a host city for training camps for national teams. He did however state that Jinan was home to the Chinese national swimming team and expected them to train in the city. Tsing Tao, a coastal city in Shandong province, will host all water-based sports and Jinan as provincial capital expects the majority of its benefit to come from tourism to the city.

A number of large-scale developments in Jinan were discussed during the meeting including a new City Hall and sports facilities which will be constructed in time to host the national Chinese Olympics. The delegation was also given tours of a new conference venue and the new university site for all of Jinan's universities.

These visits led to questions regarding planning and the planning process in particular. For larger projects the process takes between two and three years on average, with smaller more specific projects taking six months. Mr Lu explained that on average it takes one year for one building to be approved and constructed.

A further difference between the UK and China was that there is little, if any consultation with the public on large-scale projects. As the government own the majority of the land there is not an

