



REPORT BACK ON CONFERENCE/SEMINAR

REPORT TO: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
REPORT OF: Lord Mayor, Councillor Andy Matchet
TITLE: Civic Visit to Kiel, Germany for 126th Kieler Woche
DATE: 20th – 23rd June 2008
VENUE: Kiel, Germany

1. Recommendation

1.1 The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to note the report of the Lord Mayor's civic visit to Kiel and the associated Kieler Woche (Kiel Week) celebrations and the outcomes of the visit.

2. Background

2.1 The purpose of the visit was for the Lord Mayor, Councillor Andy Matchet to attend and take part in a programme of opening events hosted by Kiel City Council to mark the formal opening of Kieler Woche. This is an annual invitation because Kiel is a twin city of Coventry.

2.2 The Coventry delegation was also invited to attend the International City Forum entitled 'Climate Change and adjustment strategies of the cities in the regions of the North and Baltic Seas'.

2.3 The visit and participation in the forum allows for exchange of information and best practice in the fields of culture and business, with practitioners from 14 European cities and other institutions. The conference is a learning opportunity and this year had a focus on climate change and adjustment strategies.

2.4 The Lord Mayor's attendance provided an opportunity to raise the profile and represent the City Council and Coventry at a European and International level.

2.5 Kieler Woche is the biggest summer festival in northern Europe and the largest sailing sports event in the world. This year there was a full ten-day programme with over 1,000 events for more than 3.5 million visitors from all over the world. Now in its 126th year, the sailing regatta continues to grow. Over 6,000 competitors, from over 50 countries, will participate in the sailing classes. The competitors are based at Schliksee, the Olympic sailing village.

- 2.6 The city centre also plays host to numerous events such as the International City Forum, Kiel Week opening ceremony and the International market. The vibrant market is held in and around the main square, offers stall, food and music from all over the world.
- 2.7 A very special event is the Kieler Woche opening ceremony which takes place in the Town Hall Square on the Saturday. During the traditional Holstenbummel that follows, the whole city centre becomes a party zone, with lots of music, international food specialities, there is something for everyone.
- 2.8 Jane Barlow, Civic Business Manager, who has responsibility for maintaining international twinning links, accompanied the Lord Mayor on the visit.

3. Cost of attending

3.1 The costs for attending were as follows:

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| Flights Birmingham to Hamburg for LM and JEB: | £ 377.19 |
| Subsistence: | £ 45.89 |
| Total | £ 423.08 |

3.2 Costs were covered by the Lord Mayor's Hospitality Budget. The costs of accommodation and meals were funded by the City of Kiel.

4. Benefits

- 4.1 Through the Lord Mayor's visit, Coventry and Kiel were able to reinforce the twinning links and noted that Kiel was the first city to respond to the Coventry Cross of Nails concept.
- 4.2 The trip provided an opportunity to maintain relations with Kiel and to continue to promote peace and reconciliation in a modern world.
- 4.3 There were a range of civic events at which the Lord Mayor was an important guest amongst Kiel's other twin cities. The Lord Mayor attended many civic functions over the weekend particularly the international event on the first evening. This was hosted by the Stadtpräsidentin (City President) of Kiel, Ms Cathy Keitzer. The Lord Mayor sent greetings from the city of Coventry to the citizens of Kiel via the Visitor's Book.



4.4 The most significant contact made was between the Lord Mayor and Angela Merkel, German Chancellor, who was in Kiel to officially open Kieler Woche. Ms Merkel's visit generated significant publicity in Kiel, both TV and the local newspaper (Kieler Nachrichten), which included photographs with the Lord Mayor.



4.5 At the reception following the Chancellor's opening ceremony, the Lord Mayor discussed at length with Befehlshaber der Flotte (Chief of the German Fleet), Hans-Joachim Stricker, the common problems of securing proper funding for the UK and German navies; Hans-Joachim was fresh back from a naval visit to Plymouth.

4.6 Peter Schaede, who was the official interpreter for our delegation, hosted Coventry throughout the visit. He imparted extensive economic, cultural, historic and local knowledge about Kiel which can be disseminated for use by officers and organisations undertaking future trips to Kiel.



4.7 Similarly, Coventry were assigned Councillor Erika Diehr, a member of Kiel City Council. There were several beneficial discussions about the political and executive arrangements in Kiel and Coventry. Further introductions were made to Christian Diehr, Erica's son, who works directly for the German Chancellor's office, Angela Merkel, with a responsibility for European relations. There was information exchange about European Policy with Christian, who had had the opportunity to work in the UK Government Cabinet Office in 2005 through a German/UK civil servant exchange programme.

4.8 The key presentations at the International City Forum were given by Professor Dietmar Dommenges on climate change and its effects and Professor Dr Gernot Klepper on the economic effects of such climate change.

4.9 Timo Erlenbusch, a local historian from Kiel, was introduced by Kiel's City Council International Office. Timo was seeking permission to visit Coventry to undertake some research into the Coventry-Kiel twinning link for reproduction in his book. Arrangements will be made for Timo to visit later in the year, after Coventry Archives has re-opened. Timo's visit will be financed by the City of Kiel.

4.10 Links were maintained with the British-German Society, through close personal contact with Dr Lisa Homrich.

List of background papers

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Papers open to public inspection

| Description of paper: | Location |
|------------------------------|---|
| Civic Visit to Kiel Papers | Lord Mayor's Office, Room 36, Council House |

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| Approved by Cabinet on: | 3 rd June 2008 |
| Report: | Authority for Attendance at Conferences etc. |