



Coventry City Council

6

Public report

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

**REPORT TO:** Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee  
**REPORT OF:** Lord Mayor, Councillor Jack Harrison MBE. JP  
**TITLE:** Civic Visit to Kiel, Germany for 127<sup>th</sup> Kieler Woche  
**DATE:** 19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2009  
**VENUE:** Kiel, Germany

---

### **1. Recommendation**

1.1 The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to endorse 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 my visit, as the Lord Mayor of the City of Coventry, was 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 and participate in the International City Forum entitled 'Energy Efficient Cities in Europe – Strategies and Successful Examples'.
- 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 energy efficiency strategies and demonstrating successful examples.
- 2.4 My 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 127<sup>th</sup> 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 Colin Swann, Senior Civic Administrative Officer, who assists the Civic Business Manager in carrying out her responsibilities 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:

Flights Birmingham to Hamburg for LM and CS:	£ 428.10
Subsistence:	£ 32.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 460.68</b>

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

**4. Benefits**

- 4.1 Through my visit as Lord Mayor, Coventry and Kiel were able to reinforce its twinning links. It should be 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 I, as the Lord Mayor, was an important guest amongst Kiel's other twin cities. I 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 At the International City Forum and the Reception after the official opening of Kieler Woche, our delegation was introduced to the new Oberbugermist (Mayor) of Kiel, Mr. Torsten Albig, who had only four days earlier taken over from the previous Mayor, Angelika Volquartz. Mr Albig confirmed that he was looking forward to continuing the strong twinning links with Coventry during his six year term of office, and is hoping to visit us in Coventry very soon.



4.5 We also made contact with staff of the International Relations Office in Kiel, and spoke particularly to John Young, a young man from Washington DC, USA, who was participating on an exchange scheme with Kiel City Council to advance his knowledge of government in Europe.

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 were informal discussions about European Policy with Christian, who had had the opportunity to work in the UK Government's Cabinet Office in 2005 through a German/UK civil servant exchange programme.

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

4.9 In preparation for our participation at the International City Forum, the Sustainability and Campaigns Manager in the City Council's City Services Directorate had produced written answers to questions previously circulated to each local authority represented at the City Forum. These related to energy efficiency issues affecting our respective authorities. We were asked to identify areas which we in Coventry would identify as needing particular attention in terms of greater energy efficiency; whether energy efficiency measures had successfully been implemented in Coventry in recent years; which measures would we recommend for other cities to follow and what areas we consider require further exchange of information.



These answers were prepared and submitted in advance so that they could be included, together with those of the other participating local authorities, in the literature issued in respect of the Forum.

At the Forum itself, each participant in turn, including Coventry, was asked to comment and elaborate on the answers given, adding any further information considered to be relevant. I

was able to amplify the points set out in our written answers and comment on the work undertaken with our 'partners' in terms of energy conservation and efficiency.

List of background papers

Proper Officer: Director of Customer & Workforce Services

Author: Councillor Jack Harrison MBE. JP

Tel Number: 024 7683 3100

Other contributors: Colin Swann, Senior Civic Administrative Officer, Lord Mayor's Office,

Tel. Number 024 7683 3048

(Any enquiries should be directed to the above)

Papers open to public inspection

**Description of paper:**                      **Location**

Civic Visit to Kiel Papers                      Lord Mayor's Office, Room 36, Council House

**Approved by the Cabinet Member (Climate Change, Housing and Sustainability) on:**

16<sup>th</sup> June, 2009

**Report:**                      Authority for Attendance at Conferences etc.