



REPORT BACK ON CONFERENCE/SEMINAR

REPORT TO: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee 4th January 2012
REPORT OF: Lord Mayor, Councillor Keiran Mulhall
TITLE: Civic Visit to Kiel, Germany for 129th Kieler Woche
DATE: 17th – 20st June 2011
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 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 'Is Local Democracy in Crisis?'.
- 2.3 The visit and participation in the Forum allows for exchange of information and best practice in the fields of culture business and best practice in local government, with practitioners from 14 European cities and other institutions. The conference is a learning opportunity and this year had a focus on promoting and safeguarding local democracy.
- 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 129th year, the sailing regatta continues to grow. Over 6,000 competitors, from over 50 countries, participated in the sailing classes. The competitors were based at Schliksee, the Olympic sailing village, which we also visited during our visit.

- 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 and offers stalls, 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, my PA, who assists the Civic Business Manager in carrying out her responsibilities for maintaining international twinning links, accompanied me on the visit.

3. Cost of attending

3.1 The costs for attending were as follows:

Flights Birmingham to Hamburg for LM and CS:	£ 582.70
Travel Insurance	£ 16.33
Total	£599.03

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 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. We were fortunate to be able to visit the Church of St Nikolai in Kiel where the Cross of Nails is on display.

4.2 The visit 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 regarded as an important guest amongst Kiel's other twin cities. I attended many civic functions over the weekend including the official reception to start the event on the first evening. This was hosted by the Stadtpräsidentin (City President) of Kiel, Ms Cathy Keitzer. I sent greetings from the City of Coventry to the Citizens of Kiel via the Visitor's Book.



4.4 During this event, I had the opportunity to have informal discussions with representatives of a number of the delegations present.

4.5 At the official dinner, held at the conclusion of the reception, we shared a table with representatives from the City of Gdynia, Poland.

4.6 At the official opening ceremony of Kieler Woche, our delegation was introduced to the Oberbürgermeister (Mayor) of Kiel, Mr. Torsten Albig. Mr Albig has recently commenced the third of his six year term of office.

- 4.7 During my visit to Kiel, students from a school in Kiel presented me with a piece of fabric they had designed and printed for inclusion in the patchwork cloak to be worn by Lady Godiva in the 'Godiva Awakes 2012' celebrations to commemorate Coventry's selection as a venue for events in the 2012 London Olympic Games,
- 4.8 Peter Schaede, was the official interpreter for our delegation and 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.

Similarly, our delegation was 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 the opportunity to work in the UK Government's Cabinet Office in 2005 through a German/UK civil servant exchange programme.



- 4.9 Links were maintained with the British-German Society, through close personal contact with Dr Lisa Homrich.
- 4.10 In preparation for our participation at the International City Forum, Colin Swann had prepared written answers to questions relative to the topic under discussion by the Forum, 'Is Local Democracy in Crisis?' which had been previously circulated to each local authority represented at the City Forum. Colin had been assisted by Matthew Box, Deputy Electoral Services Manager, and Girdip Paddan/Martyn Harris, Governance Services, Customer and Workforce Services Directorate.

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. The City Council's written responses included an explanation of the situation regarding turnout trends at local elections in the City and the City Council's involvement in identifying ways to promote local democracy, in consultation with local partners and organisations.

Colin and I made a presentation to the Forum, using the written submission to elaborate on the answers given, and to amplify the points set out in our written answers.

List of background papers

Proper Officer: Director of Customer & Workforce Services

Author: Councillor Mulhall, Lord Mayor of the City of Coventry

Tel Number: 024 7683 3100

Other contributors: Colin Swann, Personal Assistant to the Lord Mayor,
Customer and Workforce Services Directorate

Tel. Number: 024 7683 3048

(Any enquiries should be directed to the above)

Papers open to public inspection

Description of paper:

Civic Visit to Kiel Papers

Location:

Lord Mayor's Office, Room 36, Council House

Approved by: Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) 16th June, 2010

Report: Authority for Attendance at Conferences etc.