



Coventry City Council

Public report

REPORT BACK ON CONFERENCE/SEMINAR

REPORT TO: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
REPORT OF: Lord Mayor, Cllr Hazel Noonan
TITLE: Civic Visit to Kiel, Germany for 132nd Kieler Woche
DATE: 20th – 23rd June 2014
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.

2. Background

2.1 As Lord Mayor of the City of Coventry, I was invited to attend and take part in a programme of events hosted by Kiel City Council to mark the formal opening of Kieler Woche. Kiel is a twin city of Coventry and as such we receive an invitation to this event each year.

2.2 Kieler Woche is the largest summer festival in northern Europe and the largest sailing sports event in the World. This year the event was held from 21st – 29th June 2014 and comprised both sailing and cultural events, the majority of which are free of charge.

2.3 The city centre plays host to numerous events such as the International City Forum, Kiel Week Opening Ceremony and the International market. Market stalls are placed in and around the main square and offer food, gifts and music from all over the world.

2.4 The largest event attended was the Kieler Woche Opening Ceremony which takes place in the Town Hall Square on the first Saturday. The event this year was broadcast live from the Town Hall Square on the local TV station and was attended by a large crowd.

2.5 As part of the proceedings, the Coventry delegation was invited to attend and participate in the International City Forum on youth unemployment. A paper was prepared and presented by the Economy and Jobs Manager, Rebecca Young from the Place Directorate.

2.6 Participation in the Forum fosters an exchange of information and best practice with 16 of Kiel's twin and partner cities. Over 100 people were in attendance and the excellent work

that is undertaken by the City Council and its partners was highlighted. Following the Forum meeting, there was considerable interest from many of the delegates in what Coventry is doing to tackle youth unemployment. A number of cities were keen to explore opportunities for further dialogue in the future.

- 2.7 Being present at this event gave me the opportunity to raise the profile and represent the City Council and Coventry at a European and International level. I met a number of senior representatives from Kiel and other cities and spoke about the importance of our twinning links as well as promoting the City more generally.
- 2.8 It is interesting to note that a large proportion of the cost of Kiel Week is borne by a number of very generous sponsors including Audi and several other large companies.
- 2.9 The Lord Mayor's Consort and the City Council's Economy and Jobs Manager accompanied me on the visit.

3. Cost of attending

	Costs Approved by Cabinet/Cabinet Member	Total of Actual Costs
Conference Fees	N/A	N/A
Flights [Lord Mayor and officer only]	£652.00	£715.98
Additional Travel Expenses	£0	£49.01
Accommodation	£0	£0
Subsistence	£200	£12.10
Total	£852.00	£777.09

4. Benefits

- 4.1 During my visit as Lord Mayor, I met with a number of senior politicians and officers from Kiel City Council and their other partners' cities such as Brest (France) and to continue to promote peace and reconciliation in a modern world. Kiel was the first city to respond to the Coventry Cross of Nails concept and we were very pleased to be able to visit the Church of St Nikolai in Kiel where the Cross of Nails is on display and to meet the Priest of the Church.
- 4.2 As the Lord Mayor of Coventry, I was regarded as an honoured guest at the various civic functions attended over the weekend. The first official reception to start the event on the first evening involved all of the twin and partner cities. Civic gifts were exchanged between ourselves and Kiel. This event was hosted by Mr Hans-Werner Tovar, Stadtpresident of Kiel. I wrote a message of greetings from the Citizens of the City of Coventry to the Citizens of Kiel via the Visitors' Book.
- 4.3 At the official dinner, held at the end of the reception, we sat with invited guests including the Turkish Ambassador for Germany and Dr Lisa Homrich of the British-German Society and Councillor Erika Diehr, a member of Kiel City Council.

4.4 Karen Thomsen was the official interpreter for our delegation and accompanied us throughout the visit. Karen lives and works in Kiel and has wide-ranging knowledge of the area and was able to impart local information about many aspects of the region. Karen is a teacher in a local vocational college. She is particularly keen to promote cultural exchanges between Coventry and Kiel. The City Council's Economy and Jobs Manager, Rebecca Young who accompanied me had several discussions with her about how the City Council can use its influence to support her. For example by making contact with Coventry schools who may be interested in exchanges for their students and exploring opportunities for young people working for Kiel and Coventry companies to have exchange opportunities.

4.5 As preparation for the International City Forum a number questions had been circulated in advance to each local authority represented at the City Forum relevant to the topic to be discussed on youth unemployment. A response to these questions was returned to Kiel by Coventry City Council in advance of the City Forum, thus enabling our response and those of other local authorities represented being included in the literature circulated at the Forum.

4.6 I was keen for Coventry to promote to other cities the approach we take to dealing with youth unemployment and some of the successful initiatives, such as the City Centre Job Shop. I therefore asked my office to make contact with the organisers to offer that Coventry would formally present at the Forum. That invitation was accepted and the presentation was delivered by the Economy and Jobs Manager, who accompanied me on the visit.

5. Other Issues

One of the issues arising from the visit was about ensuring active twinning links between the two cities, which would in particular benefit the young people of both Coventry and Kiel. For example, facilitating exchange experiences for school aged young people as well as looking at developing an exchange experience for young people who are in work / on apprenticeships.

List of background papers

Proper Officer: Executive Director, Resources

Author: Cllr Hazel Noonan

Tel Number: 024 76831121

(Any enquiries should be directed to the above)

Other contributors: Rebecca Young
024 76833776

(all enquiries should be directed to the above)

Papers open to public inspection

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