



Coventry City Council

**Public report**

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

**REPORT TO:** Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee **6<sup>th</sup> September 2017**  
**REPORT OF:** Lord Mayor, Councillor Tony Skipper  
**TITLE:** Civic Visit to Kiel, Germany for 135th Kieler Woche  
**DATE:** June 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> 2017  
**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 As part of the proceedings, the Coventry delegation was invited to attend and participate in the International City Forum entitled "Equal Opportunities and Gender Policy in a changing society". A paper was prepared and presented by Helen Shankster, Insight Manager (Engagement), Corporate Research, Information and Consultation Team.
- 2.3 Participation in the Forum fosters an exchange of information and best practice with 11 of Kiel's twin and partner cities, therefore offering a large cross-section of viewpoints to be aired.
- 2.4 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. The paper highlighted the work being undertaken in Coventry. It is evident from talking to the other delegates that there was interest in how Coventry is addressing gender inequalities – see Section 4 below.
- 2.5 Kieler Woche is the largest summer festival in northern Europe and the largest sailing sports event in the world and comprises both sailing and cultural events, the majority of which are free of charge.
- 2.6 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.

- 2.7 The largest event attended was the Kieler Woche Opening Ceremony which takes place in the Town Hall Square on the first Saturday. As usual the event was broadcast live from the Town Hall Square on the local TV station and was attended by a large crowd.
- 2.8 To mark this year's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning link there was also a band exchange between Coventry and Kiel. A band named 'Signs of Fire' were selected from a competition in Coventry in readiness for the Godiva Festival performed during Kieler Woche. Similarly a band from Kiel 'Gordon Shumway' performed on the main stage on Saturday afternoon at the Godiva Festival. The band members were accompanied by members of Kieler Jugendring.

Kieler Jugendring is a working group of youth associations active in Kiel and the surrounding area, which represents the interests and rights of children and young people. They organise, coordinate and promote voluntary youth work in Kiel and projects like Intercultural Youth exchange. They assisted with hosting Signs of Fire during our visit.

- 2.9 Other activities are also planned later in the year to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning link:
- Civic delegation of 3 plan to visit Kiel 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> September 2017 for a special meeting of Kiel City Council although details are yet to be finalised and approved. Coventry Corps of Drums will also be performing during the weekend.
  - An inward delegation from Kiel 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> November to coincide with Remembrance Sunday and the Lord Mayor's Annual Peace Lecture.

### 3. Cost of attending

3.1 The costs for attending were as follows:

	Costs Approved by Cabinet/Cabinet Member	Total of Actual Costs
Conference Fees	Nil	Nil
Return Flights for Lord Mayor and Insight Manager	£245,96	£302.46* *Additional costs for luggage allowance
Additional Travel Expenses	Nil	Nil
Accommodation	Nil	Nil
Subsistence	Nil	Nil

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

### 4. Outcomes from the International City Forum

Discussions at the conference highlighted interest in how Coventry is addressing gender inequalities in two specific areas:

- 4.1 **Reducing the gender pay gap** by encouraging girls to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects and take up jobs in the highly paid automotive/engineering sectors. Locally, the city has seen partnerships with universities to encourage this. For instance, Coventry University's partnership / outreach work gives pupils in years 10-13 the opportunity to take part in interactive activities and workshops related to careers in construction, architecture and buildings. Coventry's WMG Academy for Young Engineers (Coventry), a 14-19 school sponsored by the University of Warwick, where students can study Level 2 and Level 3 technical qualification in engineering and digital media. It was agreed to share further information about the impact and success of such programmes.
- 4.2 **Specialist support and advice for women and girls experiencing violence and the impact of Council budget cuts on these.** Coventry's submission had listed a range of services that are provided within the city, including some that target specific demographic groups (e.g. sexual identity or ethnicity) or who had experienced particular forms of violence (e.g. rape or female genital mutilation). In response it was emphasised that such services are commissioned and overseen through partnerships such as the Domestic Violence Partnership. It was also demonstrated that where services are reduced an equality impact analysis is undertaken and mitigations identified to address any negative impacts that disproportionately affect individuals of a specific gender.
- 4.3 The discussions also highlighted areas of practice that should be further explored by the Council to consider whether it would be helpful for Coventry to adopt these:
- 4.3.1 A number of cities have signed up to the European Charter for the Equality of Women and Men in Local Life [http://www.ccre.org/docs/charte\\_egalite\\_en.pdf](http://www.ccre.org/docs/charte_egalite_en.pdf). In Vaasa (Finland), adoption of these principles and an equality action plan has resulted in a greater representation of females in political life, so that in the recent municipality elections 53% of candidates were female, compared to 40% across Finland as a whole. In Brest (France), a 'gender sensitivity budget' has been developed to assess how public money is distributed between males and females and to prompt re-allocation of resources to address any imbalances. It has also developed gender equality website to encourage good practice and joint action across partnerships [http://www.ccre.org/docs/charte\\_egalite\\_en.pdf](http://www.ccre.org/docs/charte_egalite_en.pdf)
- 4.3.2 Hatay (Turkey) has created a localised version the World Economic Forum Gender Inequality Index to understand where improvements are needed in terms of health, employment, education and participation in politics - <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/rankings>. The UK ranks as 20 / 144 countries and consideration could be given to recreating an index for Coventry.

Whilst the conference was enlightening, it was surprising that all of the focus was upon inequalities that affect females and excluded impacts on males, which Coventry had included in its submission. There was also a very strong emphasis on violence against women and a concern that this is 'spiralling'. It will be helpful to investigate if there is evidence to show whether this is the case in Coventry.

## 5. Other points to note

The Kiel Council had clearly invested significant resources into the three day event and a number of very senior politicians and officers were involved throughout. It is therefore important to feedback concerns that were expressed:

