

## **MATTERS FOR NOTING**

### **CABINET – 12 JANUARY 2012**

#### **MINUTE 259 – REPORT ON VISIT TO CHINA – SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2011**

A report by the Acting Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning outlined the activities undertaken during the visit to China in September/October 2011. It also identified further actions to be taken to build upon the contacts made and the opportunities that existed now and in the future.

The Cabinet was informed that the Council had been developing Sister City arrangements with Taicang since 2008 and it had been requested by the Mayor of Taicang that the two areas now formally sign an agreement for co-operation.

The Leader of the Council had also been invited to the Suzhou Mayoral Conference to discuss Economic Development and Regeneration issues that were faced globally. Unfortunately, due to urgent Council issues, the Leader had been unable to attend and the Deputy Leader of the Council had attended on his behalf.

A visit to JiangYin had also been organised to meet with the Partner's of Peel Holdings in the development of the International Trade Centre and to identify areas of close working between Wirral and JiangYin. It had also been arranged that presentations would be delivered to Chamber of Commerce members in Suzhou and Taicang to promote the International Trade Centre. Representatives of Peel Holdings had accompanied Council representatives on the visit.

The delegation had arrived in China on Sunday, 25 September 2011 and had departed for the UK on Thursday, 6 October 2011. The itinerary was set out in the report for the Cabinet's information. It was reported that the visit had been a success, in terms of further developing economic links within China and promoting the International Trade Centre proposals.

The signing of the Sister City Agreement with Taicang had also been a further step in developing economic ties between the two areas. A delegation from Taicang was now planning to visit Wirral in March/April 2012 to take forward actions agreed in the Sister City Agreement and Suzhou Government officials had outlined their proposals for a visit to Wirral later in the year.

Peel's partner in JiangYin had agreed to take forward the opportunities for further economic links between that area and Wirral and would act as the bridge between both areas.

The Head of UKTI (China) had visited Wirral in November 2011 and, as part of that visit, had toured the International Trade Centre in order that a more clear vision of the opportunity could be gained. Peel Holdings had continued to have private commercial discussions following the visit, both at home and abroad, with potential partners and end users and it was expected that there would be follow up visits to Wirral by various parties over the coming months. It was known that a major International Import Expo was to take place in Jiangsu Province at the end of March

2012 and government officials had invited representatives from Wirral to the event. Officers were considering the opportunities this event presented.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the Cabinet notes the details of the visit to China by the Deputy Leader of the Council and Officers and the signing of Sister City agreement with Taicang, Metropolitan area of Suzhou, Jiangsu Province; and**
- (2) the report be referred to Council for information.**