

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 12TH JANUARY 2012

SUBJECT:	REPORT ON VISIT TO CHINA– SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2011
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	ACTING DIRECTOR – REGENERATION, HOUSING AND PLANNING
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
KEY DECISION	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the activities undertaken during the visit to China in September/October 2011. It also identifies further actions to be taken to build upon the contacts made and the opportunities that exist now and in the future.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That 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.
- 2.2 That the report be referred to Council for information.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Visits to China are to be reported to subsequent Cabinet and Council meetings upon return.

4.0 BACKGROUND TO REPORT

- 4.1 The Council has been developing Sister City arrangements with Taicang since 2008 and it was requested by the Mayor of Taicang that the two areas now formally sign an agreement for co-operation.
- 4.2 The Leader of the Council was also invited to the Suzhou Mayoral Conference to discuss Economic Development and Regeneration issues that are faced globally. Unfortunately, due to urgent Council issues, the Leader of the Council was unable to attend and the Deputy Leader of the Council attended on his behalf.
- 4.3 A visit to JiangYin was also 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.

- 4.4 It was also arranged to deliver presentations to Chamber of Commerce members in Suzhou and Taicang to promote the International Trade Centre.
- 4.5 Representatives of Peel Holdings accompanied Council representatives on the trip.
- 4.6 The delegation arrived in China on Sunday 25th September and departed for the UK on Thursday 6th October.
- 4.7 **Sunday 25th October** – Arrived in Shanghai.
- 4.8 **Monday 26th October** – Collected by officials from Suzhou and travelled to Suzhou. Afternoon and evening meetings with Suzhou Government Foreign Affairs officials to discuss future developments.
- 4.9 **Tuesday 27th October** – Suzhou Mayoral conference and meetings with Government Officials. Discussion held between the Mayor of Suzhou and the Deputy Leader of Wirral. Visits to Suzhou Industrial Park and Suzhou New District. Evening reception for Chinese National Day.
- 4.10 **Wednesday 28th October** – Visits to Suzhou, accompanied by Government Officials and presentation to Suzhou Chamber of Commerce regarding International Trade Centre. Travel to Taicang in the evening and meetings with Deputy Mayor and Government Officials.
- 4.11 **Thursday 29th September** – Presentation to Taicang Chamber of Commerce regarding International Trade Centre. Visits to Taicang Port and local businesses. The formal signing of the Sister City agreement took place between the Mayor of Taicang and the Deputy Leader of the Council. The agreement detailed that “ **The two sides agree to make concerted efforts, on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, to promote people to people friendly contacts and economic and trade interflow between the two cities, and actively carry out exchanges and cooperation in the fields of science and technology, culture, sports, health, education, etc**”.
- 4.12 **Friday 30th September** – Visit LOFT Industrial Design facilities in Taicang to see samples of potential goods that could be sold in the International Trade Centre. Depart Taicang for Shanghai. Evening meetings in Shanghai with potential Investors/Developers from Shanghai and Beijing and Head of UKTI (China).
- 4.13 **Saturday 1st October** – Shanghai. Met with Peel Holdings representatives in China.
- 4.14 **Sunday 2nd October** – Travel to JiangYin. Meetings with local businesses and banks. Presentation re International Trade Centre and discussions re opportunities for investment in Wirral.
- 4.15 **Monday 3rd October** – Further meetings with local businesses and other businesses from across China to discuss International Trade Centre and

investment opportunities. Met with JiangYin Government Officials to discuss potential areas for future cooperation.

4.16 **Tuesday 4th October** – Visited Port facilities at JiangYin. Met with further business people and visited potential sites for future presentations on International Trade Centre to large groups of Businesses from across South East China. Travelled back to Shanghai.

4.17 **Wednesday 5th October** – Shanghai.

4.18 **Thursday 6th October** – Depart for UK.

4.19 The trip was a success in terms of further developing economic links within China and promoting the International Trade Centre proposals.

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

4.21 Peels partner in JiangYin has agreed to take forward the opportunities for further economic links between that area and Wirral and will act as the bridge between both areas.

4.22 The Head of UKTI (China) visited Wirral in November and as part of that visit, a tour of the International Trade Centre was given in order that a more clear vision of the opportunity could be gained.

4.23 Peel Holdings have continued to have private commercial discussions following the visit, both at home and abroad, with potential partners and end users and it is expected there will be follow up visits to Wirral by various parties over the coming months.

4.24 A major International Import Expo is to take place in Jiangsu Province at the end of March 2012 and government officials have invited Wirral to the event. Officers are considering the opportunities this event presents.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 None identified in this report.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 None identified in this report.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Not applicable

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 None identified in this report

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 The Cost of the visit in September/October 2011 was £6,428.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None identified in this report.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 *None identified in this report.*

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required?

No

(b) If 'yes', has one been completed?

Yes (specify date) / No (*delete as applicable*)

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 *None identified.*

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 *None identified.*

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APPENDICES

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet- World EXPO	5.11.09
Cabinet- International Investment meeting	23.9.10
International Links (Delegated decision- Council Leader)	8.9.11
Cabinet – Report on Visit to China – October 2010	13. 1 11