

**CITY AND COUNTY OF CARDIFF
DINAS A SIR CAERDYDD**



CABINET : 8 DECEMBER 1999

**Portfolio : Corporate
Report for : Decision**

INTERNATIONAL LINKS

AGENDA ITEM 5

Background

1. Links with other Cities and Regions can provide a range of economic, social and cultural benefits, particularly for a city like Cardiff which is already a vibrant national capital which is committed to further development of this role and the profile of Cardiff as a true European capital and world class visitor destination. The Council has not reviewed its international links since local government reorganisation the current restructuring of the authority's organisational arrangements provides an opportunity to appraise the current situation.

The Issues

2. The links established by predecessor authorities were :

<i>China</i>	<i>Xiamen</i>
<i>France</i>	<i>Nantes</i>
<i>Germany</i>	<i>Stuttgart</i>
<i>Norway</i>	<i>Hordaland County</i>
<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>Lugansk</i>
<i>USA</i>	<i>Baltimore County</i>

3. The current status of these links is as follows :

- **Nantes** : Twinning arrangements have existed since 1963 and this is probably the most active of Cardiff's international partnerships. There is a current programme of inter-authority exchange at school level and on a number of professional themes including port redevelopment, city centre management and urban tourism. Many local community groups are involved at a social level.

- **Stuttgart** : Twinned with Cardiff since 1955, activities focus mainly on youth and community projects. Like Nantes, there is a twinning association for this link but neither is directly engaged in exchange programmes.

(Both Nantes and Stuttgart were invited to Cardiff during the European Council meeting, but only Nantes attended)

- **Lugansk** : Our cities have been twinned since 1959 but the economic crisis in the Ukraine has stalled the exchange programme which was successful in the 1980's. In recent years the link has been maintained on a low-key basis through more formal channels including the "Know-How Fund" project managed by CAVE International, setting up a small business development unit in Lugansk completed in 1996. Lugansk have had a new Mayor and Council since the spring of 1998 and have expressed the hope that the link with Cardiff can be re-established and developed.
- **Xiamen** : In 1983 Cardiff became the first UK local authority to twin with a Chinese city. The long-term aim of the link was to establish a toehold in China for Welsh industry but, despite the on-going involvement of both the Chamber of Commerce and University in the arrangement, there is no tangible evidence of success. There had been little contact between us since local government reorganisation until, on 5th October 1999, the day of the Prime Minister's arrival in China, a fax was received from Xiamen containing a number of specific proposals about future exchanges and indicating a wish to refresh the links.
- **Hordaland County** : Twinned with South Glamorgan since 1992, Hordaland County funds the annual Christmas tree at the Norwegian Church and there is a visit each December for the tree lighting ceremony. Leaders of both Councils have visited within the last two years and a number of educational, arts and youth sector visits have been made. The International Business Centre took a trade mission to Hordaland in October 1996 and hosted a similar trade mission in February 1997. Following local government reorganisation Hordaland expressed a wish to twin with both Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. Cardiff's preference for an exclusive agreement was communicated to them, and they have agreed to this as a way forward. At a meeting this weekend when Hordaland visited Cardiff the Hordaland delegation invited the Lord Mayor to sign a new agreement between Hordaland and Cardiff in February. As Bergen is to be the European City of Culture on 2000 the timing of this exchange is crucial in developing the Cardiff, Wales, bid.
- **Baltimore County** : Twinned with South Glamorgan County Council in 1991 and a moderate level of contact was established between Economic Development Departments in both authorities. The link is now inactive.
- Over the years a number of other links with other cities/regions have been established e.g. Education Department links with Szeged, Hungary and these would continue at an informal level.

Options for the Future

4. The development of overseas links should focus on the need to promote Cardiff and Wales in the context of developing meaningful opportunities for social, economic, educational, cultural, sports and environmental contact and co-operation with overseas communities. The relevance of existing links needs to be reviewed in this context. The County Council has given no indication of its intention to confirm any of the former links and, in the meantime, a number of other possibilities which may be of interest to the authority.
5. In previous discussions with WDA, WTB and Chamber of Commerce on the current status of existing links there was a degree of support for continuing the active links with Nantes and Stuttgart as these are the most accessible partners. However, the main recommendation was that Cardiff should also seek to develop new opportunities which would enhance the social, cultural and in particular economic development of Cardiff's profile in international terms.
6. With due regard to Cardiff's position as an ambitious European capital city which is rapidly raising its profile and status on the world stage it is appropriate to consider a two-tier classification, for example giving priority to the more active partnerships of Nantes, Stuttgart and Hordaland with only courtesy links between Cardiff and Lugansk and Xiamen. Priority status could also be extended to include new, high profile links.

Proposed Criteria for International Links

7. International links, or proposals for new arrangements, should be considered against a defined framework of criteria. For example, the link should :
 - Provide an opportunity to promote Cardiff and Wales on the European and international stage,
 - Reflect Cardiff's international standing as a European capital and world class visitor destination,
 - In European terms, be a city or region of similar size and national importance, to identify with European Union membership
 - Provide opportunities for links and activities at civic and community level which matches the objectives of the Council's strategic objectives,
 - Feature geographical, demographic, educational or cultural similarities, which offer a basis for sustaining regular exchanges of information and interest groups,
 - Offer opportunities for business, trade and inward investment
 - Offer opportunities for co-operation in high-technology sector

New Opportunities

- (a) **San Francisco**

8. In 1997 the Council was encouraged by the WDA and Cardiff Business School to represent Cardiff and Wales at a “Britain meets the Bay” trade fair. The event itself was a success although, despite discussions with the Mayor about the possibility of links between the two cities, there has been difficulty in establishing firm proposals for future links. The Council should establish with the WDA the importance of a formal link in the All-Wales context. The link should be pursued only if the WDA believe it to be important to Wales.

(b) Cape Town, South Africa

9. The possibility of links between the two regions has been discussed on several occasions. The two cities have had significant contact in recent years, not least during the 1995 and 1999 Rugby World Cup events which Cape Town and Cardiff recently hosted, and in 1999, Cardiff granted the freedom of the City to the then South African President Nelson Mandela during the last months of his term of Office.
10. In terms of international profile, Cape Town would be an ideal link for Cardiff, and there are many similarities between the cities – both are based on multi-cultural societies, they are regional and administrative capitals and have modern harbourside developments. South Africa is also an emerging nation presenting opportunities for the development of trade, tourism and sporting links. At present, Cape Town has no formal link with any UK city.

(c) Arlington, Virginia (Washington, DC)

11. An approach has been made by the Economic Development Department of Arlington County, Virginia, to explore the feasibility of establishing a North American-European network, including Cardiff and other European partners. Arlington, Virginia (Washington DC) and Ottawa, the Canadian capital, have informally invited Cardiff and Aachen in Germany to further discussions towards founding the world’s first global economic development partnership.
12. Cardiff was chosen because of its position as Capital City, its emerging European status, gateway location and the critical mass of new development taking place here. The proposal envisages the development of a four or five nation marketing alliance in which the partners support and develop each other’s interests, share knowledge of local markets and offer assistance with individual projects. Each of the proposed partners are established centres for hi-tech development and tele-communications which are envisaged as major areas of interest for the partnership.

ADVICE

This report has been prepared in consultation with Corporate Managers and reflects their collective advice. It contains all the information necessary to allow Members to arrive at a reasonable view, taking into account the advice contained in this section.

Legal Implications

The Council has powers to enter into international links of this type, provided they can be shown to be of benefit to the area.. There are no personnel implications and international links will continue to be managed on a day-to-day basis by the Policy Division.

There is an annual international budget of £7,000 which is used to assist community groups and to cover the costs of overseas delegations. In pursuing this issue we are ensuring that our commitment to value diversity is maintained.

Consequences

International links offer a broad range of opportunities for economic, social and cultural benefits.

BYRON DAVIES

Chief Executive

November 1999

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet agrees

- (i) the proposed criteria for links with international cities and regions;
- (ii) formal links being established at an appropriate level depending on the potential benefits to Cardiff and Wales,
- (iii) that existing formal links being renewed with Nantes, Stuttgart and Hordaland and with Xiamen and Lugansk
- (iv) the link with Baltimore County being relinquished
- (v) the possibility of developing links with Cape Town and San Francisco being pursued and the opportunity to become a founder member of the proposed European – North American Economic Development Programme be progressed.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR RUSSELL GOODWAY,
LORD MAYOR**