

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL MIDLANDS ENGINE TRADE MISSION TO CHINA – NOVEMBER 2018

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Policy Committee about the Midlands Engine Trade Mission to China from 23 to 30 November 2018 which the Chief Executive of the County Council, Anthony May has been invited to join.

Information

Midlands Engine

2. The Midlands Engine is a partnership organisation between Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP's), local councils, businesses and local government across the Midlands with the single ambition of promoting regional economic productivity and growth across the region. A key factor in delivering this will be through increased trade and investment with overseas markets, post Brexit.
3. China is the second largest economy in the world (\$11.8 trillion GDP) and has seen sustained rapid growth in recent years. Closer working with China is a priority in both the Midlands Engine Trade and Investment, and China strategies.
4. The County Council has engaged proactively with the Midlands Engine, support of the commitment in Your Nottinghamshire, Your Future, to make Nottinghamshire a great place to invest and do business. Recent announcements about road improvements to the A614 and a locally-led development body at Toton are tangible outcomes from the Council's engagement with the Midlands Engine.
5. The County Council's Chief Executive, Anthony May, is the Chair of the Midlands Engine Operating Board. Anthony led the development and publication of the Midlands Engine Vision for Growth report (published in September 2017). Vision for Growth underpins the current activity and strategic direction of the Engine.
6. In addition, the Council's Friendship Agreement and links with the Zhejiang province have been central to the Midlands Engine China Strategy, particularly because the Friendship Agreement complements the work of the City of Nottingham and the University of Nottingham in Ningbo, which is the second city of Zhejiang.

The Trade Mission

7. Building on successful UK Government backed Midlands Engine Trade Missions in 2016 and 2017, the 2018 Mission will be focused on progressing high profile Midlands-China business to business discussions by capitalising on sector strengths in sports, aviation links, air freight, big data, artificial intelligence, innovation and space.

8. Anthony May has been invited jointly the Mission Sir John Peace, the Chair of the Midlands Engine. The Mission will comprise a small delegation of business leaders, sector specialists and decision makers.
9. The Mission will visit two provinces; Guizhou in Eastern China and Zhejiang in South West China. The purpose is to explore projects and business opportunities across the following sectors:
 - i. **Sports**
 - ii. **Space and astronomy**
 - iii. **Innovation**
 - iv. **Aviation and freight links**
 - v. **Big data and artificial intelligence**
10. The Mission will be supported by the Department of International Trade (DIT), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Innovate UK, the Zhejiang Foreign Affairs Office (FAO), the Chinese Embassy and the British Consulate General in Shanghai.

Benefits for Nottinghamshire – Friendship Agreement with Zhejiang

11. In 2016 Nottinghamshire developed a Friendship Agreement with Zhejiang. This link builds on the connections that the University of Nottingham (UoN) has established in the province – UoN has a globally unique campus in Zhejiang's second city of Ningbo (one of only a small number of international universities with a fully established satellite campus in China). Ningbo is the sister city of Nottingham.
12. Since 2016 Zhejiang and Nottinghamshire's commercial connections have increased. The Zhejiang CCPIT (Chinese Council for the Promotion of International Trade) and East Midlands Chamber have established a cooperation agreement. The CCPIT has led over 150 Zhejiang businesses to visit Nottinghamshire since the signing of this agreement and two Zhejiang businesses have invested into Nottinghamshire during this period (Hangzhou Creative and Design Centre into Hockley and Zhejiang Shelf Company into Mansfield). These investments have created 40 jobs.
13. As recently as September, 7 Nottinghamshire based businesses attended the 12th Hangzhou Cultural and Creative Industry Exposition 2018 marked the launch of the first UK Pavilion at the Exposition.
14. Nottingham Forest Football Club also has strong links in Zhejiang. Nottingham Forest (in partnership with Nottingham based business China-Britain Football Centre) has visited Zhejiang three times to run training sessions for local PE teachers and pupils – engaging with 5,000 children. During the 2018 November visit Nottingham Forest will run similar training sessions and hope to agree extensions to the Club's China programmes.
15. The formal launch of the 2018 Mission will take place in Nottingham 23 November with a cultural exchange with the visiting Zhejiang Conservatory of Music. This relationship has been established by the University of Nottingham and is an example of existing connections between the two regions.

Other Options Considered

16. The Council could decline the invitation but this would prevent the County from benefitting from the opportunities it offers.
17. Over the past two years links with Zhejiang have resulted in 40 direct jobs in Nottinghamshire, over 500 business to business meetings and exciting new sporting and cultural links. Zhejiang is a province of 55 million people and is one of China's economic engines growing at over 7% per year. This connection presents a unique opportunity for the County.
18. The Midlands Engine China Strategy is focussed on Zhejiang as a 'lead province'. During the 2018 Mission, this lead province relationship will translate into a 5 year plan. It is important that Nottinghamshire is central to this lead partnership arrangement, as it has the potential to add further value to the Council's Friendship Agreement.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

19. This report is for information and endorsing.

Statutory and Policy Implications

20. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

21. The Midlands Engine will meet all costs associated with the Chief Executive's participation in the Trade Mission. No costs will fall upon the Council.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Policy Committee notes:

- 1) The successful engagement of Nottinghamshire with Zhejiang through Friendship Agreement
- 2) The opportunity to further enhance the relationship and activity, both for the County Council and the Midlands Engine through participation in this Trade Mission

Councillor Mrs Kay Cutts MBE
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Paula Mullin, Senior Executive Officer,
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Constitutional Comments (SLB 05.10.18)

22. Policy Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Financial Comments (NR 05.10.18)

23. The financial implications are stated in paragraph 18 of the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All