

REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 12 JANUARY 2004
REPORT ON: CITY OF DUBAI: SISTER CITIES AGREEMENT
REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
REPORT NO: 694-2003

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Council on the City's relationship to date with the City of Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
- 1.2 To make recommendations to the Council on the further development of that relationship.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that:-
- 2.2 The Council notes the existing links and potential benefits of enhanced co-operation with the City of Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
- 2.3 The Council approves the signing of a Sister Cities agreement (Appendix 1) and the organisation of an appropriate signing ceremony in Dubai.
- 2.4 The Council approves the establishment of a Sister Cities Committee to oversee future relations between the City of Dundee and City of Dubai.
- 2.5 The Council approves a grant of £1,000 to the City of Dubai Sister Cities Committee.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 It has been the policy of the City Council to provide each of the Twinning Associations operating in a City, a grant of £1,000 per annum.
- 3.2 On a similar basis it is proposed that a City of Dubai Sister Cities Committee would be allocated a grant of £1,000 in the financial year 2004/05, and each financial year thereafter, in order to further promote appropriate links between Dubai and Dundee.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Sister Cities arrangement will further promote good relations between the city and its minority groups.

6.0 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 The City of Dubai is the second largest of the seven United Arab Emirates that lie along 72 kilometres of the Arabian Gulf coast. It has a population in excess of 1 million and provides access to a 1.4 billion population, regional import market via its free trade zone. Domestic imports total approximately \$17 billion annually. Dubai's imports have more than doubled since 1989 with regional growth and an increasingly diversified and liberalised market.
- 6.2 His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum of Dubai established the Al-Maktoum Institute for Islamic Studies in Dundee in May 2002. The Institute is based in the former St Joseph's Primary School on Blackness Road and houses a number of researchers and students. The Sheikh is funding 5 students from the UAE and 2 from Palestine to undertake research at the Institute.

6.3 The Al-Maktoum Institute has become the first Scottish Higher Education centre to be accepted into the Euro-Arab Research Network which helps members exchange experience and expertise.

6.4 In October 2002, a delegation from the City of Dundee was invited to visit the City of Dubai and have further discussions with the Sheikh and other key individuals with a view to exploring opportunities of mutual benefit.

7.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

7.1 The City currently has formal twinning arrangements with Alexandria, USA; Nablus, West Bank; Orléans, France; Würzburg, Germany and Zadar, in Croatia. Each of these, with the exception of Zadar, has a twinning association or committee with strong and active links with their respective twin cities.

7.2 Twinning activity is generally concentrated around civic and cultural exchanges with little or no successful economic or trade opportunities having been concluded, nor indeed was this the purpose. Although the proposed Sister Cities agreement allows for cultural and artistic opportunities, the main emphasis is in the fields of economics, trade, science and technology and it is envisaged that the Economic Development Departments in Dundee and Dubai respectively will have a more prominent role in relationships than in the context of twinning.

7.3 As a result of increasing globalisation and mobilisation of resources in developing countries, there have been a growing number of calls on the City to engage in formal partnerships and twinning arrangements with other cities and regions around the world. However, when presented with such ventures, a strict assessment has to be undertaken to ensure that tangible outcomes may be achieved in the areas of:

- The potential for economic benefits
- The ability to deliver, in terms of resources, any obligations set out in the covenant.

It is from this perspective that any sister city agreement should be evaluated.

8.0 LINK POINTS

8.1 As part of the evaluation process to the approach for a Sister City agreement with the City of Dubai, a number of existing links and potential benefits have been identified:

- The establishment of the Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies.
- The City of Dubai is officially twinned with Gold Coast City in Australia, which is one of our partner cities in the Global Digital Cities Network, and has signed a Sister Cities agreement with Detroit, USA.
- Healthcare/Biomedical Sciences – the City of Dubai has a strong interest in developing healthcare - the Sheikh is also the benefactor and patron of the Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Award for Medical Excellence. A recent visit by the Ajman University of Science and Technology (AUST) Network showed particular interest in these sectors.
- New centre for health studies has just opened at the University of Abertay - Tayside Institute for Health Studies.
- Potential to link life sciences developments.
- The City of Dubai is creating a digital media hub, which has potential complementarity for Dundee.
- Potential links with both Universities – the City of Dubai is currently using the US based higher education system but is interested in learning more about the UK/Scottish systems. Potential exists to assist in the development of a new system in Dubai.

- Utilising Dundee's postgraduate teaching and research opportunities in healthcare - potential for collaboration.
- Access for Dundee companies seeking to export to the Middle East - Dubai is the Middle East's biggest re-exporting centre (free-trade) and has low logistical and operational costs.
- Potential for investment in local businesses to enable them to grow quicker.
- Business development experiences and opportunities.

8.2 The above list satisfies the assessment criteria in terms of both tangible outputs, which have already occurred and potential economic opportunities for local businesses. The resource required to service the agreement is minimal and is contained within existing budgets.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Significant opportunity exists for the City of Dundee and surrounding region, its institutions and its commerce and industry to take advantage of a formalised link with the City of Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Businesses will have the ability and rationale to explore and adapt to new markets with the added respectability of belonging to a state-supported scheme, and existing centres of excellence can utilise their expertise for mutual benefit.

9.2 It is therefore proposed to build upon these opportunities by establishing a formal Sister Cities arrangement with Dubai, including the formation of a Sister Cities Committee.

10.0 CONSULTATION

10.1 The Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and the Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) were consulted during the preparation of this report.

11.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 No background papers were relied upon in the preparation of this report.

ALEX STEPHEN

Chief Executive

Date: 22 December 2003

DOUG GRIMMOND

Director of Economic Development

Date: 22 December 2003



Sister Cities Agreement

between

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

and

Dundee, Scotland

Following the historic and successful visit of His Highness Shaikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum to officially open Al-Maktoum Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies in Dundee on 6 May 2002, the relationship between Dubai and Dundee has been enhanced greatly by the Institute's presence in the City.

Working with the ethos of promoting a greater understanding and building bridges through academic excellence and serving the communities, the Institute has become an integral part of Dundee's City and society. In addition, this has promoted Dundee as a home to a centre of excellence in Arabic and Islamic Studies. The City of Dundee in Scotland of the United Kingdom and the City of Dubai of the United Arab Emirates have expressed interest in the development of a Sister Cities relationship.

It is recognised that the establishment of a Sister Cities Relationship will be a contribution towards common understanding and the exchange of ideas, resources and people between the City of Dubai and the City of Dundee.

In keeping with the establishment of this relationship, the City of Dubai and the City of Dundee agree to develop programmes and activities in fields such as economics, trade, science and technology, as well as culture and arts.

These programmes and activities will serve as vehicles to promote exchange, and to strengthen the relationship between our two Cities.

The Ruler of Dubai and the Lord Provost of Dundee, on behalf of the citizens of our respective cities, will act as official representatives to carry out such an agreement.

Copies of this agreement will be sent to the respective Ambassadors of the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates.

This agreement will come into effect on the date of signature.

Lord Provost John R Letford JP
City of Dundee, Scotland

HH Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

date _____

date _____

