

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10:00am, Tuesday 22 August 2023

Edinburgh and Taiwan Visit Report and Activity

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Executive All
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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Sustainability Committee:
- 1.1.1 Notes the detail provided on and impacts arising from the Council Leader's March 2023 visit to Taiwan
 - 1.1.2 Notes that the visit was supported by University of Edinburgh partners with expertise in the fields of Net Zero and Data Driven Innovation.
 - 1.1.3 Notes the Council Leaders' presentation showcasing Edinburgh's Smart City/NetZero ambitions to a global audience at the Smart City Expo in Kaohsiung and Taipei City in Taiwan
 - 1.1.4 Agrees that development of cultural, festival, sustainability, digital innovation, trade and investment links should provide the focus for the next steps in strengthening Edinburgh and Taiwan relationships.
 - 1.1.5 Agrees that City of Edinburgh Council will work in partnership with Edinburgh International Festival, University of Edinburgh, Taiwanese officials and other stakeholders to develop a future programme of activity.
 - 1.1.6 Thanks the Taipei Representative Office of Taiwan in Edinburgh and all partners in Taiwan who provided a detailed programme and warm welcome to the Council Leader and University of Edinburgh partners throughout the visit..

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Report

Edinburgh and Taiwan Visit and Activity Report

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides a summary of the March 2023 visit to Taiwan and the developing relationship with the cultural and economic ties in Taipei and the southern cities of Tainan City and Kaohsiung.
- 2.2 The report is a response to the Council Leader's motion at full council in February 2023 which celebrated the city's positive relations with Taiwan and requested that the Chief Executive brings back a report on the tangible benefits of the visit.
- 2.3 The City of Edinburgh Council partnered with the University of Edinburgh's Climate Change Institute and Data Driven Innovation departments for the duration of the visit.

3. Background

- 3.1 The links of friendship between Scotland and Taiwan can be traced back more than 150 years to when Scottish missionaries brought modern medicine, printing machines as well as tap water systems to Taiwan. Dr James Maxwell from Edinburgh established Taiwan's first hospital in the 19th Century. During the visit it was apparent how significant James Maxwell is to Kaohsiung and Tainan City.
- 3.2 During 2022, a number of discussions were held with officials representing Taiwanese cities including Taipei, Tainan City, and Kaohsiung. During these discussions Taiwanese officials:
 - 3.2.1 Welcomed the opportunity to work closely with the City of Edinburgh to further deepen relationships, work together to foster partnerships, and collaborate to contribute to the global economy, and
 - 3.2.2 Recognised that Scotland and Taiwan share a foundation of strong values based on democracy, human rights, freedom of speech and rule of law, and that further relationships with the City of Edinburgh can support the promotion of these values within Taiwan.
- 3.3 In February 2023 Council agreed to a fully funded visit (by the Taiwanese government) to Taiwan for the Council Leader and one officer which took place in March 2023 to represent Edinburgh at the Asian Smart City Summit in Kaohsiung and Taipei.

3.4 The Edinburgh International Group (The EIG) is a partnership of city-wide anchor of institutions and stakeholders who work together to establish a collaborative “Team Edinburgh” approach to taking forward the priorities of the Edinburgh International Framework. Given the topic of Smart City and NetZero the University of Edinburgh were invited to attend Taiwan to support Edinburgh Smart City and Net Zero ambitions and to develop future collaborations.

4. Main report

4.1 The main benefits and activity of the visit to Taiwan were as follows:

4.1.1 Future relationships will be taken forward across multiple locations in Taiwan, as opposed to a single city relationship. Letters of intent were signed with the Mayors of Kaohsiung and Tainan City to develop the ties.

4.1.2 Promotion of cultural and festival links would provide a useful focus for the next stage of developing links between City of Edinburgh Council and Taiwan – there is an appetite for multiple cultural events in Kaohsiung in particular and mutual exchanges on Literature, Taiwan Fringe Festival Season and Jazz/Blues Festivals.

4.1.3 In support, the University of Edinburgh team will undertake tangible collaborations with organisations in Taiwan on sustainability, artificial intelligence and business innovation trade missions.

- i) As a result of the visit to Taiwan, the University hosted the National University of Taiwan and the leadership of Taiwan's National Science & Technology Council visited ECCI to talk about Data Driven Innovation and Carbon Capture & Storage partnership and resources.
- ii) TuringDrive, a Taipei an autonomous vehicle company, are joining a bid with the University of Edinburgh's Edinburgh Centre for Robotics for a Centre for Doctoral Training in Perception, Action and Behaviour research/innovation opportunities.
- iii) Discussions are ongoing with the Connected Places Catapult and UKRI to explore an Innovation City Twin with Kaohsiung or Taipei.

4.2 The Council leader presented to over 190 countries at Taipei City, host to the Smart City Summit & Expo and in Kaohsiung who also co-hosted this year.

4.3 Prior to promoting Edinburgh at the Smart City Summit, the Council Leader met with the Mayors of Tainan City and Kaohsiung, as well as national government officials. Visits were also made to numerous sites across Taiwan including sustainability businesses, art centres, festivals, hospital and a net zero village.

4.4 Edinburgh Festivals are also a member of the EIG and has agreed to support work on taking forward culture led collaborations with Taiwan during 2023/2024. The council's Head of Service for Culture Venues has held discussions with a major arts venue in Kaohsiung for joint performances in the coming years.

- 4.6 The Edinburgh delegation held a meeting with UK Research & Innovation team at the Smart City Summit and agreed to follow up by Edinburgh participating in the Connected Places Catapult. This provides a facilitated route to potential future collaboration with cities in both Taiwan and Japan, and for activities in Edinburgh, with funding to support it.
- 4.7 The City of Edinburgh Council agreed letters of intent to further initiate developments of performances at Edinburgh Festivals and other Cultural activity around literature. Events are already planned for May and July 2023.
- 4.9 In July 2023, the Scottish Storytelling Centre and Edinburgh Central Library hosted a National Museum of Taiwan Literature exhibition. Other cultural activities begin progressed are an artist in residence programme with Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop and an Orchid Festival with the Royal Botanical Gardens.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 As next steps it is recommended that:
- 5.1.1 Officers continue to work with Edinburgh International Group partners to engage with representatives of Taiwanese cities and Taiwanese Government
 - 5.1.2 Council officers and Edinburgh International Group partners to take forward the offer of a future trade and investment visit with additional developing ties to the festivals.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Delivery of actions outlined in this report will be taken forward within agreed Council budgets. Any additional budget requirements identified will be discussed and agreed through annual budget decision making processes.
- 6.2 All costs associated with visits to Taiwan outlined in this paper was fully funded by the Taiwan government. The University of Edinburgh funded the costs of their own flights.

7. Stakeholder/Community/Environmental Impact

- 7.1 Edinburgh International Group members, including University of Edinburgh, Festivals Edinburgh, Royal Botanic Gardens and others, have been approached and agreed to progress an enhanced programme of activity.
- 7.2 The Carbon impact of the two Council representatives (Council Leader and one accompanying officer) in attendance was 2.842 tCO₂e per person.

8. Background reading/external references

[Edinburgh International Framework](#)

9. Appendices

None