

# City of Edinburgh Council

10:00am, Thursday, 9 February 2023

## Edinburgh and Taiwan Partnership Links

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Executive All
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### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that Council:
- 1.1.1 Notes the long history of cultural, scientific, and educational relationships between the City of Edinburgh and Taiwan
  - 1.1.2 Notes the engagement carried out with representatives from Taipei, Tainan City, and Kaohsiung City in Taiwan to explore opportunities for building on these relationships
  - 1.1.3 Agrees that development of cultural and festival links should provide the focus for the next steps in strengthening Edinburgh and Taiwan relationships
  - 1.1.4 Agrees that City of Edinburgh Council will work in partnership with the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, University of Edinburgh, Taiwanese officials and other stakeholders to develop a future programme of activity
  - 1.1.5 Notes that the Representative Office of Taiwan have offered to fully fund an Edinburgh delegation of cultural and digital representatives to visit Taiwan to establish the appropriate partners to progress this programme
  - 1.1.6 Agrees that the Council leader and one officer will represent Edinburgh at the 2023 Asian Smart City summit in Taipei, with all costs fully funded by the Government of Taiwan.

**Andrew Kerr**

Chief Executive

Contact: Nick Langan, International Relations Officer

Policy and Insight Team, Corporate Services Directorate

# Report

## Edinburgh and Taiwan Partnership Links

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report provides a summary of the existing relations with the Taiwan and the developing relationship with the cultural cities of Tainan City and Kaohsiung in the southern part of Taiwan.
- 2.2 The report is a response to the Council Leader's motion in March 2022 which celebrated the city's positive relations with Taiwan and requested that the Chief Executive brings back a report on a potential memorandum of understanding to help foster existing collaborations.
- 2.3 During 2022 discussions have been held with the Mayors of Tainan City, Kaohsiung, and the Taipei Representative Office in the UK Edinburgh Office. Taiwan officials stated that any further relations should be progressed after the Taiwan local Mayoral elections in November 2022.
- 2.4 As a result of these and other discussions, officers' recommendations are that a number of sectoral initiatives can be taken forward without the need for formal friendship agreements, with benefits to multiple cities in Taiwan rather than a focus on one individual city.
- 2.5 In line with recommendations made by the Representative Office of Taiwan, it is proposed that Edinburgh continues to strengthen and develop informal collaborations particularly with the Jazz/Blues, Fringe Festivals and digital sector, and support the co-ordination of partner-wide activity within Edinburgh.

### 3. Background

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- 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 19<sup>th</sup> Century.
- 3.2 More recently, bilateral relations between Scotland and Taiwan have seen developments through the annual Scottish parliamentary delegation visit to Taiwan

and trade relations with food/drink, (Taiwan is 4<sup>th</sup> largest export market for Scotch whisky), green energy and cultural exchanges.

- 3.3 Each year Taiwanese performers perform at our world leading Festivals. A recent performance in 2021 from a Taiwanese band at the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival showcased our close musical connections.
- 3.4 The Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) in Taiwan and the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) established a partnership and have collaboratively on joint science research projects.
- 3.5 The National Taiwan Ocean University in Keelung signed and MoU with the University of Edinburgh to enhance collaboration on green energy research projects.
- 3.6 The Royal Botanical Gardens of Edinburgh (RBGE) organised a biodiversity festival in 2014 and continue to exchange plant species with partners in Taiwan. Other Edinburgh relations include exchange of small animals between Edinburgh Zoo and Taiwanese Zoos.
- 3.7 The UK Minister for Trade visited Taiwan in November 2022 in a clear signal of the UK's commitment to boosting UK-Taiwan trade ties. Taiwan is recognised as a champion of free and fair trade underpinned by the rules-based global trading system. The UK's £8 billion trade partnership has grown by 14% in recent years (2018 – 2020), with UK exports to Taiwan also increasing in that time. The Government's most recent annual business survey showed that an overwhelming majority of UK companies operating in Taiwan are optimistic about its economy and prospects.
- 3.8 In March 2022 Council agreed a motion from Councillor Cammy Day to:
  - 3.8.1 Celebrate the positive relationships between Scotland and Taiwan, including those cited above, and
  - 3.8.2 Agree for the Chief Executive to back a report on a potential memorandum of understanding to help foster the existing collaborations.

## 4. Main report

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- 4.1 During 2022 a number of discussions were held with officials representing Taiwanese cities including Taipei, Tainan City, and Kaohsiung. During these discussions, Taiwanese officials:
  - 4.1.1 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
  - 4.1.2 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.

4.2 These discussions further concluded that:

- 4.2.1 Given the strength of existing links, a formal memorandum of understanding was not required at this stage,
  - 4.2.2 Future relationships could best be taken forward across multiple locations in Taiwan, as opposed to a single city relationship,
  - 4.2.3 Promotion of cultural and festival links would provide a useful focus for the next stage of developing links between Edinburgh and Taiwan including building on the good work of the Jazz and Blues festival in recent years.
  - 4.2.4 In support of this theme, the Representative Office of Taiwan offered to fully fund an Edinburgh delegation of cultural representatives to visit Taiwan to establish the appropriate partners to progress the relationship, and
  - 4.2.5 An initial fully funded visit to Taiwan, through the Taiwanese government, has also been offered to the Council Leader to represent Edinburgh at the Asian Smart City Summit in March 2023. Taiwan has moved steadily toward the goal of becoming a digital nation and smart island and worked to promote the development of smart healthcare, smart transportation and digital economy. Taipei City, host the Smart City Summit & Expo each year and won the 2021 IDC Smart City Asia Pacific Award. Kaohsiung are also hosts this year.
- 4.3 This proposed approach is consistent with the ways of working set out in the Edinburgh International Framework. This framework sets the basis for the Council's approach to building international relationship and states that as a city Edinburgh is open to building international relationships which are aligned to our Council Business Plan priorities.
- 4.4 Building on this framework, the Edinburgh International Group (The EIG) is a partnership of city wide anchor institutions and stakeholders who work together to establish a collaborative "Team Edinburgh" approach to taking forward the priorities of the Edinburgh International Framework.
- 4.5 Edinburgh Festivals, including Edinburgh International Festival and Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival, are members of the EIG and discussions to strengthen these links are currently progressing.

## 5. Next Steps

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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
- 5.1.2 Officers and Edinburgh International Group partners take forward the offer of a fully funded invitation of Edinburgh representatives from the culture/festival sector (especially the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival ) to visit Taiwan to establish a co-ordinated approach of sectoral collaborations in 2023,

- 5.1.3 The Council leader and one officer represent Edinburgh at the Asian Smart City Summit in Taipei city in March 2023, with all costs fully funded through the Taiwanese Government
- 5.1.4 Officers continue to work with the Edinburgh International Group to establish a joint approach to fostering relationships with Taiwan.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 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. All costs associated with visits to Taiwan outlined in this paper are fully funded by the Taiwan government.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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Edinburgh International Group members, including, University of Edinburgh, Festivals Edinburgh, Royal Botanic Gardens and others, have been approached and agreed to support an enhanced programme of activity. Moreover, a particular emphasis on the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival links will further strengthen the musical connections.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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[Edinburgh International Framework](#)

## **9. Appendices**

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None