



# Making connections



## Dortmund – Leeds 2007/2008

It was another strong year for the Leeds–Dortmund partnership. 2007 has seen the economic development links between Leeds and Dortmund strengthened enormously, with two successful business delegations coming to visit Leeds and one visit to Dortmund focusing on matters of economic development.

2008 will see further work in this area but it is also planned for the partnership to see more education and community links.

Below: A delegation from Dortmund in January 2007 with Honorary German Consul, Mark Green, and Anne Morgan of Leeds City Council



# Dortmund – Leeds

## 2007

### ■ Business over breakfast in January

Business representatives in Leeds got the chance to find out how they could benefit from developments in Dortmund's economy at a special breakfast seminar held in January.

The head of the Dortmund economic development agency, Udo Mager, outlined at the seminar opportunities for British companies in Dortmund's flourishing IT, biomedical science and nanotechnology sectors.

The seminar, sponsored by Park Plaza Leeds, offered local companies the chance to network with experienced business support professionals. It formed part of a two-day visit to Leeds by six economic development representatives from Dortmund, the aim of which was to promote greater economic co-operation between the two cities.

During their visit, the delegates toured potential investment sites in Leeds and learned about Leeds' thriving financial services and creative and digital industries.

### ■ Autumn action in Dortmund

At the end of September representatives of Leeds City Council and Leeds Chamber of Commerce travelled to Dortmund for a 2 day visit.

The aims of the visit were to cement existing good relations with Dortmund's business support organisations, to plan ahead for future areas of cooperation, and to conduct a scoping visit to the Dortmunder Herbst 2007 consumer fair to identify its potential as a platform for doing business with Leeds.

The visit provided a great opportunity to meet with Dortmund's Economic Development Agency, the Dortmund Chamber of Commerce and the Dortmund Chamber of Skilled Trades and Small Businesses. The trip was a complete success and, as well as planning next year's joint commercial activities with our partner city, we were able to plan for an inward trade visit to Leeds organised by the Dortmund Chamber of Skilled Trades and Small Businesses.

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### ■ Building good relationships

Eight German construction companies from Dortmund and the surrounding economic area were welcomed to Leeds in early November following their visit to the Interbuild 2007 construction fair in Birmingham.

The visit, organised by the Dortmund Chamber of Skilled Trades and Small Businesses, gave the companies the opportunity to learn about the construction sector in the Leeds economy and to visit some key current development sites in the city.

At an evening reception held at the Civic Hall the delegates were officially welcomed to the city and were given the opportunity to network with Yorkshire based companies to identify potential areas for joint business ventures. They were also given an overview of the Leeds economy and the role of the Leeds Initiative partnership Construction Leeds.

### ■ Learning from each other

There are currently two active school partnerships between Dortmund and Leeds. Allerton Grange High School in north Leeds is linked with Leibniz Grammar School, and Wortley High School, located to the west of Leeds, is linked with Heisenberg Grammar School.

The long-established and successful link between Wortley High and Heisenberg Gymnasium saw a group of young people from the German school visit Leeds in June 2007 to take part in the annual action-packed Breeze youth festival, offering an opportunity for cultural exchange and language practice.

The lively partnership between Allerton Grange and Leibniz Grammar School focuses mainly on joint project work. Pupils from the two schools have this year jointly produced a DVD covering the tourism industry in Leeds and Dortmund, and the material was published in both German and English to present to parents. Leibniz Gymnasium has already expressed enthusiasm about the possibility of attending the Breeze International Youth festival in 2008.



2008



### ■ Get down to the YMCA

There are plans for a youth exchange between the YMCA association based in Hawksworth Wood and the equivalent organisation in Dortmund, the Christlicher Verein Junger Menschen (CVJM).

The exchange will offer a unique international experience to young people in Leeds and Dortmund who would not traditionally have the opportunity to take part in such activities.

### ■ The TWINS 2010 project

This flagship project is part of the successful bid of the Ruhr region for European Cultural Capital 2010. The aim is to establish a sustainable cultural network of partner cities linked with cities in the Ruhr region.

Burkhard Rinsche from Dortmund's cultural department is preparing guidelines for the whole Ruhr region including Dortmund and its partner cities for TWINS 2010 at the moment. He suggested that Dortmund and Leeds should develop a project around the themes of urbanism and integration using digital media.



### ■ Early years

A brand new link has been established in 2007 between Robin Hood Primary School in south Leeds and the 'KiTa Kuithanstraße' day care centre in Dortmund.

The Dortmund day care centre undertakes all educational activities in both German and English to give the children a head start in their English language learning, which is a compulsory part of their later education.

The link came about as a direct result of the visit to Dortmund in September by Leeds City Council representatives, and both sides are very enthusiastic about the prospects for the partnership.

### ■ On a mission

An economic trade mission made up of Yorkshire businesses will be heading to Dortmund in spring 2008 with the aim of further developing business links between the two cities.

It is anticipated that the mixed sector delegation will explore possibilities of bilateral projects with Dortmund companies, expanding contacts in vocational training and the construction sector.



# Dortmund

**Location and background:** Situated in the middle of North-Rhine Westphalia, Dortmund is the capital of the Ruhr region and one of the ten most prominent cities in Germany.

**Population:** 600,000 inhabitants.

**Economy overview:** The main areas of Dortmund's economy used to be coal, steel and beer. Like Leeds, the structure of the economy in Dortmund has changed considerably over the past few decades and the city is now a thriving centre for new technologies, distribution services and environmental consultancy.

**University:** The Technical University of Dortmund is home to more than 20,000 students.

**Local government:** The directly elected executive mayor of Dortmund is Dr Gerhard Langemeyer of the Social Democratic Party of Germany.

**Partnership with Leeds:** Twinned since 1969, Leeds and Dortmund have a well established, lively partnership. The partnership takes place in all areas of activity such as school links, youth and community exchanges, and joint business projects. Economic links are crucial to the relationship and an economic co-operation agreement with Dortmund's economic development agency was signed in March 2004.



## Get involved!

If you would like more information on the Dortmund - Leeds partnership or if you would like to get involved, please contact the international relations office on +44 (0)113 247 4484  
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