

EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01AM ON TUESDAY, MAY 16

**ABERDEEN & GRAMPIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ON HIGH LEVEL TRADE MISSION TO CHINA
New alliances open up new opportunities for Aberdeen companies**

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce has participated in one of the first network-wide overseas trade missions to Shandong Province, China, led by a delegation of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce.

James Bream, research & policy director, joined senior representatives and business people from Ayrshire, Dundee & Angus, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and West Lothian. The mission explored new trading opportunities and links with business, education and government organisations.

As part of the programme, Scottish Chambers of Commerce (SCC) announced the official opening of a new International Trade Office in the city of Yantai. The formal opening ceremony was hosted by the Vice Mayor Madame Zhang Bo, together with senior officials from Yantai Municipal Government.

As part of the event, both parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding for trade engagement and partnership, designed to achieve an effective channel for exchange of business between Scotland and Yantai.

During the trade visit, Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce participated in a series of productive meetings with senior business people, highly influential politicians including Vice Governor Wang Shujian, and local government officials as well as national 'think tanks' bodies in Beijing and Yantai and Jinan in the Shandong Province

James Bream commented: "The Chinese economy continues to grow at a faster pace than western economies and the rate of growth within new cities such as Yantai and Jinan opens up the potential for Aberdeen businesses to promote and sell goods and services which Chinese businesses and consumers want and need. That demand, together with a more recent policy of 'opening up' to new trading partners and overseas alliances by the Chinese, presents a myriad of opportunities for our local businesses to capitalise on.

"The aim of our mission was to strengthen relationships and increase engagement with existing and new contacts in sectors where there are direct B2B or knowledge-sharing opportunities for Scottish companies. Yantai is a city of 7 million and SCC's base in Yantai will enable us to plan a comprehensive approach to exploiting the many opportunities in Yantai and further afield for our members and non-members."

Shandong Province represents the third largest economy in China with a population of over 97 million and a GDP in excess of 6.3 trillion yuan (£0.7 trillion). It is China's best wine growing region accounting for over 25% of all wine production. Yantai is the biggest trading port in North China and in 2016, the city imported over \$19 billion (£14.7 billion) of goods and services.

James Bream also visited the city of Jinan, which is home to one of the first national high-tech business incubators and since its foundation in 2002, it has incubated more than 1,000 small and medium sized science and technology enterprises. It focuses on cultivating fast-growing sectors such as biomedicine, ecommerce, energy, environmental protection and new materials.

Key sectors for Aberdeen-based companies to meet key economic needs in the Chinese target cities include: bioscience, R & D, manufacturing, engineering and smart technologies, energy including upstream and downstream products and services, logistics, agriculture and food and drink.

The accelerated growth of consumers in Shandong province also opens opportunities in consumer goods, recreation and tourism services, financial and professional services and education.

Chief executive, SCC, Liz Cameron said: "We now have a deeper understanding of how we can achieve the best exchange for business, where the opportunities exist for Scottish organisations and how we can best pursue these.

"We have also identified a number of potential opportunities for inward investment into Scotland and will be working with Scottish Government and SDI as well as other trade organisations to explore these and leverage the momentum of change within China.

James Bream added: "We will now undertake a deep dive of companies based in Aberdeen who have products, skills and expertise which have the potential to be exported to Shandong Province. Our aim is to add impetus to our local and wider Scottish economy by assisting companies who have not previously thought about exporting to grasp the potential that international trade offers.

"The new more open trading environment in fast growing cities such as Yantai, Jinan and the wider Shandong Province, together with the practical advice and direct B2B links that Aberdeen Chamber now has within this market, will facilitate more effective trading partnership opportunities for our local businesses and educational institutions."

SCC intends to return to Shandong Province later this year to conclude discussions on further Memorandums of Understanding and explore new ways to foster co-operation between the two countries.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

- Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce is the North-east's leading business membership organisation and the largest Chamber in Scotland. Representing around 1,300 organisations collectively employing 125,000+ people across all sectors, we work locally, nationally and internationally to support businesses from sole traders to multinational corporations in a myriad of ways.
- Scottish Chambers has a network of 26 local Chambers throughout Scotland and a membership of over 12,000 businesses. In December last year, SCC received grant funding of £400,000 from Scottish Government to forge new global trading alliances between Chambers in Scotland and the international network of Chambers, which are represented in over 180 overseas territories.

Delegate List:

Alison Henderson	Chief Executive	Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce
Colin Loveday	President	Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce
Dave Valentine	International Trade Advisor	Scottish Chambers of Commerce
James Bream	Director of Policy & Research	Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce
Linda Scott	Chief Executive	West Lothian Chamber of Commerce
Liz Cameron	Chief Executive	Scottish Chambers of Commerce
Liz McAreavey	Chief Executive	Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce
Neil Amner	President	Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
Nora Senior	International Trade Emissary	Scottish Chambers of Commerce
Tim Allan	President	Scottish Chambers of Commerce
Val Russell	Chief Executive	Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce

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