

Briefing Note: Senior Delegation from the Consulate-General of China in Manchester

1. Introduction:

- 1.1. The Consulate-General of Manchester is one of three in the United Kingdom, which work alongside Chinese Embassy in London to promote UK-China relations. The Manchester consular area covers the Midlands to Scotland. Their mission is to promote, facilitate and boost the substantial cooperation in trade and investment, science and technology, education, culture and arts and politics with the North of England.
- 1.2. The Consulate General serves as a vital bridge between Chinese government ministries and funding bodies, local authorities and industries and funding bodies and UK institutions. The Manchester team helps Chinese industries, research institutes and universities identify and strengthen collaborative partnerships with partners in our region. For the University, good relationships with the team in Manchester are essential to the smooth operation of links and collaboration.
- 1.3. In addition the Consulate-General also provides standard embassy functions such as visas for travel to China and support for Chinese citizens in the UK.

2. The delegation

2.1 Consul General ZHENG Xi Yuan: Appointed in 2018 The Consul –General has visited Leeds several times but this will be his first official visit to the University. Previously he has attended the final of Leeds International Piano Competition and the launch of 'Visit Leeds China Forum'.

2.1.1 Consul General ZHENG received his BSc and MSc in Chemistry from Lanzhou University and an MA International Relations from Beijing. He has been a diplomat with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1992. Before taking up the post as Consul-General in Manchester, he was the Consul-General in Mumbai, India (2015-2018), Counsellor in Chinese Embassy Greece (2008-2011) and Vice-Consul, Chinese Consulate-General in New York (1996-1998). Between his posts overseas, he also worked as the Director of the Department of Policy Planning, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is married (to Consul Li) and they have one daughter.

2.2 Education Counsellor Mr ZHAO Jiang: Head of the Education Unit in the Consulate-General in Manchester. He started his career in the Ministry of Education in 1984. Before he took up his post as the Education Counsellor in Manchester in September 2018, he was Education Counsellor in the Consulate in Melbourne (2014-2018), and prior to that roles in Washington (05-06) and Huston (98 – 01) USA. Between his

overseas posts he also served as the Deputy Director–General, Department of Education in Qinghai Province.

2.3 Consul LI Fang Hui: Madam Li is a professionally trained diplomat who joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1985. She holds a BA Journalism from Sichuan University. Before she took up the post of Consul at Manchester Consulate-General this year, she served in Mumbai (2015-2018) and was first secretary in both Chinese Embassy in the UK (2011-2014) and Greece (2008-2011). Between 2004 and 2008, she was the Director, Spokeswoman and Media Manager of Beijing Organisation Committee for the 16th Olympic Games. Other roles have included Deputy Director at the Department of Information in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She is married (to Consul-General Zheng) with one daughter.

2.4 Vice Consul Mr HU Xiao: Mr HU just started his role at the Education Unit and he will be responsible for looking after Chinese students' wellbeing including managing CSC scholarships from the UK. This visit will be part of his induction.

3. University objectives

3.1 To ensure warm relations and secure ongoing support in our engagement with government departments in China. The Consulate-General is 'the window' of the Chinese government in Northern England, it is essential to have their support and endorsement for future collaborations as well as for our existing projects such as the SWJTU-Leeds Joint School and our Business Confucius Institute.

3.2 Profile Raising. The visit is an opportunity to showcase key Leeds strengths to an active and engaged Consul-General. This Consul-General is keen to facilitate high quality research and innovation collaborations – and is actively bringing contacts together across the North. He is aware of Leeds' ranking and position in N8 and Russell Group and of our volume of Chinese students and staff. This visit gives us the opportunity to explain our key role in the National Institutes and to highlight the depth and breadth of our research excellence. Consul-General Zheng is interested in facilitating inward investment and industry collaboration – again an opportunity for us to position Leeds as a strong potential partner.

3.3 To optimise our opportunities in China: The staff of the Consulate-General and the Consul-General himself are well-connected in China, not only with government agencies but industries and local organisations. Senior delegations from China often call upon them as part of their UK visit programmes and therefore informed Consulate staff can actively promote Leeds' strengths to a wider audience of potential investors and partners.

3.4 Updating the Consulate-General on our major achievements and latest development plans in student education and our high quality support for International (Chinese) students and staff.

3.4.1 Though we should not highlight this issue, it is possible there will be mention of Hong Kong, Taiwan etc. Students have been active recently in identifying web based country lists and admin references to them as 'countries'. Our approach is to openly acknowledge that this is a sensitive issue amongst students and to explain that such informal references to Hong Kong and Taiwan are not intended to suggest they are sovereign states and in no way indicate an institutional policy in this respect. Each example is dealt with whenever we are made aware. We confirm that the University follows UK Government policy and approach in all international recognitions. Our priority is the wellbeing of all our students.

3.5 Acknowledge the good work of the Business Confucius Institute. We look forward to welcoming the new Chinese director. Acknowledge the academic leadership shown by outgoing Chinese Director Prof Hongwei YAN.

3.6 The Manchester team are an important point of contact for Leeds to gain further understanding of latest Chinese legislation and policy orientation.