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**Minutes of the meeting of the Committee to consider applications to undertake certain duties by Members and foreign travel by Officers, held in Committee Room 1 County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex on Tuesday, 20 September 2016**

**Present:**

Councillors

Barry Aspinell	(substitute for Mike Mackrory)
Michael Danvers	
David Finch	Chairman
Dick Madden	
Jillian Reeves	

Councillor Barry Aspinell attended as substitute for Councillor Mike Mackrory.  
Councillor Kevin Bentley was in attendance to answer questions relating to items 4, 5 and 8.

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Mike Mackrory for whom Councillor Barry Aspinell attended as substitute.

**2 Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**3 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Madden declared a Code interest in Agenda Item 4 (Approval for Member and Officer Trade Visit to China) and abstained from voting thereon, due to his role as a potential participant in the visit (Minute 4 below refers).

Councillors Madden and Finch declared a Code interest in Agenda Item 9, Approval for Member and Officer attendance at CNN Conference, as potential attendees and confirmed they would abstain from voting (Minute 9 below refers).

**4 Approval for Member and Officer Trade Visit to China**

Councillor Madden declared a Code interest in this item (minute 3 above refers) and refrained from voting thereon.

The Committee considered report FTC/06/16 by the Secretary to the Committee, which sought approval for Councillor Kevin Bentley and two Officers (Peter

Manning and Ge Jing) to participate in a trade and investment promotion visit to Jiangsu Province, between 16 and 29 October 2016, at a total estimated cost of £5170.40.

Following publication of the agenda for the meeting, other commitments had caused Councillor Bentley to withdraw from the trip and seek another Member to participate. This was likely to be Cllr Madden due to the political requirement for Cabinet Member attendance and relevant portfolio links.

The recommendation was therefore revised to remove the specific reference to Councillor Bentley.

Councillor Bentley provided background information regarding the established links between Essex and Jiangsu Province and how the commercial relationship had developed.

Members were asked to note that costs of this trip were more than covered by the income generated by the commercial activities of the international trade team.

**Resolved**

That foreign travel to China for one Member and two Officers (Peter Manning and Ge Jing) to participate in a trade and investment promotion visit to Jiangsu Province, between 16 and 29 October 2016, at a total estimated cost of £5170.40, be approved.

## **5 Member Foreign Travel to Brussels**

The Committee received report FTC/07/16 by the Secretary to the Committee, regarding self-funded foreign travel to Brussels by Cllr Kevin Bentley on 3 and 4 October 2016.

The visit relates to Councillor Bentley's role as Chairman of the EELGA (East of England Local Government Association) East of England Europe and International Panel.

in response to Member's questions, Cllr Bentley confirmed that the Brussels office would continue to operate following the EU referendum.

Members were reminded that as there was no cost to the Council, approval by the Committee was not required and the report had therefore been submitted for information only.

**Resolved**

That foreign travel by Cllr Kevin Bentley to the East of England European Partnership Office in Brussels on 3 and 4 October 2016, at no cost to Essex County Council, be noted.

**6 Approval Confirmation for Officer Visit to Rotterdam**

The Committee considered report FTC/08/16 by the Secretary to the Committee, which sought to confirm the action agreed in principle since the last meeting regarding proposed foreign travel to Rotterdam to attend the Interreg 2 Seas Project SPONGE 2020 Conference.

Will Humpington, Environment Partnerships Coordinator, was in attendance to answer Members questions. The Officer provided background information regarding the project to reduce floodwater at the Basildon Hospital Site, the contribution to the delivery of the ECC Flood Capital programme and funding split.

Members also noted that a further application for officer foreign travel had been made in connection with this project and would be considered, subject to the agreement of the Chairman, as an item of urgent business at this meeting (Minute 12 refers)

**Resolved**

That the action agreed in principle since the last meeting of the Committee to approve foreign travel for three officers to Rotterdam to attend the Interreg 2 Seas Project SPONGE 2020 Conference between 12 and 14 September 2016 at a total estimated cost of £995, be confirmed.

**7 Feedback from Officer Travel to Barcelona**

Members received report FTC/09/16, presented by Louise Hall, Head of Commissioning (Vulnerable People), providing feedback from Officers following their visit to Barcelona in June 2016, as requested by the Committee when it approved the application in March of this year.

In introducing the report, Ms Hall commented on the investment of the Catalanian Government in technology and the connectivity this provided in providing proactive support to vulnerable adults.

In response to Members questions, Ms Hall confirmed a series of workshops with partners was taking place to assess current use of technology and to look at the future model.

**Resolved**

That the report be noted.

**8 Feedback from Member Travel to China**

Members received report FTC/10/16, presented by Councillor Kevin Bentley, which provided feedback following his visit to China in October 2015, as requested by the Committee when it approved the application in September 2015.

Councillor Bentley highlighted the introduction of cultural centres in Jiangsu and Chelmsford as a result of this visit. The centres are due to launch shortly and are privately funded.

**Resolved**

That the report be noted.

**9 Approval for Member and Officer attendance at CNN Conference**

Councillors Finch and Madden declared a Code interest in this item and took not part in the voting thereon (minute 3 above refers).

Members considered report FTC/11/16 by the Secretary to the Committee, which sought approval for for five members and one officer to attend the County Councils Network (CCN) annual conference from 6 to 8 November 2016 in Guildford, Surrey.

**Resolved**

That attendance for five members and one officer at the CCN annual conference from 6 to 8 November 2016 in Guildford, Surrey at a total estimated cost of £3860 plus VAT, be approved.

**10 Date of Next Meeting**

The Committee noted that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 18 October 2016 at 10.15 or on the rising of the Cabinet meeting to be held that same morning, whichever was the later.

**11 Urgent Business**

The Chairman agreed to consider report FTC/12/16, Approval for Officer Foreign Travel to The Netherlands, as an item of urgent business due to the visit being scheduled to take place before the next meeting of the Committee.

In response to a question from Councillor Aspinell regarding whether the meeting could take place using video conferencing, the Chairman commented on the value of face to face communication in relationship building and where there were multiple attendees. The Chairman expressed that these benefits outweighed the low financial outlay for this visit.

**Resolved**

That foreign travel to Amsterdam, The Netherlands for Nicola China to attend a one day conference relating to the Interreg 2 Seas SPONGE2020 project on 7 October 2016 at an estimated cost of £123 be approved/not approved.

**Chairman**