

APPROVAL FOR VISITS MADE BY MEMBERS

involving travel abroad / individual costs exceeding £500 / aggregate costs for more than one member of £1,000

Name of Member(s) travelling:

Cllr John Jowers (5th - 6th Nov) for 1 below
Andrew Cook (5th - 7th Nov) for 1&2 below
Hilary Rowlands (5th - 7th Nov) for 1&2 below

Details of the visit (dates are shown above):

The visit comprises of 2 elements.

- 1) Attendance at the End Conference for the EU funded SUSCOD Project
- 2) Evaluation of the SUSCOD project by those directly involved with its delivery

Attendance at the End Conference forms part of the SUSCOD Project (funded through Interreg IVb North Sea Region Programme). The costs of travel and accommodation are included within the programme budget, funded by the EU (with project activity match from ECC).

Estimated cost of the visit:

£ 1306.96 Total Cost for 3 attendees
(excl taxes)

Rationale for the estimated cost:

* Please note you will need to demonstrate that in accordance with the Members' Allowances Scheme three quotes have been obtained before booking foreign hotels.

All 3 attendees have been invited to attend the morning conference. Officers have also been invited to participate in a further activity to undertake the final evaluation of the project

Figures (totals in brackets) presented include ;

accommodation costs £175 (excl taxes) per night per person (£875)
specific hotel selected from those recommended due to proximity to station and timing for return flight on 7th November.

Alternative quotes from those recommended included Hilton hotel at £185 - £202 pppn and Park Plaza at £151 pppn (but further from the central station, and hence a potential taxi fare slightly increased journey time could result)

flights £97 - £142 per person depending on time of travel
(£353.96)

train to city centre £6 per person (£18)

Subsistence £20 per person for one evening meal (5th Nov) (£60)

Purpose of the visit and anticipated value to the County Council:

ECC has already had substantial benefit from this Project through a series of physical infrastructure projects on the coast together with other programmes of activity involving partners, shared learning and added value from the third sector.

Transnational activity and cooperation are fundamental parts of the project and attendance at conferences is a key component which is expected as part of participation in the Project. The conference aims to enable partners to learn about a

new potential EU Directive as well as examples of best practice in Integrated Coastal Zone Management. The subsequent evaluation event, will enable officers to discuss the success or otherwise of different aspects of the Project with a variety of transnational colleagues, and it is anticipated that this will assist with future delivery of coastal projects in Essex. The events will also enable stronger relationships to be developed which could assist with the development of future European funded projects once the new funding programmes are announced in 2014.

The officers listed, have both been actively involved with the management of the SUSCOD project. Their attendance at both the End Conference and the evaluation session is considered essential to successfully close this 3 year project down. It will also enable the sharing of knowledge and lessons learnt throughout the project and to ensure these are fed back to the lead and other partners. Attendance will also provide the opportunity for initial informal discussions with existing partners regarding the potential for further partnership working in the future. It is understood that content from the coastal conference held in Essex in September 2013, is being used for the end conference in the morning and it is therefore also important that officers are in attendance to respond to any resultant questions.

A number of European Partners recently attended an International Coastal Conference which took place in Clacton on 25th September and was organised as part of UK partners' commitments to the SUSCOD project. Cllr Jowers was Chairman for this event, and received the invitation to attend this End Conference following his valued contribution and interaction with European partners on that occasion. Participation in the 2 activities by officers who have worked on the SUSCOD project during the last 3 years has been considered essential given ECC's active participation in the Project Steering Group, Project Management Group, and as Lead Partner for one of the Work Packages, as well as participation in a number of other Work Packages.

Background re SUSCOD project

SUSCOD stands for SUsustainable COastal Development

SUSCOD aims to support a step change in coastal decision making through finding new ways to improve coordination and thereby also the quality of decision making, particularly through greater emphasis on the 8 principles for Integrated Coastal Zone Management which were previously approved by the EU (more info can be accessed via this link <http://www.suscod.eu/Pages/Suscod/ICZMPrinciples.aspx>)

The SUSCOD programme is to end in December 2013 after a 3 year successful international partnership. It has been a very fruitful project with the creation of the Essex Coastal Forum and 3 related conferences, an Essex Coastal Warden scheme, planning studies in Harwich (including a proposed location for a new marina) and improvements to the town's public realm, the construction of Crag Walk in Walton on the Naze, designs for an associated visitors' centre and the creation, signposting and promotion of 3 educational walks on the cliff top. Activity has also included projects to tackle deprivation in Dovercourt. This has included a successful brochure to promote visitor opportunities in the town, as well as interesting walking routes off the cruise ships in Harwich, into the old seaside town. The activity has been varied and highly successful. The current performance is due to strong partnership working not only within Essex County Council, but also with partners across Essex and internationally.

SUSCOD international partners are

- Agency for Maritime and Coastal Services, Belgium
- Essex County Council, UK
- Fife Coast and Countryside Trust, Scotland
- Flanders Hydraulics Research, Belgium
- North Bohuslän, Sweden
- Province of North-Holland, The Netherlands
- Region Zealand, Denmark

Comments of the Chief Executive

15/10/13

I am assured that this is a necessary trip by the Executive Director for the benefit of ECC and partners.

Comments of the Section 151 Officer

Purpose of the visit is aligned to ECC business as confirmed as necessary by the Executive Director.

Margaret Lee 16/10/13

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