

APPROVAL FOR AD HOC FOREIGN VISITS MADE BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Name of Members and Officer(s) To Be Confirmed based on availability:
travelling:

1. Cllr Peter Martin
2. Cllr David Finch
3. Cllr Stephen Castle
4. Joanna Killian
5. Robert Overall
6. Margaret Lee
7. Dave Hill
8. Jim Barker McCardle - Partner
9. Richard Puleston
10. Anthony Doyle
11. Jo Smith
12. Terry Osborne
13. Gwyn Owen

Possibly:
Keir Lynch

Details of the visit (incl. dates):

LGC Awards Evening Presentation and Dinner, 13 March 2013, Grosvenor House Hotel Park Lane, London

Essex County Council has been shortlisted for 5 Awards in the Local Government Chronicle Awards. These are:

1. Council of the Year – Essex County Council
2. Central Services Team of the Year - Delivering Transformational Change through Procurement
3. Public Private Partnership - Essex Property and Facilities Management (ECC/MITIE)
4. Corporate Governance - Corporate Governance
5. Public Sector Partnership - Essex County Traveller Unit

<i>Estimated cost of the visit for LGC Awards:</i>	£1,523.50
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Rationale for the estimated cost:

We have received some 'sponsorship income' in the shape of hospitality provided by Price Waterhouse Coopers and MITIE who have offered Essex County Council (ECC) spaces on tables. Thirteen spaces have been offered to ECC.

A list is appended to this report setting out the hospitality to Essex County Council.

Without the sponsorship income received, the total cost of attendance at this event would be £4,043.50p (travel estimated to be £263.50)

Cost of tables – £2,520 (inc VAT) per table. Total cost £3,780 (inc VAT) for 1.5 tables
Cost of travel - £263.50p (this is made up of the cost of tickets, a group booking fee and collection fees).

The total 'sponsorship' income received is £2,520.

The cost to Essex County Council of attending this event is therefore £1,523.50p including travel.

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

The LGC Awards were launched sixteen years ago by the Local Government Chronicle. They were the very first awards scheme to recognise and celebrate achievements from across local government. ECC has been shortlisted for five awards including Council of the Year. The judging visits for these awards took place throughout January. As a shortlisted Council, ECC is invited to attend the Awards evening where the winners will be announced.

In today's difficult economic climate, it is important that Council employees and our partners are able to be recognised and celebrated for their hard work and innovation. This in turn helps to boost moral across the Council as a whole as teams come together to share in the collective achievement of the organisation.

The awards ceremony itself acts as a national platform for sharing best practice and acquiring new ideas as attendees will learn about the innovative steps taken elsewhere. At the LGC Live event, both Council of the Year and Most Improved Council of the Year finalists will present their entry to a panel of judges and attendees will also be able to hear presentations from previous winners, take part in a series of big issue discussions and make connections at an organised networking session.

Summary:

Essex County Council has been shortlisted for 5 Awards in the Local Government Chronicle Awards. These are:

1. Council of the Year – Essex County Council
2. Central Services Team of the Year - Delivering Transformational Change through Procurement
3. Public Private Partnership - Essex Property and Facilities Management (ECC/MITIE)
4. Corporate Governance - Corporate Governance
5. Public Sector Partnership - Essex County Traveller Unit

The value to Essex will be to:

- a) Showcase Essex County Council as a leader in local government across a range of services.
- b) Raise our profile with other local authorities, public sector bodies, and to current and potential private sector partners as a leader in public service

- c) Raise our profile as a forward thinking and innovative local authority.
- d) The ability to network with over 1,300 of our peers.
- e) Learning best practice from the other award winners, particularly how others are being innovative and delivering top quality services.
- f) Provide public recognition to our staff of their excellent performance

The Terms of Reference for this Committee do not strictly cover this event, but in the interests of openness and transparency, it was felt appropriate to report to members on the planned attendance at the event and the benefits that will be derived from it.

Endorsed by: Chief Executive and Executive Director for Finance*

Comments of the Chief Executive

The Council has been shortlisted for a number of awards in recognition of its achievements in 2012. The attendees are those who have submitted and presented for ECC through the selection process and have, in their own right, delivered the performance outcomes or improvements that the rewards recognise. The shortlisting alone has boosted morale in the teams that are being celebrated and allowed a moment of positive reflection in tough times.

The Council has sought the sponsorship of partners to reduce costs. In the case of MITIE they are being considered alongside ECC in the partnership category. Both PWC and MITIE won their contracts in open tender, prior to the event in consideration. Given that all three statutory officers, tasked with advising this Committee, have been selected for attendance at the event, it was felt even more appropriate for the decision to be considered and approved in this way.

Comments of the Section 151 Officer

The event relates to ECC business, and the authority has been mindful of cost by seeking sponsorship of places. This sponsorship is provided by MITIE and PWC, current contractors / providers of ECC. In both cases, the relevant contracts were won in an open tender process sometime prior to any knowledge of this event or the related sponsorship.

A Gifts and Hospitality form is attached for completeness.

Gifts and Hospitality Register

Section One of this form should be completed (either in electronic or paper form), in accordance with the Officer code of conduct, for any offers of hospitality or gifts offered by an external individual or body and proposed to be accepted. Please read the notes overleaf before completing the form.

SECTION ONE: Details of the offer – this section must be completed by the Officer RECEIVING the offer	
Date offer received	7/1/2012
Name of Officer	Please see the report to the Foreign Travel Committee.
Service/section	ECC wide
Who is offering the gift or hospitality?	Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC)
What is your and/or the County Council's relationship with the organisation offering the gift or hospitality (please delete as appropriate)?	PwC are currently working with Essex County Council on elements of the Transformation Mark II project.
Nature of gift or hospitality, approximate value, and date of event (if applicable)	PwC are sponsoring a table at the LGC Awards and Dinner in London on 13 March 2013; Value of £2,520;
Details of other employees, members or related personnel offered the same gift or hospitality	Please see the report to the Foreign Travel Committee
Offer accepted/declined, strike through as appropriate:	Acceptance Intended
Benefit to Essex County Council in accepting the offer (where applicable)	<p>The benefit to Essex will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> g) Showcase Essex County Council as a leader in local government across a range of services. h) Raise our profile with other local authorities, public sector bodies, and to current and potential private sector partners as a leader in public service i) Raise our profile as a forward thinking and innovative local authority. j) The ability to network with over 1,300 of our peers. k) Learning best practice from the other award winners, particularly how others are being innovative and delivering top quality services. l) Provide public recognition to our staff of their excellent performance
Officer signature	This request is referred to the Foreign Travel Committee for approval.
Date	10 February 2013
Following completion of the above section and before any offer is accepted, this form must be sent to the relevant Head of Service, Director (or the Chief Executive) for authorisation.	

SECTION TWO: Action authorised by Head of Service, Executive Director, Chief Executive, – Upward agreement is required. Peer level sign off is not acceptable. Offers received by staff below Head of Service must be authorised by the Head of Service. Offers received by Heads of Services must be authorised by the Executive Director Offers received by Directors must be authorised by the Chief Executive. Offers received by the Chief Executive must be authorised by the Executive Director for Finance or the Director for Transformation	
Name of Authorising Officer	This request is referred to the Foreign Travel Committee for approval.
Record of Authorising Officer's action See notes overleaf and delete as appropriate	TBC following decision of the Foreign Travel Committee.

Authorising Officer's signature	N/A
Date	Date of the Foreign Travel Committee meeting is 19 February 2013.
Authorising Officers please ensure: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The employee is informed of your decision 2. This form is indexed and recorded on your Register of Gifts and Hospitality 3. This form is filed in the relevant Register of Gifts and Hospitality 	

Directors review the 'Register of Gifts and Hospitality' held by Service Areas on a regular basis and will question any unusual or repeat entries. **All** registers are all subject to review by Internal Audit