

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: 5 members and 2 officers (Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive)

Members will be the Leader of the Council and 3 other Cabinet Members. Details will be finalised after the elections.
Cllr Theresa Higgins

Details of the visit (incl. dates):

LGA Annual Conference 2nd – 4th July 2013 in Manchester.

Estimated cost of the visit: £6737.50

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.

Delegate costs = £495pp x 7 delegates = £3,465

Train costs = £217.50 x 7 delegates = £1,522.50

Accommodation costs (3 nights) = £90 x 3 nights x 5 people = £1,350

Accommodation (2 nights) = £100 x 2 nights x 2 people = £400

Estimated Total = £6,737.50

Notes:

Hotel has been booked through Inntel and the delegates will be staying at the Hilton Deansgate.

We have secured a cost for members of £90 per night B&B for 3 nights. As officers are attending for 2 nights, the best rate we could get was £100 per night.

These prices are within the allowable rate for officers and members of £150 per night in a major UK city.

The conference fee per delegate is £495 plus VAT.

Rail fare cannot be finalised yet as fares cannot be checked for July, but going on April prices (departing on a Monday, returning on a Thursday):

- Outgoing: £176 anytime ticket
- Return: £41.50 advance ticket
- Total £217.50

Total travel costs is therefore (£217.50 x 5 equalling) £1,522.50.

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

The Local Government Association (LGA) is a politically-led, cross-party organisation which works on behalf of councils across England and Wales to ensure that local government has a strong and credible voice with national government. The LGAs membership also includes fire, national park, passenger transport and police authorities.

The LGA Annual Conference is one of the largest events in the local government calendar, and regularly attracts over 1,100 delegates. The conference is attended by Council Leaders and Chief Executives, senior officers, lead members and policy makers across local government, and it also attracts high numbers from LGA partner organisations in the wider public sector, and the private and voluntary sectors.

With a growing emphasis on partnership working at Essex County Council, the LGA Annual Conference is a prime opportunity to discuss best practice and share innovation from delegates up and down the country. In addition, delegates will have the opportunity to share experiences, hear high-profile speakers, debate issues of importance, participate in these debates, and network with colleagues, peers and partners.

Comments of the Chief Executive

This is a major conference, run on an annual basis, attended by both politicians and officers. It is an important event for sharing best practice, networking and training. It also allows councils to showcase their achievements to others. It provides a key opportunity for participants to engage with national politicians who often attend in speaking roles to share policy and practice programmes, as well as deliver key announcements on new initiatives. It is a key opportunity for the Local Government 'family' to voice their priorities. I therefore support the proposal. As I will also be attending the conference, the comments of the Executive Director for Finance should be considered as the prime source of advice in this matter.

Comments of the Section 151 Officer

Approved

The LGA is a key overarching body for local government and has a key role to play in policy development and relationships, including those with central government. Rationale for the visit and the benefit to Essex County Council is clearly set out above, and costs comply with relevant ECC policies