

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 Kevin Bentley

Details of the visit (incl. dates): 15 & 16th March 2016

Official Opening of the new East of England European Partnership Office in Brussels on 15th March 2016

Estimated cost of the visit:

£

n/a – Self funded

TOTAL COST TO ECC: £0

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.

Accommodation:

Cllr Kevin Bentley - self funded Hotel 1 night (paid for by Cabinet Member)

Travel:

St Pancras to Brussels return

Self-funded by Cabinet member

Reason for visit:

- Meeting with European Commission to discuss waste and recycling elements of new Circular Economy package.
- Meeting with MEPs to discuss how Essex can maximise its European funding.
- Meeting with representatives of other European regions to discuss EU funding and project cooperation / coordination.

Cllr Bentley is to hosting the opening of the new Brussels Office of the East of England European Partnership on 15 March

Essex County Council are a member of the East of England European Partnership, which is setup to assist partner organisations to improve their access to EU Funding. They do this by

- Finding a path of opportunity for partners through the EU institutions and legislation;
- Providing intelligence and advance warning of EU policy and funding developments;

- Raising the profile of individual partners in particular and the East of England in general with key policy makers in the EU and organisations across the EU;
- Creating links through networking and partner searches with other European regions in support of transnational project development.

ECC has been an active participant in previous European Funding programmes securing £12.8m in the last programme which ran from 2007 – 2013. This visit will provide an opportunity for Essex County Council to nurture and develop its network, to maximise the benefits of membership of the East of England European partnership and ensure that ECC priorities are met, enhancing opportunities to leverage future European funding into the County.

Cllr Bentley is also chair of the Europe and International Panel (EIP) which provides strategic guidance to the work of the European Partnership, and is its voice on issues relating to European and international affairs. It meets quarterly and has a broad stakeholder engagement including local government (East of England LGA), international trade, business, social and environmental partners, Local Enterprise Partnerships as well as Members of the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions. This trip also presents an opportunity to introduce Cllr Bentley to important partners of the EIP.

Comments of the Section 151 Officer