

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):

Day trip to the East of England European Partnership Office in Brussels on Thursday 30 July.

Estimated cost of the visit:	£ 115
	TOTAL COST TO ECC: £0 as Cabinet Member is paying for trip with personal funds.

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:

None as day trip

Travel:

Colchester – St Pancras International. Leaving 30th July (early morning, tbc) and returning on the same day. (evening, tbc).

Colchester – St Pancras (return) - £57.50
St Pancras – Brussels (return) - £57.50

Reason for visit:

Cllr Bentley is to attend the Brussels Office of the East of England European Partnership on 30 July

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 has also recently become 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.

An itinerary is being put together and will include visiting the office, introducing the Cabinet Member to new members of the office and reinforcing the Council's priorities and ideas for the future. Meetings are also being pursued with members of the European Commission during the visit.

Comments of the Section 151 Officer