

Report to Committee to consider applications to undertake certain duties by Members and Foreign Travel by Officers	FTC/12/14
Date of meeting: 23 September 2014	
Member and Officer Attendance at the LGA Annual Conference - Feedback	
Report by: Committee Services Manager	
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1 Purpose of the Report

- 1-1 To provide feedback (including final cost information) from Members and Officers following their attendance at the LGA Annual Conference in July, as requested by the Committee when it approved the application in February this year.

2 Recommendation

- 2-1 That the report be noted.

3 Background

- 3-1 On 25 February, the Committee approved the attendance of up to five members and two officers at the Local Government Association Annual Conference in July, at an estimated cost of £3,465. As a condition of this approval, the Committee requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting detailing the actual cost of attendance and including feedback from the delegates regarding their perception of the benefits of attending.
- 3-2 The delegates who attended were Councillors David Finch, Kevin Bentley, Theresa Higgins and Ivan Henderson and, the Chief Executive and the Executive Director for Corporate Services.

4 Costs

- 4-1 At the time the application was approved, total costs were estimated at £3,465. Actual costs were as follows:

Name	Conference Fee	Hotel	Travel	Total
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	£	£	£	£
David Finch	594	202	79.10	875.10
Kevin Bentley	594	202	79.10	875.10
Ivan Henderson	594	230	135.05	959.05
Theresa Higgins	594	220	89.10	903.10
Joanna Killian	594	182	120.35	896.35
Margaret Lee	594	162	0.00*	756.00
Total	3,564	1,198	502.70	5,264.7

* travel expenses met by LGA as a speaker

5 Report on the Visit

5-1 The following feedback has been received:

Councillor Kevin Bentley

- 5-2 I was involved in various activities as part of the LGA Conference, including speaking on Emerging Growth, a CCN Evening Reception, hosting a table discussion on the Employment and Skills Board, a Westminster and Manchester Council fringe event looking at incentives to drive local growth and acting as a judge for the LG Challenge Final.
- 5-3 On 8 July, I spoke about Economic Growth as part of a 'breakout' session that focused on the role of Councils, alongside LEPs in creating the right conditions for growth. This was an interesting session that emphasised the importance of local knowledge in identifying growth sectors and equipping residents with the necessary skills and capacity to achieve growth ambitions.
- 5-4 I was invited to the County Councils Network Evening Reception, which offered a useful opportunity to engage with County Leaders, Senior Executives and national experts on the issues facing members of the Network.
- 5-5 An 'Innovation Zone' was setup as a space for delegates to come and listen to various presentations, featuring two presentation zones and discussion tables for between 4-6 participants. I hosted a table discussion on the Employment and Skills Board.
- 5-6 I also attended the 'Follow the Money' fringe event that was hosted by Westminster City Council and Manchester City Council. This looked at the incentives to drive local growth, looking at the opportunities and barriers for local authorities to contribute to the local growth agenda. It was a good opportunity to contribute, promoting the work that is going on in Essex, and to listen to best practice from elsewhere.
- 5-7 I was also very pleased to have been selected to be on the panel to judge the LG Challenge 2014, where competitors took part in a series of real-life challenges in host authorities around the country, which test their individual and team-working skills. This gave an insight into innovative practice taking place in local

government across the country, commending those local government officers that think outside the box or go the extra mile.

- 5-8 Overall, I found that attendance at the LGA Conference was, as always, very worthwhile. It offered an opportunity to promote Essex County Council as a local government leader, as well as to learn about good practice from other Councils. The conference provided a variety of opportunities to network and make contacts with experts and other senior councillors and officers. This has immeasurable benefits in continuing to share and learn from elsewhere, but also in promoting Essex County Council and creating future opportunities to influence.

Councillor Ivan Henderson

- 5-9 I found the LGA conference extremely useful in gathering information and networking with Councillors and other organisations offering services to Local Authorities.
- 5-10 One area of local Government policy which was up for some lively discussion within the fringe meetings was concerning Local Enterprise Partnerships and the complicated and long winded process to access Government grants and Growth funds. Councillors from all parties also made the point that future Governments need to have as a policy priority more devolved powers to local Authorities.
- 5-11 I have always held the view that the LGA does a very effective job on making sure local Authority concerns and views are listened to by those who create laws that affect every council in this country.

The Chief Executive

- 5-12 In broad terms it was a successful event –
- 5-13 Positive: the exhibition, fringe events, innovation hubs were excellent, some very useful plenary sessions
- 5-14 Negative – a bit flat as last one pre-election.

The Leader

- 5-15 The Leader will give an oral report at the meeting
- 5-16 The Executive Director for Corporate Services and Customer Operations
- 5-17 Overall the conference was good with ample networking opportunities and useful fringe and main events relevant to our business today.
- 5-18 Specific areas of note – Fringe meeting on innovative finance hearing from CEOs and Leaders around the country on projects underway; Care Act – discussion on the implication of the act and some ideas on IT solutions to ensure processes are efficient and effective; Social Finance main hall discussion which I then followed up

with by leading a session in the innovation hub on ECC Social Impact bond which was well received.