

Committee to consider applications to undertake certain duties by Members and foreign travel by Officers	FTC/06/13
date: 18 June 2013	

Approval for a visit to be undertaken by Members and Officers: Municipal Journal Awards Evening Presentation and Dinner, 20 June 2013

Report by Governance Team Manager

Enquiries to Judith Dignum, 01245 430044, ext 20044

1. Purpose of the Report

To consider an application for Members and Officers to attend the Municipal Journal Awards Evening Presentation and Dinner in London on 20 June 2013.

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 David Finch
2. Andrew Ford (PwC)
3. David Gimson (PwC)
4. Jessica Leitch (PwC)
5. Denise Murray
6. Vicki Branchett
7. Roger Bullen
8. Angela Hutchings
9. Sophie Kavanagh
10. Mark Hobson

Details of the visit (incl. dates):

MJ Awards Evening Presentation and Dinner, 20 June 2013, London Hilton Hotel, Park Lane, London

Essex County Council has been shortlisted for 3 Awards in the Municipal Journal Awards. These are:

1. Workforce Transformation – Transformation Support Unit
2. Innovation in Finance - Social Finance
3. Legal Services – Essex Legal Services

Estimated cost of the visit for MJ

Awards: £200.00

Rationale for the estimated cost:

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

MJ Achievement Awards 2013 Hospitality Summary

- The event is being held at the London Hilton Hotel on Park Lane, London.
- The evening commences with a champagne reception.
- The cost of the table includes a three course dinner, 6 bottles of wine and still and sparkling water
- Evening entertainment following the ceremony to include a networking opportunity and a live band.

Without the sponsorship income received, the total cost of attendance at this event would be £2360.00 (travel estimated to be £200). This assumes that Essex County Council would have used all 10 spaces available on the table.

Cost of table – £2,160 (inc VAT). Seven places on that table equates to £1512 (7x £216)

Cost of travel - £200 (this is an estimated figure as travel plans by those attending have not been confirmed).

The total 'sponsorship' income received is £1512.

The cost to Essex County Council of attending this event is therefore estimated at £200 travel costs.

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

This is the tenth anniversary of the MJ Achievement Awards. ECC has been shortlisted for three awards. 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. Attendees will also be able to hear examples of other entrants' achievements and make connections at an organised networking session.

Summary:

Essex County Council has been shortlisted for 3 Awards in the Municipal Journal Achievement Awards. These are:

1. Workforce Transformation – Transformation Support Unit
2. Innovation in Finance - Social Finance
3. Legal Services – Essex Legal Services

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. PWC won their contract in open tender, prior to the event in consideration. Having sought the approval of the Committee for attendance at the recent LGC Awards it was considered appropriate to seek similar approval for these awards.

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 PWC, a current contractor / provider of ECC. The relevant contract was 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	6/5/2013
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 MJ Achievement Awards and Dinner in London on 20 June 2013; Value of £1512;
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	6 June 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 18 June 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