

Committee to consider applications to undertake certain duties by Members and Foreign Travel by Officers

10:30	Tuesday, 22 April 2014	Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex
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Please note: This Committee will commence at the time shown above, or on the rise of the Cabinet meeting to be held that morning, whichever is the later.

Quorum: 3

Membership:

M Danvers
D Finch
M Mackrory
D Madden
S Walsh

For information about the meeting please ask for:

Judith Dignum (Governance Team Manager)

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Essex County Council

Essex County Council and Committees Information

All Council and Committee Meetings are held in public unless the business is exempt in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972.

Most meetings are held at County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1LX. A map and directions to County Hall can be found at the following address on the Council's website:
<http://www.essex.gov.uk/Your-Council/Local-Government-Essex/Pages/Visit-County-Hall.aspx>

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The Council Chamber and Committee Rooms are accessible by lift and are located on the first and second floors of County Hall.

If you have a need for documents in the following formats, large print, Braille, on disk or in alternative languages and easy read please contact the Committee Officer before the meeting takes place. If you have specific access requirements such as access to induction loops, a signer, level access or information in Braille please inform the Committee Officer before the meeting takes place. For any further information contact the Committee Officer.

Induction loop facilities are available in most Meeting Rooms. Specialist head sets are available from Duke Street and E Block Receptions.

The agenda is also available on the Essex County Council website, www.essex.gov.uk. From the Home Page, click on 'Your Council', then on 'Meetings and Agendas'. Finally, select the relevant committee from the calendar of meetings.

Please note that an audio recording may be made of the meeting – at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded.

Part 1

(During consideration of these items the meeting is likely to be open to the press and public)

		Pages
1	Apologies for Absence	
2	Minutes To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2014	5 - 6
3	Declarations of Interest To note any declarations of interest to be made by Members	
4	Member Foreign Travel Visit to Antwerp - Floodcom Final Conference	7 - 10
5	Member Foreign Travel Visit to Antwerp EU Walls and Gardens Project	11 - 14
6	Urgent Business To consider any matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.	

Exempt Items

(During consideration of these items the meeting is not likely to be open to the press and public)

To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of an agenda item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 or it being confidential for the purposes of Section 100A(2) of that Act.

In each case, Members are asked to decide whether, in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption (and discussing the matter in private) outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

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Urgent Exempt Business

To consider in private any other matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

Minutes of a Meeting of the Committee to consider applications to undertake certain duties by Members and foreign travel by Officers held at County Hall, Chelmsford, at 11.45am on 25 February 2014

Present:

Councillors

John	Aldridge	(Chairman) (substitute for Councillor David Finch)
Michael	Danvers	
Mike	Mackrory	
Dick	Madden	
Simon	Walsh	

An apology for absence was received from Councillor David Finch, for whom Councillor John Aldridge substituted.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. Approval for Member Visit to Jiangsu Province

Councillor Sue Lissimore, Peter Manning (Head of International Trade) and Paul White (International Trade Manager) were present during this item to respond to Members' questions.

The Committee considered report FTC/01/14 by the Committee Services Manager which sought approval for Councillor Sue Lissimore (Deputy to Councillor Kevin Bentley, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Infrastructure) to visit Jiangsu Province, China from 25 March – 5 April 2014. Councillor Lissimore would be accompanied by two officers from the International Trade Team, which had prior approval to travel abroad. The signed approval for the officers concerned to undertake this visit was attached as an appendix to the report, in accordance with the Council's policy for Officer Foreign Travel, Gifts and Hospitality.

The following points were made in response to Members' questions:

- The cost of the visit would be met from income paid to ECC in respect of fees to cover the cost of the China trade and investment promotion work.
- Councillor Lissimore commented on the briefings and advice she had received in preparation for the role as leader of the delegation, and on her experience of hosting delegations from Jiangsu to the UK.

The Committee asked to receive a report to a subsequent meeting giving feedback from the visit.

Resolved:

- (1) That the visit of Councillor Sue Lissimore to Jiangsu Province from 25 March – 5 April 2014 at an estimated cost of £2033.16 be approved.
- (2) That a report giving feedback from the visit be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

3. Approval for Member and Officer Attendance at the Local Government Association (LGA) Annual Conference

The Committee considered report FTC/02/14 by the Committee Services Manager which sought approval for five members and two officers to attend the Local Government Association (LGA) Annual Conference in Bournemouth from 8 – 10 July 2014. The attendees would be Councillors David Finch, Kevin Bentley, Julie Young, Theresa Higgins and one UKIP nominee, plus the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive.

Commenting on the value of attendance at the Conference, Councillor Mackrory referred to the opportunities it offered to meet and lobby government ministers and to put forward the Council's case.

The Committee asked to receive a report to a future meeting detailing the actual cost of attendance and including feedbacks from all ECC delegates regarding their perception of the benefits of attending.

Resolved:

- (1) That approval be given for the attendance of five members and two officers at the Local Government Association Annual Conference in Bournemouth from 8-10 July 2014 at an estimated total cost of £3,465.
- (2) That a report detailing the actual cost of attendance and including feedback from all ECC delegates regarding their perception of the benefits of attending be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

4. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 18 March 2014 at 10.30am or on the rising of the Cabinet meeting to be held that same morning, whichever is the later.

The meeting closed at 11.55am

Chairman
18 March 2014

Committee to consider applications to undertake certain duties by Members and Foreign Travel by Officers	FTC/03/14
Date: 22 April 2014	
Approval for Member Visit to Antwerp (Floodcom Final Conference)	
Report by: Committee Services Manager	
Enquiries to: Judith Dignum, 01245 430044, ext 20044	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To consider an application (attached as Appendix 1 to this report) for Councillor John Jowers, Cabinet Member for Libraries, Communities and Planning, to attend the Floodcom Final Conference in Antwerp from 24 - 25 September 2014.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That approval be given/not given for Councillor John Jowers to attend the Floodcom Final Conference in Antwerp from 24 – 25 September 2014 at an estimated cost to the Council of £220.

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: *John Jowers*

Details of the visit (incl. dates):

Travel to Antwerp on 23 September 2014, attend the Floodcom Final Conference on the 24th September and travel back on the 25 September 2014.

Estimated cost of the visit: £ 440. *All costs re-imbursed by EU at 50%. Therefore cost to ECC = £220*

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.

Flights: £130 (City Jet from London City to Antwerp)

Other Travel: £40 (trains to London City)

Accommodation: 2 nights in Lindner Hotel £250

Subsistence: £20 (meal on first night, all other food provided)

All costs re-imbursed by EU at 50%. Therefore cost to council = £220

The conference is being held in the Lindner Hotel, Antwerp with all activities and meals provided at the hotel. We will be applying for a block booking discount with the venue for all delegates staying in the hotel.

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

Floodcom is a 2Seas Programme EU funded project dealing with flood alleviation schemes and community engagement on flooding issues with a total budget of €4.5 million.

Essex is lead partner and there are also partners from Belgium, France and the Netherlands. This three year project closes with a final conference in Antwerp on 24 September where we will celebrate its achievements, including an innovative education activity developed by Essex.

As lead partner we would like Cllr Jowers to represent us at a senior level and participate at the conference as host. Given the prestige of the project, we feel that representation from a councillor level is necessary. 50% of all costs will be reimbursed from the EU as a project expense.

Comments of the Chief Executive

Approved - 

Comments of the Section 151 Officer

Approved - conference is relevant to ECC business and costs are in line with ECC travel and subsistence policies.

Marguerite 1/4/14

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Committee to consider applications to undertake certain duties by Members and Foreign Travel by Officers	FTC/04/14
Date: 22 April 2014	
Approval for Member Visit to Antwerp (EU Walls and Gardens Project)	
Report by: Committee Services Manager	
Enquiries to: Judith Dignum, 01245 430044, ext 20044	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To consider an application (attached to this report) for Councillor John Jowers, Cabinet Member for Libraries, Communities and Planning, to attend the EU Walls and Gardens Project at Fort of Duffel near Antwerp from 29 - 30 April 2014.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That approval be given/not given for Councillor John Jowers to attend the EU Walls and Gardens Project at Fort of Duffel, near Antwerp, from 29 – 30 April 2014 at an estimated cost to the Council of £320.

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:

John Jowers

Details of the visit (incl. dates):

30th April to 1st May 2014

Estimated cost of the visit: £ 320

Rationale for the estimated cost: Travel by national rail and Eurostar £180, Accommodation and subsistence £140.

* Please note you will need to demonstrate that in accordance with the Members' Allowances Scheme three quotes have been obtained before booking foreign hotels.

Purpose of the visit and anticipated value to the County Council: Cllr Jowers has been invited to represent the Council at the opening event for Fort Duffel on 30th April. The restoration and opening up to the public of the fort forms part of the EU-funded Walls and Gardens project, in which the County Council is a partner. The County Council has been taking a leading role in the interpretation activities of the project. These include the creation of an innovative mobile phone application that allows the partners to develop trails linking fortified sites. A guide to the development of forts is also being prepared for the general public.

Politicians and representatives from the other 20 partners involved in the project will be at the event. They include the Deputy Prime Minister of the Flemish Government and the Mayor of Duffel. Attendance by Cllr Jowers is important for the reputation of the authority and will demonstrate Essex County Council's commitment and support for the project which will bring financial and social benefits for the County Council and the people of Essex.

The opening event takes place at 18:00 and is followed by an evening reception, therefore an overnight stay will be required. **The travel costs are eligible for funding as part of Walls and Gardens which means that 50% can be reclaimed by the County Council.** The travel costs are a relatively small amount compared to the overall project budget for ECC which is in excess of £350,000.

Comments of the Chief Executive

I approve

Joanna Killian 11 April 2014

Comments of the Section 151 Officer

Approved – this falls within the remit of ECC business and costs are according to relevant ECC policies

Margaret Lee 11 April 2014