

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

09:00	Wednesday, 27 March 2013	Committee Room 2, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex
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Quorum: 3

Membership:

Councillor Peter Martin (Chairman)
Councillor Bill Dick
Councillor David Finch
Councillor Michael Lager (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Mike Mackrory

For information about the meeting please ask for:

Judith Dignum (Lead Governance Officer)

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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>

There is ramped access to the building for wheelchair users and people with mobility disabilities.

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	5 - 8
3 Declarations of Interest To note any declarations of interest to be made by Members	
4 Approval for a visit to be undertaken by Members and Officers	9 - 12
5 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.

6 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.	
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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 11.00am on 19 February 2013

Present:

Councillors

David Finch
Michael Lager
Mike Mackrory
Peter Martin (Chairman)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Bill Dick.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the deletion of 'Peter Martin' and its replacement by 'Michael Lager' in minute 1 (Apologies for absence).

Arising from consideration of minute 5 (Urgent Business - Approval for a visit to be undertaken by an Officer), the Committee agreed that the Director of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and all SELEP staff who were also employees of Essex County Council should be added to the list of those exempt from the requirement to seek the Committee's approval to undertake foreign travel. Members also requested the Assistant Director – Corporate Law to submit a report to a future meeting identifying any further, similar bodies and seeking approval to exemption for their staff.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Director of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and all SELEP staff who are also Essex County Council employees be exempted from the requirement to seek the Committee's approval to undertake foreign travel.
- 2) The a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee identifying any further, similar bodes and seeking approval to exemption for their staff.

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

4. Approval for a visit to be undertaken by Members and Officers

The Committee considered report FTC/02/13 by the Secretary to the Committee detailing an application for a group of thirteen Members and Officers to attend the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards Evening Presentation and Dinner on 13 March 2013 at the Grosvenor House Hotel, London. The Council had been nominated for five LGC Awards.

The application had been endorsed by the Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer.

In considering the application, the Committee was advised that as the Chief Executive had been one of the award judges, the cost of her attendance would be met by the LGC. This, coupled with 'sponsorship income' worth £2520 received from PriceWaterhouseCoopers and MITIE, meant that the cost to the Council of attending the event would be £1313.50 including travel.

In response to concerns regarding the number of proposed attendees the rationale in selecting each attendee was explained. The Executive Manager in attendance (Tomi Platts) advised that this information had been omitted from the report in error and she undertook to supply it following the meeting. In the light of this, the Committee accepted that the number of attendees was proportionate to the number of awards and also agreed that an invitation should be extended to the Leader of the Opposition, as had occurred in the past.

Resolved:

That the attendance of Members and Officers, including the Leader of the Opposition, at the LGC Awards Evening Presentation and Dinner on 13 March 2013 be agreed.

5. Dates of Future Meetings

The Committee considered report FTC/03/13 by the Governance Team Manager seeking its agreement to dates of future meetings.

Resolved:

That future meetings of the Committee be held on the following dates, at 10.30am or on the rising of the Cabinet meeting to be held on the same day, whichever is the later:

2013

19 March

21 May

18 June

16 July

10 September

1 October

19 November

17 December

2014

21 January

The meeting closed at 11:15am.

Chairman
27 March 2013

Committee to consider applications to undertake certain duties by Members and foreign travel by Officers	FTC/04/13
date: 27 March 2013	

Approval for a visit to be undertaken by Members and Officers

Report by Governance Team Manager

Enquiries to Judith Dignum, 01245 430044, ext 20044

1. Purpose of the Report

To consider an application for five Members and two Officers to attend the Local Government Association Annual Conference from 2 – 4 July 2013 in Manchester.

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: 5 members and 2 officers (Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive)

Members will be the Leader of the Council and 3 other Cabinet Members. Details will be finalised after the elections.
Cllr Theresa Higgins

Details of the visit (incl. dates):

LGA Annual Conference 2nd – 4th July 2013 in Manchester.

Estimated cost of the visit: £6737.50

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.

Delegate costs = £495pp x 7 delegates = £3,465

Train costs = £217.50 x 7 delegates = £1,522.50

Accommodation costs (3 nights) = £90 x 3 nights x 5 people = £1,350

Accommodation (2 nights) = £100 x 2 nights x 2 people = £400

Estimated Total = £6,737.50

Notes:

Hotel has been booked through Inntel and the delegates will be staying at the Hilton Deansgate.

We have secured a cost for members of £90 per night B&B for 3 nights. As officers are attending for 2 nights, the best rate we could get was £100 per night.

These prices are within the allowable rate for officers and members of £150 per night in a major UK city.

The conference fee per delegate is £495 plus VAT.

Rail fare cannot be finalised yet as fares cannot be checked for July, but going on April prices (departing on a Monday, returning on a Thursday):

- Outgoing: £176 anytime ticket
- Return: £41.50 advance ticket
- Total £217.50

Total travel costs is therefore (£217.50 x 5 equalling) £1,522.50.

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

The Local Government Association (LGA) is a politically-led, cross-party organisation which works on behalf of councils across England and Wales to ensure that local government has a strong and credible voice with national government. The LGAs membership also includes fire, national park, passenger transport and police authorities.

The LGA Annual Conference is one of the largest events in the local government calendar, and regularly attracts over 1,100 delegates. The conference is attended by Council Leaders and Chief Executives, senior officers, lead members and policy makers across local government, and it also attracts high numbers from LGA partner organisations in the wider public sector, and the private and voluntary sectors.

With a growing emphasis on partnership working at Essex County Council, the LGA Annual Conference is a prime opportunity to discuss best practice and share innovation from delegates up and down the country. In addition, delegates will have the opportunity to share experiences, hear high-profile speakers, debate issues of importance, participate in these debates, and network with colleagues, peers and partners.

Comments of the Chief Executive

This is a major conference, run on an annual basis, attended by both politicians and officers. It is an important event for sharing best practice, networking and training. It also allows councils to showcase their achievements to others. It provides a key opportunity for participants to engage with national politicians who often attend in speaking roles to share policy and practice programmes, as well as deliver key announcements on new initiatives. It is a key opportunity for the Local Government 'family' to voice their priorities. I therefore support the proposal. As I will also be attending the conference, the comments of the Executive Director for Finance should be considered as the prime source of advice in this matter.

Comments of the Section 151 Officer

Approved

The LGA is a key overarching body for local government and has a key role to play in policy development and relationships, including those with central government. Rationale for the visit and the benefit to Essex County Council is clearly set out above, and costs comply with relevant ECC policies