

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