

**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 10:45am on 23 September 2014**

Present:

**Councillor**

Anne	Brown	(Chairman, and substitute for Councillor David Finch)
Michael	Danvers	
Theresa	Higgins	
Roger	Hirst	(substitute for Councillor Dick Madden)
Mike	Mackrory	
Andy	Wood	(substitute for Councillor Simon Walsh)

Councillors Sue Lissimore and Theresa Higgins were also in attendance.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Finch, Dick Madden and Simon Walsh, for whom, respectively, Councillors Anne Brown, Roger Hirst and Andy Wood substituted.

**2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

Members agreed to defer this item to the next.

**3. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**4. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Mackrory declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 (Member Attendance at the County Councils Network Annual Conference) in that he was one of the members due to represent the Council at the Conference (minute 5 below refers).

**5. Member Attendance at the County Councils Network (CNN) Annual Conference**

Councillor Mackrory declared a personal interest in this item (minute 4 above refers).

The Committee considered report FTC/08/14 by the Secretary to the Committee detailing an application for Members to attend the CCN Conference in Marlow, Buckinghamshire from 16-18 November 2014 at an estimated total cost of £4,606.30.

In considering the application, Members noted the value to the Council of attendance at the Conference, particularly in terms of the opportunity to meet with senior leaders at other county councils and with senior government ministers.

**Resolved:**

That the attendance of Councillors David Finch, Leader of the Council, Kevin Bentley, Deputy Leader, Dick Madden, Cabinet Member for Families and Children, Mike Mackrory, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, and Julie Young, Leader of the Labour Group at the CNN Conference in Marlow, Buckinghamshire from 16-18 November 2014 at an estimated total cost of £4,606.30 be approved.

**6. Officer Attendance at the Material Advanced Recovery Sustainable Systems (MARSS) First Public Workshop, Germany**

The Committee considered report FTC/09/14 by the Secretary to the Committee detailing an application for Sonia Davidson-Grant (currently acting Interim Executive Director for Place Commissioning) to attend the MARSS First Public Workshop to be held at Regent GMBH, Mertesdore, Germany on 6 October 2014 at an estimated cost of £450.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Higgins, Members noted that although Sonia Davidson-Grant was expected to attend the Workshop, an alternative nominee would be sought if required.

**Resolved:**

That the attendance of Sonia Davidson-Grant (acting Interim Executive Director for Place Commissioning), or alternative nominee, at the MARSS First Public Workshop to be held at Regent GMBH, Mertesdore, Germany on 6 October 2014 be approved.

**Secretary's Note:** Sonia Davidson-Grant has been appointed on a permanent basis to the position of Executive Director for Place Commissioning and her attendance at the Workshop has therefore been confirmed.

**7. Officer Attendance at the Middle East Smart Gov Summit, Dubai**

The Committee considered report FTC/10/14 by the Secretary to the Committee detailing an application for David Wilde (Director for Information Services) to attend and speak at the Middle East Smart Gov Summit in Dubai from 9-10 December 2014. The costs of travel and accommodation would be met by the organisers of the event, Fleming Gulf, who had issued the personal invitation to Mr Wilde to speak.

The Committee was informed that, should personal circumstances prevent Mr Wilde from attending the Summit, arrangements would be made to send a substitute.

**Resolved:**

That the attendance of David Wilde, Director for Information Services, or his substitute, at the Middle East Smart Gov Summit in Dubai at no cost to the Council be approved.

**8. Report of Action Taken Since Last Meeting – Member Visit to Finland**

The Committee received report FTC/11/14 which confirmed the action taken since the last meeting regarding a proposed visit to Finland by the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning.

In considering the report, the Committee was informed that a majority of Members had expressed their support for the application upon being consulted by email.

**Resolved:**

That the decision taken since the last meeting of the Committee to approve a visit to Finland by Councillor Ray Gooding, Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, from 1-3 October 2014 at a total cost of £549 (plus £20 Members meal allowance) be noted.

**9. Member and Officer Attendance at the Local Government Association (LGA) Annual Conference**

The Committee considered report FTC/12/14 providing feedback 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 2014.

Councillor Theresa Higgins provided her feedback at the meeting, and this is attached as an appendix to these minutes.

In response to a question from Councillor Hirst regarding the actual costs being more than estimated, Councillor Higgins commented that some Members had been accommodated in hotels at some distance from the Conference venue and this had led to a greater use of taxis than would usually be expected..

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the report, including the feedback provided at the meeting by Councillor Theresa Higgins and attached to these minutes as an appendix, be noted.

- (2) That for the future, efforts be made to book hotel accommodation closer to Conference venues.
- (3) That the Leader of the Council be asked to provide his feedback to the next meeting of the Committee.

#### **10. Essex Sporting Exchange Visit to Nanjing Youth Olympics – Feedback**

The Committee noted report FTC/13/14 following Officer attendance at the Essex Sporting Exchange visit to China for the Nanjing Youth Olympics in August.

Brian Shaw, Strategic Lead, Education & Skills, Active Essex, was in attendance to respond to Members' questions. He highlighted his personal learning experiences from the visit, and indicated that Jiangsu have now requested an extension of the sporting and cultural exchange with Essex to 2017.

Members thanked Mr Shaw for his attendance and noted his feedback report.

#### **11. East of England Inward Investment Mission to China – Feedback**

The Committee noted report FTC/14/14 providing feedback from the East of England Inward Investment Mission to China, as requested by the Committee at its meeting on 25 February 2014 when it approved Councillor Sue Lissimore's application to participate.

Councillor Sue Lissimore and Peter Manning, Head of International Trade, ECC, were in attendance to respond to Members' questions.

Mr Manning advised that the Essex-Jiangsu link helps Essex attract new inward investment and Essex businesses to find new export markets. The visit had focused on attracting inward investment in the life sciences sector and on developing the relationship between Essex and Jiangsu.

The Committee noted the full itinerary which showed that the visit maximised contact with target businesses and intermediary organisations. The Life Science Conference had been very successful and attracted approximately 170 people from Jiangsu life science businesses, industry parks, research parks and life science industry associations, at no marketing cost to ECC. Since the visit, five companies had visited the East of England region and were interested in locating to Essex, with a further two company visits planned for later in the year.

Councillor Sue Lissimore thanked Peter Manning and his team for organising the visit which ran smoothly and was well attended.

Members thanked Councillor Lissimore and Mr Manning for their attendance and noted the report.

**Resolved:**

That a copy of the report be circulated to all Members of the Cabinet for information.

**12. Date of Next Meeting**

The Committee noted that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 21 October 2014 at 10:30 or on the rising of the Cabinet meeting to be held that same morning, whichever was the later.

The meeting closed at 11:15.

Chairman  
21 October 2014

**Appendix****Feedback from Councillor Theresa Higgins following her attendance at the Local Government Association (LGA) Annual Conference (minute 9 above refers)**

1. I find the LGA Conference useful for networking and getting information. It is one of the few opportunities to discuss ideas with other councillors.
2. This time, due to date of the full Council meeting, I only attended for one day but made the best use of my time by going to a couple of relevant sessions and the group meetings.
3. I enjoyed listening to different projects in the innovation zone.
4. The only negative I have is that many of the examples given are for unitary or metropolitan councils and not for the two-tier system.