

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Strategic Planning & Infrastructure
DATE	21 st January 2014
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Energy Cities Annual Rendezvous 2014 & 2015 and North Sea Commission Conference
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/14/001

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report seeks approval for the attendance of the Lord Provost's and three Officers at a Mayors Meeting on the subject of 'Development of new EU project cooperation within the European World Energy Cities', 4th to 5th February 2014 in Esbjerg, Denmark.

The report requests approval for a delegation consisting of, Council Leader, Director of EP&I and 2 Officers, from Aberdeen City Council to attend the Energy Cities' Annual Rendezvous, 23rd to 25th April 2014 in Riga, Latvia and to nominate Council Leader, Barney Crockett, to the Executive Committee of Energy Cities.

Further to Committee Report EPI/13/019 from the 21st May 2013 Aberdeen has been successful in its bid to host the Energy Cities Annual Rendezvous in 2015.

The report seeks approval for 2 Officers and Council Leader to attend the North Sea Commission 25th Anniversary Conference in Aalborg, 12th to 14th March 2014.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the committee:

1. Approves the travel and visit of the Lord Provost and 3 Officers to attend the Mayors Meeting in Esbjerg, South Denmark which is organised by World Energy Cities.
2. Approves the travel for an Aberdeen City Council delegation to attend the Energy Cities Annual Rendezvous, Riga, Latvia to represent the City and attend relevant parallel meetings, conferences, events, and to gain knowledge for the conference layout for the event in Aberdeen 2015.

3. Approves the request to nominate Aberdeen City Council Leader to the Executive Committee of Energy Cities.
4. Note the success of Aberdeen City Council in its bid to host the Annual Rendezvous in the city in 2015.
5. Approves the travel for 2 Officers and Council Leader to Aalborg for the North Sea Commission Conference.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- Costs for the Lord Provost and 3 Officers attendance at the Mayors Meeting, Esbjerg will be met from the current service travel budget. Approximate costs are £2,700.
- Costs for the elected member and officers attending various meetings of the Energy Cities Annual Rendezvous 2014 will be met from this year's financial travel budget. Approximate costs are £3,000.
- Funding is required to cover the cost of meeting rooms, technical equipment, hospitality and meals, equipment for interpretation as well as management of local transports and site visits (if appropriate) during the Annual Rendezvous in 2015. Anticipated costs are expected to be from £130,000 to £167,000. This will be met from service budgets.
- Costs for Council Leader and 2 Officers attendance at North Sea Commission Conference will be met from the current service travel budget. Approximate costs are £1,800.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Travel

As far as possible, measures relevant to the destination will be taken to reduce any risks in line with Council Policy.

Risk Management

It is important that Aberdeen is fully represented in all European matters, especially those dealing with energy issues, and all opportunities for influencing policy and the development of transnational projects for the City's benefit are grasped in order that opportunities are maximised. This level of participation will help increase the understanding of the new programmes and will assist in developing the capacity to successfully develop new projects and work with other European cities that will benefit Aberdeen City.

Human Rights/Equality/Diversity

European Policy takes full account of the Equal Opportunities Policy of the Council.

Sustainability

Aberdeen City Council has a clear contribution to make to sustainable development with an emphasis on enhancing productivity through improved resource efficiency, new business opportunities in the developing market for sustainable technologies and delivering better and more efficient Council services. By attending these events, it will give Aberdeen City Council the opportunity to look at the possibilities of best practice and drawing down more funds from EU programmes to raise the quality of life through increasing economic opportunity for all on a socially and environmentally sustainable basis. Attendance at this event will help ensure Aberdeen promotes awareness as an internationally recognised energy efficiency hub and pool for generating innovative solutions.

Environmental

European activities are implemented in line with the aim of achieving a quality and sustainable environment.

Social

The principles of Social Inclusion underpin European cohesion policy.

Economic

European representation and inter-regional networking contributes to the City's overall effort to maximise opportunities and to promote its interests, both at home and overseas with the aim of creating sustainable economy and energy efficiency environment.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Meeting in Esbjerg, Denmark, 4th to 5th February 2014, World Energy Cities

The Lord Provost has been invited to attend the Mayors Meeting on the topic of 'Development of new EU Project Cooperation within the European World Energy Cities'. The meeting takes place between the 4th and 5th February and also in attendance will be the Mayors of Stavanger and Esbjerg. Three Officers from Aberdeen City Council will attend with the Lord Provost as parallel project meetings will be taking place and it is essential the Council is represented at these meetings.

A diverse programme has been arranged for the participants including the following activities;

- Site visit to the Port of Esbjerg
- Blue Water Shipping Headquarters

-SE Energy's passive home and headquarters who will present on their vision of smart grid and energy savings

The purpose of the meeting and visit in Esbjerg, is to also identify projects and potential partners for Horizon 2020 proposals and calls. Confirmed ideas are currently Climate Action in Industry as well as Energy such as demand response in block buildings, consumer engagement for sustainable energy and distribution grid and retail market to name but a few. The visit will allow participants at the Mayors Meeting to exchange ideas, identify projects and partners and potentially work together for a joint bid to Horizon 2020.

5.2 Energy Cities' Annual Rendezvous, 23rd to 25th April 2014, Riga, Latvia

It is proposed the Council Leader, accompanied by three Aberdeen City Council Officers, including the Director of Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure, attend the Energy Cities' Annual Rendezvous, Riga, 23rd to 25th April 2014.

The purpose of the annual rendezvous is to look at worldwide common challenges and the effective ways in which to quickly shift and efficiency use decentralised and sustainable energies. The meetings and conferences offer members a possibility to hear about highly topical issues, good experience of other cities and have interesting discussions with others working with the same issues and deepen relationships with other cities. The conference will do the following:

- explore successful strategies of local leaders to exchange best practice and knowledge
- host various interactive sessions to build bridges between the pieces of the energy transition puzzle
- provide an opportunity for professionals of various fields and political levels to network internationally and share insights on building, transport, cultural and financial issues.
- discuss how to ensure high quality of life maintained and innovative city planning
- identify projects and partners for Horizon 2020 calls

Participation of Aberdeen City Council is essential at the conference in order to share new practices and knowledge, and enlarge our European networks with other local authorities to find new partners to work with for the implementation of joint projects. It also allows Aberdeen to continue to be involved in projects supported by the European Commission and disseminate information on Aberdeen City on an international scale, ensuring Aberdeen maintains and promotes its international recognition as an energy efficient hub.

Additionally, our opinion on future policy directions on EU level can be used to influence policy development and decision making.

The conference will be used as a tool for Aberdeen City Council Officers to meet with and discuss with potential partners calls for Horizon 2020 to advance current and future projects within the local authorities involved and ensure Aberdeen remains at the forefront of research and innovation continuing to make us the internationally recognised energy and sustainability hub.

5.3 Nomination of Council Leader to Executive Committee of Energy Cities

To ensure Aberdeen's influence and demonstrate our seriousness in working with Energy Cities, we seek approval to nominate Aberdeen City Council Leader, Barney Crockett, to sit on the Executive Committee of Energy Cities.

Sitting on the Executive Committee will raise Aberdeen's international profile and a good channel to disseminate our own experience in energy efficiency and sustainability.

Energy Cities is the European Association of local authorities in energy transition, from 2013 to 2015; Energy Cities is currently under the Presidency of the City of Heidelberg with a board of directors from 11 European Cities. The association created in 1990 represents now more than 1,000 towns and cities in 30 countries. The offices of the Energy Cities are situated in Brussels and Besancon in France. Its main objectives are:

- To strengthen its members role and skills in the field of sustainable energy.
- To represent its members interests and influence policies and proposals made by European Union institutions in the fields of energy, environmental protection and urban policy.
- To develop and promote its members initiatives through exchange of experiences, the transfer of know-how and the implementation of joint projects.

5.4 Annual Rendezvous Energy Cities, Aberdeen, April 2015

Aberdeen City Council has been informed that the Board of Directors of Energy Cities unanimously accepted Aberdeen's proposal to host the Energy Cities' Annual Rendezvous in 2015. This will provide the opportunity to build and develop future partnerships for promoting and influencing current and future policy and the development of projects. This conference will attract over 400 EU visitors to Aberdeen, providing the opportunity to promote Aberdeen City as a destination to work with and visit.

It is expected the contribution requested from the hosting local authority is to cover local expenditures corresponding to the meeting venue(s), technical equipment for presentations, hospitality and meals, equipment for interpretation and local transport and site visits. Anticipated costs are expected to be from £130,000 to £167,000. This will be met from service budgets.

5.5 North Sea Commission Conference

North Sea Commission was founded in 1989 and to celebrate its 25th Anniversary a conference is being arranged to discuss and plan their future work and direction. This coincides with the launch of the new EU Funding Programmes, such as Interreg North Sea Region and Horizon 2020.

During the conference there will be parallel workshops to discuss thematic work streams. Aberdeen City Council participates in the economic development and sustainable development working groups. The Council Leader is the Vice Chair of the North Sea Commission Economic Development working group.

The 2014 Joint Annual Conference of the North Sea Conference and the Interreg North Sea Region Programme will be held in Aberdeen in June. During the 25th Anniversary North Sea Commission Conference in Aalborg, the conference steering group, of which Aberdeen City Council is a part of, shall be meeting to finalise the programme for the June conference.

5.6 Horizon 2020

Horizon 2020 is Europe's biggest Research and Innovation programme which provides nearly 80 billion Euros of funding over the next seven years, 2014 to 2020. This is a financial instrument to implement the 'Innovation Union' of Europe's 2020 flagship initiative to secure Europe's global competitiveness.

The funding is aimed at research and innovation to invest in Europe's future for a sustainable, smart and inclusive growth. The goal is to ensure Europe produces world-class science, removing barriers to innovation and make it easier for the public and private sectors to work together.

The meetings and conferences which have been discussed in this report are essential tools for Aberdeen City Council to identify projects and European partners in order to apply for funding from Horizon 2020. This will ensure Aberdeen's future as an innovative, forward-looking city investing in the city for its citizens and future generations and meeting Europe 2020 initiatives.

6. IMPACT

Several of the challenges of the Community Plan identified in the Single Outcome Agreement are also supported, such as: Leading the City, Being Informed, Getting Involved, Land Use and the Environment and Clean City, Prosperity and Jobs, and Aberdeen's Image.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

There will be inevitably be some risks associated with overseas travel. As far as possible, measures relevant to the destination will be taken to reduce any risks in line with Council Policy.

It is important that Aberdeen is fully represented in all European matters and that all opportunities for influencing policy and the development of transnational projects for the City's benefit are grasped in order that opportunities are maximised. If this is not done the Council could be at risk of not being able to draw down European grant monies.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1: Draft Programme Mayors Meeting, Esbjerg

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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Appendix 1: Draft Programme Mayors Meeting, Esbjerg

Development of new EU project cooperation within the European World Energy Cities.

Practitioners meeting the 4th of February

Time	Activity	Place
09:00	Welcome to all practitioners and introduction to the program – by Brussels partners	City hall of Esbjerg
09:15	Presentation of the participants	Esbjerg City Hall
09:30 – 12:00	Three parallel project development workshops on areas of mutual interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop 1: Skills for the offshore energy sector (Morten Basse/Offshoreenergy.dk, Aberdeen City Council?, Stavanger?)• Workshop 2: Secure, clean and efficient energy (Preben Hildebrandt/SE, Lyse, Aberdeen?)• Workshop 3: Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing (Søren Røn/Next Step Citizen, Lyse, Aberdeen?)• Workshop 4: Municipal project developers	Esbjerg City Hall
12:00-13:00	Short feedback to all from the three workshops plus Q and A between the workshops	Esbjerg City Hall
13:00-13:30	Off to lunch	Port of Esbjerg

Political meetings the 4th of February

Time	Activity	Place
10:45	Arrival of Ms Christine Sagen Helgo, Mayor of Stavanger	Esbjerg Airport
11:15 – 12:45	Bilateral meeting between Ms Christine Sagen Helgo and Mr Johnny Søtrup	Esbjerg City Hall
12:55	Arrival of Mr George Adam, Lord Provost of Aberdeen	Esbjerg Airport
13:30 – 15:00	Joint working lunch. Introduction to the programme Brief presentation of project development workshop outcome	Hotel Jerting – see more
15:00 – 16:00	Site visit to the Port of Esbjerg with a presentation by Port Director Ole English	Port of Esbjerg
16:00 – 16:45	Site visit to Blue Water Shipping's headquarter with a presentation by former CEO and BWS founder Kurt Skov.	Port of Esbjerg
17:00 – 18.30	Site visit to SE Energy's passive house plus standard headquarter. CEO Niels Duedahl will present SE's visions on smart grid and energy savings	SE Headquarter
18:30	Check-in at hotel	
19:15	Joint dinner/ Return Flights	Restaurant Gammel Havn – see more (only in Danish)

Political meetings the 5th of February

Time	Activity	Place
	Return Flights	Esbjerg Airport