

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	05 March 2018
REPORT TITLE	World Energy Cities Partnership and international trade opportunities
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/18/014
DIRECTOR	Bernadette Marjoram
REPORT AUTHOR	Matt Lockley

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

- 1.1 To seek approval for international travel related to trade opportunities and the World Energy Cities Partnership (WECP) as set out in the report.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council approve the travel and associated costs of attending the trade and WECP events as set out section 3 of this report, subject to the Council's budget setting process for 2018-19

3. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

WORLD ENERGY CITIES PARTNERSHIP

- 3.1 Aberdeen City Council is a founding member and partner in the World Energy Cities Partnership (WECP) and the Lord Provost was recently elected as Vice President of the organisation. The WECP takes an active role in promoting economic, educational and cultural links across its 19 member cities. Aberdeen City Council, through the Lord Provost's Vice Presidency, plays a significant role in strategic and operational planning for the WECP.
- 3.2 The WECP meets twice a year. In April/May, the Working Group meeting is convened to run alongside the Offshore Technology Conference (OTC) in Houston. The Annual General Meeting takes place each autumn in a different host city. In 2018, the AGM will take place in October in Kuala Lumpur.
- 3.3 This report seeks approval for the Lord Provost and two officers to attend the WECP Working Group and OTC (April 2018) and the WECP AGM (October 2018). Two officers are required in order that one can support the Lord

Provost and participate in WECP related meetings and activities with the second officer focused on the trade and investment opportunities that run alongside the WECP meetings. As in previous years, Scottish Development International (SDI) have a pavilion at OTC and Invest Aberdeen will have a presence on the pavilion, providing significant opportunities to promote the city and meet international investors and delegations. The WECP AGM in Kuala Lumpur coincides with the International Greentech and Eco Products Exhibition and Conference Malaysia (IGEM) event, and it is anticipated that Aberdeen City Council will support a trade delegation to this.

- 3.4 Attendance at the WECP Working Group and AGM has a number of benefits for Aberdeen and the Council. It enables the Lord Provost to start to build his Vice Presidency alongside the President, Mayor Savage of Halifax. It also provides the opportunity for commitments in the Council's Memoranda of Understanding (Halifax, Villahermosa and Barranquilla) to be discussed and future activity in support of the MoUs to be agreed. The City Council is an active and central member of WECP's Communications, Economic Development and Strategy Committees and participation in these meetings means that Aberdeen can benefit from proposed new projects or joint initiatives with other member cities. Finally, the meetings are key milestones in terms of Aberdeen's proposed bid to host the WECP AGM in 2019 (referenced in the WECP annual update report to CH&I in August 2017 (CHI/17/203). This will be the subject of a separate report to the appropriate Committee ahead of the June bid deadline.

BARENTS SEA CONFERENCE, HAMMERFEST

- 3.5 The Lord Provost has been invited to the Barents Sea Oil and Gas Conference, which runs from 23-25 April in Hammerfest, Norway. This is a significant conference in the calendar as it brings together all of the Norwegian and global players who have exploration and drilling rights (and opportunities) in the Barents Sea basin.
- 3.6 The Lord Provost would be accompanied by an officer to this event. The International Trade team is working closely with Storvik & Co in Norway on an itinerary for the Lord Provost which includes civic meetings with Mayors from key Arctic Norway towns and provinces and meetings with and visits to UK and global companies who are active in the region. It is anticipated that this trip will lead to further opportunities for Aberdeen companies in the Barents Sea basin that will be pursued at Offshore Northern Seas in August.

OFFSHORE NORTHERN SEAS, STAVANGER

- 3.7 Aberdeen City Council has a long-standing commitment to the Offshore Northern Seas (ONS) expo, held in alternate years in Stavanger, Norway. This year's event runs from 27th – 30th August. It is proposed that the Lord Provost leads the Aberdeen delegation supported by two officers.
- 3.8 ONS is a major trade show in the international calendar and a large number of Aberdeen companies and stakeholders will be present and have an active role to play. It provides an important milestone for the delivery of the Invest Aberdeen initiative, which will form the basis of the Council's participation at

the show. Early discussions with Scottish Enterprise (SE) and Scottish Development International (SDI) have been positive and it is proposed that Invest Aberdeen will share space with SE/SDI at this year's show. Further details on this approach will be brought to the appropriate Committee later in the year.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Costs outlined in the table below are contained within budgets proposed for international travel in the 2018-19 budget setting process.

City / country	Event	Proposed dates	Attendance	Indicative cost
Hammerfest, Norway	Barents Sea Conference (Northern Norway carried over from 17-18 plan)	22 – 25 April 2018	Lord Provost, one officer	£4,000
Houston, USA	Offshore Technology Conference and World Energy Cities Partnership (WECP) working group	28 April – 2 May 2018	Lord Provost (Vice President of WECP), two officers	£7,500
Stavanger, Norway	Offshore Northern Seas Expo	27 – 30 August 2018	Lord Provost, two officers	£5,000
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	WECP Annual General Meeting	14 – 19 October 2018	Lord Provost (Vice President of WECP), two officers	£7,500
Total indicative costs				£24,000

4.2 Any further proposals for international trade related travel will be brought back to the City Growth and Resources Committee at an appropriate point in the cycle.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

6.1 Reputational

The Council is a core and founding member of the World Energy Cities Partnership and the Lord Provost has recently been elected as the Vice President on a two-year term (until the 2019 AGM). It is important for Aberdeen to be represented and for the Lord Provost to fulfil his Vice Presidential duties at the two formal meetings of the partnership each year.

- 6.2 Other
Consideration has been given to employee; customer/citizen; environmental; technological; legal and financial risk. No risk or impact was identified

7. IMPACT SECTION

Economy

- 7.1 The Council's participation in the World Energy Cities Partnership (WECP) and Offshore Northern Seas (ONS) is fundamentally focussed on driving economic benefit in the city. The WECP provides an international forum for the Council to promote opportunities in Aberdeen and to link Aberdeen businesses to markets in the 19 partner cities. As noted above, over half of the inbound delegations to Aberdeen each year come from WECP partner cities and these are delivering new opportunities (i.e. the potential tie up between the Oil and Gas Technology Centre and an Innovation Centre in Karamay). ONS is a major bi-annual trade show where it is important for Aberdeen City Council to lead a delegation and to promote investment opportunities through Invest Aberdeen.
- 7.2 The WECP also commits to learning and the sharing of best practice, which enables Aberdeen City Council to learn from initiatives in other cities and, occasionally, to partner with others in international projects (i.e. the Scale Up project led by Esbjerg).
- 7.3 The Barents Sea conference will promote Aberdeen City's international profile as a global hub; building on existing relationships and providing support for local Aberdeen companies to increase their export turnover in the Northern Norway region.

People

- 7.4 Membership of the WECP enables Aberdeen to be promoted in a global partnership and enhances the reputation of the city as a global energy capital. This encourages a sense of pride for local residents and businesses and underpins confidence in the local economy.
- 7.5 Participating in the WECP also enables officers in the economic development service to work with their counterparts from 18 other global energy cities and to experience the dynamics and challenges of partnership working on an international scale. There are significant learning opportunities for officers from their work with the WECP.

Place

- 7.6 Membership of the WECP enables Aberdeen to be promoted in a global partnership and enhances the reputation of the city as a global energy capital. This encourages a sense of pride for local residents and businesses and underpins confidence in the local economy. Attendance at ONS and other trade shows (i.e. Barents Sea conference) has a similar impact in terms of the city's global profile and networks.

Technology

7.7 No direct implications.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

World Energy Cities Partnership Annual Report (CHI/16/120) – report to CH&I Committee, 25.08.2016, published

World Energy Cities Partnership Annual Report (CHI/17/203) – report to CH&I Committee, 29.08.2017, published

9. APPENDICES

None

10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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