

Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 1 October 2013

Eurocities Annual Meeting and Conference 2013

Item number	7.7
Report number	
Wards	City Wide

Links

Coalition pledges	P31 and P35
Council outcomes	CO23 , CO25 and CO26
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1 and SO4

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Executive summary

Eurocities Annual Meeting and Conference 2013

Summary

This report proposes Council representation at the Eurocities annual meeting and conference in Ghent, Belgium on 27-29 November 2013. The theme of the Eurocities 2013 conference is 'Smart Cities', exploring how innovation and new technology can be used to empower citizens and build more inclusive, more sustainable societies. Two Edinburgh projects have been shortlisted for the Eurocities 2013 Awards. It is proposed that up to two elected members attend this year's annual meeting, conference and Eurocities Awards ceremony.

Recommendations

- 1 To approve attendance at the Eurocities annual meeting and conference in Ghent in November 2013 as outlined in paragraph 2.7.

Measures of success

- Raise city's international profile
- Promote Edinburgh's expertise
- Learn from European good practice
- Strengthen links with European cities and find new partners

Financial impact

The costs of attendance depend on the time of booking. Travel options have been considered and the recommendation is air travel with a connecting train. It is estimated that travel and accommodation per person will be in the region of £300. As a nominated city for the Eurocities Awards the Council is entitled to two free registration places (£240 each) at the conference. Costs for elected members' attendance will be met from the Economic Development budget 2013/14.

Equalities impact

There are no equalities impacts arising from attendance at this conference.

Sustainability impact

Travel arrangements will be made in accordance with the Council's Sustainable Travel Plan.

Consultation and engagement

Membership of Eurocities provides the Council with a channel for engaging in consultations on EU policy, legislative and funding proposals.

Background reading / external references

Eurocities AGM website: www.eurocities2013.eu

Eurocities website: www.eurocities.eu

- Papers held by External Relations Unit

Eurocities Annual Meeting and Conference 2013

1. Background

- 1.1 This report proposes Council representation at the Eurocities Annual Meeting and Conference in Ghent, Belgium on 27-29 November 2013.
- 1.2 Eurocities is the network of major European cities, bringing together the local governments of 170 cities that between them govern 130 million citizens across 35 European countries. Edinburgh has been a member since 1991 and a number of Edinburgh's twin and partner cities are also members.

2. Main report

- 2.1 The Eurocities AGM is the key annual decision making meeting of the association. It provides a forum for debate and the formation of future priorities and strategy, as well as electing the President, Vice-President and Executive Committee members of the association. This year's Annual Meeting and conference is taking place in Ghent from 27-29 November.
- 2.2 Eurocities provides member cities with a platform to exchange knowledge, experiences and compare different approaches through a variety of policy forums, working groups, projects and events. The network provides a strong voice for cities, allowing dialogue with the European institutions on EU legislation, policies and programmes that impact on their citizens, services and territories. The network is active across a wide range of urban policy issues and challenges including: economic development, provision of public services, environment, knowledge society, transport, employment, education, social affairs and culture.
- 2.3 Membership of Eurocities offers the following benefits:
 - a channel for influencing policies, legislation and funding programmes;
 - intelligence on funding opportunities and policy development from the European Commission, particularly on urban policy;
 - an efficient partner search forum for transnational EU funding bids and the design of successful joint projects;
 - opportunities to exchange good practice and improve benchmarking for city government;
 - opportunities to raise the international profile of the city.
- 2.4 The theme of the Eurocities 2013 conference is 'Smart Cities', exploring how innovation and new technology can be used to empower citizens and build more

- inclusive, more sustainable societies. It will include a private session for Eurocities political representatives on 29 November, providing an opportunity for city leaders to exchange views on key challenges faced by city administrations.
- 2.5 The winners of the Eurocities Awards 2013 will be announced at an awards ceremony on 27 November during the annual meeting. Two Edinburgh entries submitted by the Council - the 'Your Library' and 'Edinburgh Outdoors' interactive websites and mobile apps - have been successful in reaching the shortlist. Both projects will be showcased in films screened at the awards ceremony. Representatives of shortlisted projects are also invited to lead speed-networking sessions aimed at promoting best practice and knowledge exchange, city-to-city contacts and collaborative project development.
- 2.6 Council representation at the AGM / conference will provide opportunities to:
- influence Eurocities' future priorities and work programme;
 - share experience and good practice with other European cities;
 - promote the city and the expertise available in Edinburgh;
 - strengthen links with other European cities for future EU bid development and joint activities.
- 2.7 It is proposed that up to two elected members attend this year's annual meeting supported by an officer from the External Relations team.
- 2.8 A cost estimate was taken for comparative purposes considering options for a direct train journey from Edinburgh to Ghent, for air and train travel from Edinburgh to Brussels and to Ghent and the minimum required overnight accommodation for the Annual Meeting and Conference on 27 – 29th November.
- 2.9 A direct flight to Brussels and return train travel from Brussels to Ghent offers best value, has no additional requirement for overnight accommodation above the minimum requirement, and is the most time effective. The recommended option is therefore a direct flight from Edinburgh to Brussels and onward train travel from Brussels to Ghent.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves attendance at the Eurocities annual meeting and conference in Ghent in November 2013 as outlined in paragraph 2.7.

Greg Ward

Head of Economic Development

Links

Coalition pledges	P31 - Maintain our City's reputation as the cultural capital of the world by continuing to support and invest in our cultural infrastructure P35 - Continue to develop the diversity of services provided by our libraries
Council outcomes	CO23 - Well engaged and well informed – Communities and individuals are empowered and supported to improve local outcomes and foster a sense of community CO25 - The Council has efficient and effective services that deliver on objectives CO26 - The Council engages with stakeholders and works in partnership to improve services and deliver on agreed objectives
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1 - Edinburgh's Economy Delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all SO4 - Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric
Appendices	None