

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10am, Tuesday, 1 October 2019

EUROCITIES Annual Conference 2019

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To approve attendance by the Lord Provost at the EUROCITIES AGM and annual conference in Prague on 20-22 November 2019.
- 1.2 To note that further information on the benefits of attendance will be provided following the event.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

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EUROCITIES Annual Conference 2019

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report proposes Council representation at the EUROCITIES AGM and Conference in Prague on 20-22 November 2019. The theme of the 2019 conference is 'Cities at a Crossroads', exploring the challenges cities face in managing the transition to future fit sustainable and inclusive cities in a changing Europe. It is proposed that the Lord Provost attend as the Council's EUROCITIES representative.

3. Background

- 3.1 This report proposes Council representation at the EUROCITIES AGM and conference in Prague on 20-22 November 2019.
- 3.2 EUROCITIES is the network of major European cities, bringing together the local governments of over 140 of Europe's largest cities and over 45 partner cities, that between them govern 130 million citizens across 39 European countries. Edinburgh has been a member since 1991 and a number of Edinburgh's twin and partner cities are also members. Membership includes cities across Europe, from both EU and non-EU countries.
- 3.3 The network is active across a wide range of urban policy issues and challenges of fundamental importance to cities including: economic development, provision of public services, environment, energy, knowledge society, transport, employment, social affairs, culture, housing and education.
- 3.4 The Lord Provost's programme of international civic engagements was approved by Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee on [26 February 2019](#). The EUROCITIES AGM and conference are additional to this programme but builds upon the Mayor's Summit which took place earlier this year.

4. Main report

- 4.1 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 AGM and conference is taking place in Prague from 20-22 November. Politicians, decision makers and professionals from approximately 100 major European cities will attend the annual conference.

- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 Membership of EUROCITIES offers the following benefits:
- Opportunities to raise the international profile of Edinburgh;
 - A channel for developing policies based on common experience and lessons learned;
 - Opportunities to exchange good practice and improve benchmarking for city government;
 - An efficient partner search forum for the design of successful joint projects.
- 4.4 The theme of the EUROCITIES 2019 Conference is 'Cities at a Crossroads, looking at the transformation happening in cities in a changing Europe. It will include plenary debates for EUROCITIES political representatives to discuss key challenges and opportunities facing city administrations in managing the transition to future fit, sustainable and inclusive cities and a Europe that reflects our societies.
- 4.5 Council representation at the AGM and 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;
 - Connect with other European cities for future joint activities.
- 4.6 It is proposed that the Lord Provost attends to represent the City of Edinburgh Council at the AGM and conference. An officer will also attend the EUROCITIES AGM.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Information on the benefits of attendance will be provided after the event.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The costs of attendance depend on the time of booking. Estimated costs per person are in the region of £600 for travel and accommodation plus 280 EUR conference registration fee (approximately £253).
- 6.2 Costs for attendance are contained within existing budget provision.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Travel options have been considered and the recommendation is a direct return flight from Edinburgh to Prague. While there are adverse impacts on air quality and noise associated with air travel, overland travel is not considered practical given the distance and excessive travel time. A return flight to Prague offers best value, has no additional requirement for overnight accommodation above the minimum requirement, and is the most time effective. As part of the international activity plan the Council has committed to monitor the carbon footprint of future international programme travel and to take account of this as part of the sustainability programme. This will be reported as appropriate to the Policy and Sustainability Committee.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 EUROCITIES website: www.eurocities.eu

9. Appendices

None