

Report to:	COUNCIL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Report of:	DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Date of Decision:	19 JANUARY 2016
SUBJECT:	OVERSEAS TRAVEL AND INWARD DELEGATIONS FROM ABROAD
Wards affected:	All

1. Purpose of report:
1.1 To provide details, for information, of Member and Officer overseas travel undertaken between 24 August and 26 November 2015.
1.2 To provide details, for information, of inward delegations from abroad.

2. Decision(s) recommended:
2.1 To note approved Member and officer overseas travel.
2.2 To note the details of inward delegations from abroad.
2.3 To note that with effect from 19 January 2016 authority for foreign travel by City Council Members and officers will only be granted when 4 weeks' notice has been given. Visits proposed with less than 4 weeks' notice will be refused unless under EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES which will require written documentation and an extremely robust reason to travel.

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3. Relevant background/chronology of key events:

A. OVERSEAS TRAVEL

- 3.1 The Council Business Management Committee has responsibility for the oversight of arrangements for foreign travel undertaken by Members and officers of the City Council. Under the new administration the authorisation of foreign travel has been delegated to Strategic Directors and the Chief Executive or nominee.

At the request of Members, quarterly reports on foreign travel undertaken are reported to this Committee.

- 3.2 In line with established practice the attached schedule of visits are grouped to reflect the main activity areas identified within the Council's current international activities. With particular relevance to the City Council's priorities as detailed in the Council Plan. Those activities include:

Networks/Policy – The various European and international agencies on which we have representation or where we seek to further Birmingham's interests e.g. Eurocities and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum.

Sister/Partner Cities – This refers to our on going work with Chicago, Frankfurt, Guangzhou, Johannesburg, Leipzig, Lyon and Milan.

Funding, Specific Projects/Professional – Where Birmingham participates in collaborative, practical or funding initiatives with benefits to Birmingham, or where joint work is undertaken through professional bodies.

- 3.3 In the interest of minimising the costs of foreign travel undertaken by Members and officers requests must be submitted at least 4 weeks before the intended date of travel. This will enable the purchase of flights and accommodation at the most economical cost.

3.4 Travel Undertaken

The attached Appendix A is a summary of approved overseas travel comprising of 4 visits undertaken by Members and 30 visits by officers at a maximum cost of £17,674.

B. INWARD DELEGATIONS FROM ABROAD

- 3.5 As part of the City Council's broader engagement with the international community consideration has been given to how the Council can improve the effectiveness of delegations to Birmingham from abroad. Consequently a registry of such visits was established in January 2008.

Subsequently the Council Business Management Committee requested, in December 2008, that regular reports be submitted with details of delegations visiting Birmingham from abroad. Attached is a summary of inward visits for July – December 2015
Appendix B

Signature:

Chief Officer:

Date:

List of Background Documents used to compile this Report:

Authorisation for foreign travel forms and report back from visits.
Registry of inward delegations.