

Birmingham City Council

Council Business Management Committee

12 February 2024



Subject: Overseas Travel and Inward Delegations from Abroad
Report of: Strategic Director – Places, Prosperity and Sustainability
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Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential :

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 To provide details, for information, of Member and Officer overseas travel undertaken between 1st October 2023 – 31st December 2023.
- 1.2 To provide details, for information, of known proposed Member and Officer overseas travel forthcoming commitments for the next monitoring period 1st January 2024 – 31st March 2024.
- 1.3 To provide details, for information, of inward delegations from abroad for the period 1st October 2023 to 31st December 2023.
- 1.4 **Please note: since the announcement of the Section 114 notice, overseas travel has been temporarily suspended unless funded by ring fenced grant and / or is contractually necessary. Any upcoming proposed visits will be subject to these tests and will be subject to Section 151 Board Approval.**

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 To note approved Member and officer overseas travel.
- 2.2 To note the proposed upcoming forward travel proposals.
- 2.3 To note the details of inward delegations from abroad.

- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 To note that additional requirements to complete a COVID risk assessment prior to travel has to be conducted as part of the Authorisation to Travel process.

3 Background

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.
- 3.2 At the request of Members, quarterly reports on foreign travel undertaken are reported to this Committee.
- 3.3 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:
- Civic related visits – Visits undertaken by the Lord Mayor.
 - 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 ongoing 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 This will enable the purchase of flights and accommodation at the most economical cost.

TRAVEL UNDERTAKEN

- 3.6 The attached Appendix A is a summary of approved overseas travel comprising of 0 visits undertaken by Members and 3 visits by officers at a maximum cost of £0.

PROPOSED FORTHCOMING TRAVEL

- 3.7 The attached Appendix B provides an indicative schedule of known forthcoming travel proposals providing CBM with an early insight for information. It should be noted that this schedule is not an approved travel schedule. Each proposal will follow the normal approval process. Due to the Section 114 notice, conditions will also need to be satisfied as set out in paragraph 1.4.

INWARD DELEGATIONS FROM ABROAD

- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 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 1st October 2023 – 31st December 2023 as Appendix C.