

**CABINET – 5 FEBRUARY 2013**

**ITEM 4 - PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**Member Questions**

**Question (1) from Mrs Hazel Watson (Dorking Hills)**

Please list all trips outside of the UK taken by Members of Surrey County Council at the Council's expense since 1 January 2011 including:

- The name of the Member undertaking the trip.
- The start and end date of the trip.
- The destination.
- The purpose of the trip.
- The outcomes and findings of the trip.
- Details of any report back from the Member to any committee, sub-committee, working group etc on the findings of their trip.
- Travel costs, accommodation costs, subsistence and any other costs relating to the trip.

**Reply:**

The following information has been gathered about trips outside of the UK taken by Members at the Council's expense since 1 January 2011:

Lynne Hack visited Brussels on 25 January 2011 to attend the Board meeting of Peri-Urban Regions Platform Europe (PURPLE). The total costs were £85.06. The action points and minutes arising from the meeting are available at [www.purple.eu](http://www.purple.eu)

Lynne Hack visited Brussels on 21 March 2011 to attend the Board meeting of Peri-Urban Regions Platform Europe (PURPLE). The total costs were £91.44. The action points and minutes arising from the meeting are available at [www.purple.eu](http://www.purple.eu)

Lynne Hack visited Dublin from 23-24 May 2011 to attend the General Assembly of Peri-Urban Regions Platform Europe (PURPLE). The total costs were £293.20. The action points and minutes arising from the meeting are available at [www.purple.eu](http://www.purple.eu)

Lynne Hack visited Brussels on 7 July 2011 to attend the Board meeting of Peri-Urban Regions Platform Europe (PURPLE). The total costs were £183.24. The action points and minutes arising from the meeting are available at [www.purple.eu](http://www.purple.eu)

Ian Lake and Denise Saliagopoulos visited Zibo City from 21-23 August 2011 to meet the Zibo Ceramics Association. The total travel costs were £3100.

Lynne Hack visited Brussels from 29 – 30 November 2011 to attend the Board meeting of Peri-Urban Regions Platform Europe (PURPLE). The total costs were £173.88. The

action points and minutes arising from the meeting are available at [www.purple.eu](http://www.purple.eu)

Lynne Hack visited Ireland in 2011 to obtain information on and visit a unique facility that creates vehicle fuel from waste plastics. The total costs for Lynne Hack and two senior officers from Waste Management were £524.09.

Helyn Clack visited Brussels on 14 July 2012 to attend a Board meeting of Southern England Local Partners. The total costs were £99. The outcomes of the meeting are included in the minutes, which can be found at [www.hants.gov.uk](http://www.hants.gov.uk)

John Furey visited Bergamo on 28 September 2012 to visit a fluidised bed thermal treatment plant. The total travel costs for John Furey and three senior officers were £2220.60.

John Furey visited Sarpsborg from 8-9 October 2012 to visit an energos gasification plant. The total costs for John Furey and three senior officers were £1748.

This list may not be exhaustive, as the county council does not maintain centrally a list of all trips undertaken by Members. Similarly, the reasons for, and nature of, the visits suggest that the outcomes and findings are likely to contribute to policy development and, as such, there is no expectation that any specific reports on each visit is brought to formal meetings.

**David Hodge**  
**Leader of the Council**  
**5 February 2013**

**Question (2) from Mrs Hazel Watson (Dorking Hills)**

Given the public furore by Surrey residents against the two-day residential stay by 26 Conservative Cabinet members and senior officers at Farnham Castle on 5 and 6 November 2012, costing £4,158, and revelations that a similar event took place at Farnham Castle on 9 and 10 May 2012. Please can you state:

- How many overnight residential meetings have the Conservative Cabinet held at Council Taxpayers expense during the life of this Council (since May 2009)?
- What have been the dates and venues for these meetings?
- What has been the overall cost of these meetings?
- Will you be cancelling the booking of Farnham Castle for a similar event in June 2013 and confirm that in future Cabinet awaydays will all be held at County Council buildings or premises of neighbouring Councils free of charge to save Council Taxpayers' money and as recommended by the Secretary of State?

**Reply:**

The Cabinet have attended 3 overnight residential meetings since May 2009. These took place on the following dates: 20 and 21 February 2012, 9 and 10 May 2012 and 5 and 6 November 2012. All of these events were held at Farnham Castle at a negotiated rate and

the total cost was £10,691.40 (inclusive of VAT). The Cabinet were joined by senior officers at the meetings held in May and November 2012.

**David Hodge**  
**Leader of the Council**  
**5 February 2013**

**Question (3) from Mrs Hazel Watson (Dorking Hills)**

The Smarter Working Policy Framework presented to the People, Performance and Development Committee on 23 January 2013 stated that the County Council's occupancy of office space averages only 47%:

- What actions are being taken to reduce the amount of unused space either by disposing of property or renting it out?
- Please supply the supporting data used to obtain the figure of 47%, including any breakdown by individual properties.

**Reply:**

An occupancy study was carried out in 2010 for our major offices which showed an average desk occupancy of 47%. Since this time under the Making a Difference programme, we have rationalised office space and there have been a number of office closures including those in Leatherhead, Guildford, and Conquest House in Kingston. This has reduced desk ratios within existing SCC sites from 1:1 to 3 desks for every 5 people. In addition freehold offices have been purchased in Redhill to replace leasehold offices in Reigate. This and further actions will save the council £6.6M in property costs over the period of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

A programme of revised desk occupancy surveys are of being carried at present to measure the impact of these changes. We will provide the update information when we have completed the occupancy studies.

**Tony Samuels**  
**Cabinet Member for Assets and Regeneration Programmes**  
**5 February 2013**