

REPORT BACK ON CONFERENCE/SEMINAR

REPORT TO: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

REPORT OF: Jenni Venn, Policy and Performance Manager, Chief Executive's Directorate

TITLE: Executive Bureau Meeting of the Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities

DATE: 13-14th April 2007

VENUE: Lisbon, Portugal

1 Recommendation

1.1 Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities (CAAC) is a network of some 40 cities from Ireland, UK, Spain, Portugal and France. It was founded in 2000 and funded through the EU regional programme Interreg aimed at improving co-operation and promoting economic development between EU regions. It is consulted regularly by the EU on its urban and regional policy.
- 2.2 Through its membership of the CAAC the council aims to increase Coventry's profile in Europe; gain information about and influence EU regional and urban policy including funding opportunities; learn from other cities and develop trans-national partnerships with the aim of accessing EU funding under the new EU funding programmes for 2007-2013.
- 2.3 As the lead city for developing activity on urban regeneration for the CAAC, and through membership of other working groups, Coventry will have direct influence on the type of projects that will be developed and put forward for funding. Working closely with city partners from Ireland, Spain, France and Portugal on developing work programmes will also give us the type of partners that are required to access a range of EU funds that require trans-national partners.
- 2.4 As a lead authority for the working group on Urban Regeneration the council is a member of the Executive Bureau which meets three times a year to discuss progress and future activity. The Executive Bureau meeting in Lisbon was held to discuss a number of key issues and to plan for the annual meeting to be held in Chester in June. The Bureau meeting was held to coincide with meetings of the Culture and Economic Development working groups led by the cities of Lisbon (Portugal) and San Sebastian/Donastia (Spain) respectively.

3 Cost of attending

The Executive Bureau meeting and associated working groups were attended on behalf of the council by Jenni Venn, Policy & Performance Manager. The total cost of attendance including flights, transfers, insurance, accommodation and associated expenses was £640.

4 Benefits

- 4.1 The key topic for the Executive Bureau meeting was addressing climate change and identifying potential activity that cities in the network can take along within the context of EU policies and opportunities for financial support. Coventry expressed interest in taking part in future projects and agreed to showcase the work already undertaken in the city through a project that supports environmental sustainability improvements in the motor industry supply chain at the annual general meeting.
- 4.2 The Culture working group agreed to develop links between the cities' cultural collections with a view to developing cooperation and contacts between museums and collections to enable more economical exchanges of exhibits and expertise. This could be of considerable interest to Coventry when the new spaces are available in the Herbert. The group is also proposing to develop a travelling exhibition to highlight the cultural and historical impact of the Atlantic Area on the rest of Europe and the world – which would include the age of exploration; development of trade and slavery. The project is being led by the cities of Rennes and Lisbon. Coventry expressed an interest in hosting the exhibition in the future.
- 4.3 The Economic Development working group continued discussions about the areas that partner cities were most interested in developing programmes of activity and potential funding opportunities in the new EU funding programmes. Priorities including support for small and medium sized enterprises; employment and social cohesion; innovation and technology clusters and funding opportunities are being considered through the EU Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme and the Seventh Framework Programme. Coventry will look to be involved in joint projects that will bring benefit to the city. It was agreed that the lead city San Sebastian/Donastia would develop these ideas further. In addition, Coventry agreed to be the UK contributor to the development of an economic development glossary which would set out the concepts and terminology used by different countries so cities could have a shared understanding of what these mean.

List of background papers

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(Any enquiries should be directed to the above)

Papers open to public inspection

Description of paper:

CAAC papers and minutes

Location

CH77