

CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 57

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Application for Membership of Eurocities		
Date of Meeting:	9 December 2008		
Report of:	Director of Cultural Services		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Paula Murray	Tel: 29-2534
	E-mail:	Paula.murray@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report is to ask for approval to apply to join the EUROCITIES network as a full member from 2009. Within the European & International Strategy for Brighton & Hove City Council 2007-2013, one of the four strategic priorities is 'networking and forging European & International partnerships. EUROCITIES is the main network in Europe aimed at cities of 250,000 populations and above.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Meeting approve the proposal to join EUROCITIES.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 Brighton & Hove has been a member of Eurotowns since 1997. Eurotowns is a network of medium –sized cities with population ranging from 30,000 to 250,000. It was the town of Brighton that originally joined Eurotowns. There are currently 19 members of Eurotowns. Brighton & Hove City Council is leaving Eurotowns network from the end of 2008 as it is considered too small, and has too few appropriate partners of similar size. Only Vigo is similar in population size to Brighton & Hove in having a population over 250,000 and it is not an active member of the Eurotowns network. Many of the members are under 100,000 in population and have few common challenges to Brighton & Hove.
- 3.2 An options analysis was written by the European manager suggesting approaching the EUROCITIES network to join from 2009. EUROCITIES is a network which brings together the local authorities of over 130 large cities from over 30 countries from around Europe. The mission statement of EUROCITIES is as follows: "EUROCITIES is committed to work towards a common vision of a sustainable future in which all citizens can enjoy a good

quality of life.”

- 3.3 The network is active across a wide range of policy areas, including economic development and cohesion policy, provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society, governance and international co-operation. The network has around 30 specialist staff to support the forums and working groups in these areas.
- 3.4 Membership would raise Brighton & Hove to the top tier of city representation in Europe with direct links to the Commission to influence on policy, legislation and funding programmes which affect larger urban areas.
- 3.5 EUROCITIES contains Belfast, Birmingham, Bradford, Bristol, Cardiff, Hull, Leeds, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Sheffield, Southampton and Sunderland. Whilst these are all potential partners they are all potential rivals economically within the UK so parity of information and influence and visibility on a European and International stage is crucial.
- 3.6 By contrast the only other UK member of Eurotowns is West Lothian (Livingston) with Telford and Wrekin also having withdrawn from the network in 2008.
- 3.7 Aalborg who are leading on the successful CIVITAS bid which Brighton & Hove is partner in, is also a member. Membership of the transport forum should enable more efficient use of these European funds in the implementation of the project.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Councillors European Meeting on 19 May 2008 involving Cllr Lynda Hyde, Former President of Eurotowns and David Smith, Lead Councillor for International Affairs, Paula Murray, Head of Arts, International & Voluntary Sector Teams and Rachel Williams, European Manager came to the decision to leave Eurotowns with the preferred option of joining Eurocities in 2009.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications:

The membership fee of Eurocities is 15,433 Euros in 2009, this would be found from existing budget through the funding saved from the Eurotowns subscription and the rationalisation of other membership fees.

Membership of Eurocities will give opportunities for staff and Councillors to attend forums be involved in policy development and exchange of ideas such costs and resource implications will need to be met from the appropriate Directorate budgets.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Anne Silley

Date: 25/11/08

5.2 Legal Implications:

There are no adverse legal implications arising from this report and membership will assist the council in terms of meeting its priorities.

Lawyer Consulted:

Name Bob Bruce

Date: 21.11.08

5.3 Equalities Implications:

An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been carried out. This is not a change in policy or a new policy but rather membership of a network of local authorities.

5.4 Sustainability Implications:

The Brighton & Hove City Council European & International Strategy was developed to help deliver the Brighton & Hove sustainable community strategy. In particular it is seen as helping support activity in the following eight priority thematic areas:

- Promoting enterprise and learning
- Reducing crime and improving safety
- Improving health and well-being
- Strengthening communities and involving people
- Improving housing and affordability
- Promoting resource energy and enhancing the environment
- Promoting sustainable transport
- Providing quality services

Membership of this network will provide Brighton & Hove with access to more best practice examples around Europe in these areas along with the opportunity to take part in forums and potential new projects with other EUROCIITIES members.

5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications:

There are no implications on crime and disorder in joining this network.

5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

Joining the EUROCIITIES network bring extra resources of the network to bear to improve the service offered and the benefits that can accrue from International networking and partnerships towards supporting the delivery of the council's strategic objectives. The subscription for 2009 can be covered through the European & International team budget, subject to review on a yearly basis.

The wide range of fora which the council can join should enable all parts of the council to take full part in EUROCITIES membership and potentially encourage contributions towards costs from other directorates in future years.

5.7 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

It is envisaged that membership of Eurocities will contribute to four of the five Council priorities. Protect the environment whilst growing the economy. Better use of public money, Reduce inequality whilst increasing opportunity and open and effective city leadership. The mission statement of EUROCITIES is as follows: "EUROCITIES is committed to work towards a common vision of a sustainable future in which all citizens can enjoy a good quality of life." Membership of EUROCITIES will raise Brighton & Hove's profile internationally.

6. **EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 6.1 In the options analysis the only advantage of leaving Eurotowns and not joining EUROCITIES was perceived to be the cost saving of membership but this would be outweighed by the reduction in funding coming into the city.
- 6.2 Unlike many other cities Brighton & Hove has always used networks for European work and does not engage in city twinning and so has no obvious European partners to work with. With the movement of structural funds to Eastern Europe, many of the major funding streams which Brighton & Hove is eligible to access require other partners from across the EU.

7. **REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 Brighton & Hove City Council needs membership of a network which can provide support from Brussels to help meet local priorities and potential partners of a similar size with similar problems and challenges to work jointly with. EUROCITIES is the main network for large cities which can offer this.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. NONE

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. NONE

Background Documents

1. NONE