

15. MEMBERSHIP OF EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF ENERGY WISE COUNCILS

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Council's approval to join a European association of energy-wise city councils.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. We have been invited to join Energie-Cités – the European Association of Energy-Wise City Councils.
3. In the normal course of business, officers would normally subscribe to such an association as part of our normal business practice. However, in this instance the Energie-Cités actually require all Councils to formally resolve to join and the Mayor to sign the application.
4. As energy is a key strategy the Council has identified to be developed in the next 24 months, joining this association of energy-wise city councils is a timely and sensible action.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

5. Should the Council join, the annual membership fee will be 1,500 euros (NZ\$2,500). This would be met from the Corporate energy management budget.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Taking into account the benefits of the membership, and the high calibre and sound international reputation of the European Association of Energy-wise Cities, it is recommended that the Council formally joins Energie-Cités.

BACKGROUND ON CITY COUNCIL JOINING EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF ENERGY-WISE COUNCILS

6. **Energie-Cités** is an association of 110 members (representing energy-wise municipalities) from 21 European countries. Since 1998, the Council's Energy Manager has maintained good working contacts with Energie-Cités. Christchurch is the only non-European city appearing in their list of best practice case studies, in their paper publications and on the Internet. Energie-Cités see Christchurch as an energy-wise city and the Christchurch City Council as the leader in energy management in the region, and the Association is keen to learn from our experience.
7. In accordance with the Association Charter, a city council outside Europe may, in principle, become an Associated Member, and would pay a reduced (50%) membership fee. Should the Council decide to join, Christchurch would be the first and only city-member outside Europe.
8. Energie-Cités have now invited the Council to formally join them.

Benefits to the Council and Christchurch City from Joining the Association

9. Energie-Cités is a valuable source of first-class expertise, workable and proven strategies, and projects and case studies, all very specific to local authorities. Tapping into their expertise would provide substantial benefits to the Council. This is important now as energy is a component of the Council's strategic directions (Prosperous Economy and Healthy Environment) in the draft 2006/16 LTCCP. City-wide energy strategies have been developed and tested in Europe, and the team of 13 professionals from Energie-Cités would provide Council staff with valuable assistance in the work associated with the development and implementation of a sustainable energy strategy for the city of Christchurch.
10. Other benefits from the membership include:
 - Receiving information on various European initiatives, programmes and projects on a regular basis through their magazine, personal contacts and website.
 - Attending conferences, training sessions and technical visits at waived/reduced fees (two free registrations for the annual conference and preferential rates for site visits, free postage of publications).
 - Exchanging experiences with European municipalities advanced in energy matters.
 - Promoting the Christchurch City actions and experiences via a European-wide network (each member has access to a promotional space on their website in order to promote its initiatives; other promotional tools include CD-ROMs, the good practice database, the annual conferences, etc).
 - Having a permanent representation in Brussels as well as the use of a meeting room (which can be booked on the website in the "Members only" section).
 - Benefiting from Energie-Cités' expertise and assistance in organising international energy conferences/meetings in Christchurch.
11. The membership would enhance international recognition and broaden good publicity for the City Council as a leader in the field of energy efficiency in Australasia.
12. An additional benefit for the city would be an opportunity to promote Christchurch through another European information channel, which has the potential to attract more visitors from Europe to the city.