

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 14 FEBRUARY 2019

**Question to Philip Atkins OBE
Leader of the Council**

By Kyle Robinson

Question

Whilst Staffordshire County Council is making millions of pounds of cuts to front line services, does the Leader of the Council think it is acceptable to use taxpayers money to send councillors and staff to the MIPIM conference held in the South of France?

Reply

The total cost of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent delegation attending MIPIM in Cannes is estimated to be in the region of £130k in 2019. Staffordshire County Council's financial contribution to this is £12,500 (matched by Stoke-on-Trent City Council). The remaining £105k is raised through sponsorship and in 2019 we have secured support from companies including St Modwen, Keele University, Staffordshire University, Wardell Armstrong, Knights plc, Harworth Group and ENGIE. For the County Council's contribution of £12,500 we gain access to the Midlands Engine pavilion, which is a £1 million plus project, with the majority of this investment also coming from the private sector. Every destination in the West and East Midlands will be represented at MIPIM.

It should also be noted that of the 6 local authority representatives attending MIPIM (4 from Staffordshire and 3 from Stoke-on-Trent) the team have secured 6 of these passes free of charge from organisers Reed Midem plus an additional free pass for David Frost, Chair of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP. The cost otherwise through the Midlands partnership is £595 per pass.

MIPIM is attended by over 24,000 delegates from over 100 countries and is one of the largest events for attracting investment and raising the profile of our area on an international stage. There will be a particular focus for Staffordshire on skills through our partnerships with both Keele and Staffordshire Universities as well as promotion of the County as a great place to visit. This will include serving food and drink produced in Staffordshire at our events.

Our attendance at MIPIM is particularly significant this year in light of the country's proposed exit from the European Union and it provides us with a timely opportunity to showcase our area as being open for business in terms of both trade and investment. Having a well-balanced and mixed economy will be important for Staffordshire in being able to address economic shocks and maintain the resilience of the local economy and MIPIM can provide an important platform to demonstrate how we will achieve this and engage with new potential partners. Staffordshire has already seen the percentage change in private sector employment (18.4%) increase more than the West Midlands and Great Britain

(16.5%). We need to be highlighting this along with the increase in GVA in Staffordshire, which is up 17.0% between 2011 and 2016 from £14.3 billion to £16.7 billion. This stands the area in good stead in a competitive market and MIPIM is the ideal place to showcase this with significant opportunities available for a very modest financial contribution.

Please see our recent press release

<http://www.makeitstokestaffs.co.uk/promoting-stoke-on-trent-staffordshire-on-the-world-stage-at-mipim/>