

Committee Public Relations and Economic Development Sub (Policy and Resources) Committee	Dated: 5 March 2019
Subject: City of London Corporation – Recommendations for 2019 Party Conferences	Public
Report of: Bob Roberts, Director of Communications	For Decision
Report author: Meghan Green, Corporate Affairs Officer	

Summary

Every year the City of London Corporation delivers a programme of strategic political engagement at three party conferences – Liberal Democrat, Labour, Conservative. In the previous three years the City Corporation has also attended and hosted events at the Scottish National Party (SNP) conference.

This report provides an opportunity for Members to review and approve top-line proposals for the 2019 conference season.

Recommendation

1. It is recommended:
 - a. To continue hosting events at the Liberal Democrat, Labour, Conservative and SNP Conference
 - b. To organise a set number of events tailored to each party conference as detailed in the report below

Background

1. The City of London Corporation began attending major party conferences in 1994 and has been doing so on an annual basis ever since.
2. Party conference attendance and activity is now intrinsic to the City Corporation's political engagement programme and aims to achieve the following objectives:
 - To engage across the political spectrum and outside the City and London
 - To be involved in key policy debates of strategic importance.
 - To engage politically with numerous contacts who are concentrated in the same location at a given time
 - To be seen as a regular, reliable and relevant attendee and partner on key issues.
3. The format of participation has evolved over time: initially hosting small, private dinners, the City Corporation began hosting additional fringe events from 1997 onwards. More recently, the City Corporation has also hosted private roundtable discussions on relevant policy matters with politicians, policymakers and other experts.
4. In line with our aim to achieve cross-party engagement, the City Corporation attended the Liberal Democrat, Labour, Conservative and Scottish National Party conferences in 2018.

Proposals

5. Following an evaluation of last year's Party Conference activity, the Corporate Affairs team will ensure that the 2019 party conference activity provides the most effective

opportunities for strategic political engagement with each political party and is relevant in policy terms.

6. Following a series of visits to potential venues in January and February 2019, hotel rooms and venues have already been secured for all party conferences except the SNP, where dates and location are confirmed nearer to the time.
7. PRED members will be contacted by Corporate Affairs in order to seek their attendance at each party conference. This is to ensure the Corporation can receive the 'early bird' rates offered by the Parties.
8. As agreed by the PRED Sub Committee in 2017, all members of the PRED Sub Committee are invited to attend party conferences as City Corporation representatives and are therefore eligible for a two-day commercial guest party conference pass, with the cost being met from the party conference budget. Members' accommodation will be covered and arranged accordingly.
9. In chronological order, it is proposed the 2019 party conference season follows the following format:

Liberal Democrat Party Conference, 14-17 September 2019, Bournemouth:

Proposal: To host a private roundtable in partnership with a think-tank, covering a policy area of relevance to the City Corporation. To host a sit-down dinner of approximately 50 attendees with a select and focused guest list from the business, political and policy related sectors.

Labour Party Conference, 22-25 September 2019, Brighton:

Proposal: To host a private roundtable in partnership with a think-tank, covering a policy area of relevance to the City Corporation. To host a sit-down dinner of approximately 65 attendees with a select and focused guest list from the business, political and policy related sectors. To explore partnership with UK Finance for the sit-down dinner, as was the case in 2018.

Conservative Party Conference, 29 September - 2 October 2019, Manchester:

Proposal: To host a private roundtable in partnership with a think-tank, covering a policy area of relevance to the City Corporation. To host a sit-down dinner of approximately 100 attendees with a select and focused guest list from the business, political and policy related sectors. To explore partnership with UK Finance for the sit-down dinner, as was the case in 2018.

Scottish National Party Conference, dates and location TBC:

Proposal: To host a private roundtable in partnership with an organisation and bilateral meetings for the Chair of Policy and Resources.

10. Member attendance at City Corporation roundtables: Following agreement reached in 2018, roundtables will not be opened to members generally, and, where it might be a case for more than one Member to attend these events, it will be at the discretion of the Policy Chair to decide.

Conclusion

11. Members are asked to approve proposals and recommendations for the City of London Corporation's programme of engagement at the 2019 party conferences. Further detail will be presented to Members in due course.

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