

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Policy and Resources	14 March 2019
<b>Subject:</b> Think tank review and memberships	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Communications	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Eugenie de Naurois, Head of Corporate Affairs	

### Summary

1. As part of the City of London Corporation's political engagement programme, the Corporate Affairs Team coordinates and reviews the relationships we hold with think tanks. The City Corporation has worked closely with over 35 think tanks over the past 17 years and is currently a corporate member of nine think tanks.
  - Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation (CSFI)
  - Chatham House
  - Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)
  - Local Government Information Unit (LGiU)
  - New Local Government Network (NLGN)
  - Open Europe
  - Whitehall and Industry Group (WIG)
  - New Financial (as part of the Women in Finance sponsorship)
  - The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS)
2. An annual review is undertaken on think-tank memberships so as to:
  - Refresh our approach to working with think tanks to ensure that we have the maximum impact with these partnerships; and
  - test whether we are members of the right think tanks in the given context.
3. The City Corporation's engagement with think tanks is beneficial to the organisation if it takes place on a strategic basis. Any engagement focuses on mapping the City's interests and those of the think tanks to identify greater collaboration. The Corporate Affairs Team also ensures that a political balance is maintained across the organisations we engage with.
4. It is proposed the City Corporation does not take a decision regarding the think tank New Financial as our membership is currently attached to the Women in Finance Charter sponsorship, which was approved for 2019/2020 at the Policy & Resources Committee in January 2019.

5. It is proposed that the City Corporation continues its membership of eight think tanks for 2019/2020:
  - Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation (CSFI)
  - Chatham House
  - Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)
  - Local Government Information Unit (LGiU)
  - New Local Government Network (NLGN)
  - Whitehall and Industry Group (WIG)
  - Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS)
  - Open Europe
6. It is proposed that the City Corporation sponsors in addition the Chatham House Europe Programme for 2019/20.

## **Recommendation**

Members are asked to agree to:

7. Renew eight existing think-tank memberships at a total cost of £89,400.
  - Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation (CSFI)
  - Chatham House
  - Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)
  - Local Government Information Unit (LGiU)
  - New Local Government Network (NLGN)
  - Whitehall and Industry Group (WIG)
  - Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS)
  - Open Europe
8. Not take a decision regarding the think tank New Financial, as our membership is currently attached to the Women in Finance Charter sponsorship, which was approved at the Policy & Resources Committee in January 2019.
9. Sponsor, in addition, the Chatham House Europe Programme for £10,000.
10. The required funding of £99,400 for these memberships and sponsorship being drawn from your Committee's 2019/20 Policy Initiatives Fund, categorised under Events and charged to City's Cash.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. In October 2015, the Public Relations & Economic Development Sub Committee agreed that the City Corporation's relationships with think tanks should be reviewed, and that this review should consider existing engagement, the policy context, policy themes and cost.

2. For the purpose of this report, the term ‘think-tank’ denotes regular academic think tanks, self-styled research and policy institutes and charities with a key policy function.
3. The City Corporation is a member of nine think tanks. This includes the following benefits:
  - Strengthening relationships with the think tank;
  - influencing its agenda;
  - invitations for Members and officers to attend high level events. (New proposed membership); and
  - copies of publications and policy briefings.

### **Current Position**

4. The Corporate Affairs Team keeps under review the City Corporation’s engagement with and membership of think tanks. This includes:
  - Meeting all the think tanks of which the City Corporation is a corporate member and some of those which we regularly work with;
  - analysing the work and relationships we have with those think tanks we work with less frequently;
  - understanding think tanks’ priorities for the year(s) ahead; and
  - assessing the best relationship that the City Corporation can have with them to ensure it is relevant, proactive and beneficial to both parties.
5. In terms of memberships, these offer an effective means of supporting think tanks and accessing benefits. Payment is due within the next year to all these think tanks in order to renew the City Corporation’s membership for 2018/19 (where membership is by financial year) or 2019 (where membership is by calendar year).
6. The agreed approach that has been adopted regarding the City Corporation’s work and relationships with think tanks is to:
  - Shift the focus towards an annual cycle of proactive engagement with think tanks to map their interests for the year ahead, our interests, and identify where we can best work together;
  - continue to be agile by welcoming unsolicited ideas;
  - ensure a broad political and thematic balance of think tanks that we work with.
  - insist on excellence as a collaborative delivery partner and quality of their product; and
  - ensure that we are getting the best value for money.
7. The Corporate Affairs Team maintains a think tank grid, which summarises the organisations we are members of, those with whom we work on an ad hoc basis and those we could work with in the future. It is available at members’ request.

## Proposals

8. The City Corporation seeks to engage with a politically-balanced range of think tanks in a number of key and relevant policy areas. The direction and degree of our engagement is shaped by a number of factors, including amongst others: a particular think tank's public profile and the influence it has on government, major political parties and public policy debates.
9. In recent years it was possible to identify one or two think tanks as being the most influential in policy debates. Nowadays there is frequent personnel movement between politics and the world of think tanks. Additionally, Members of Parliament maintain links with think tanks across the spectrum and a number of think tanks provide the secretariat for All-Party Parliamentary Groups.
10. Think tanks' influence and public profile fluctuate. As a result, organisations such as ours must be agile in this respect: we may be members of a think tank which for a period does not enjoy a high degree of influence but which we deem may have in the future. The City Corporation attempts to remain connected to work on the key issues of the moment. For example, think tanks looking at Britain after Brexit present a useful value for the City Corporation.
11. In view of the evaluation and the current political and economic context it is proposed that the City Corporation renew its membership of the following eight think tanks for 2019/20 for a total cost of £89,400.
12. Members are asked to agree to renew eight existing think-tank memberships
  - Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation (CSFI): £5,000
  - Chatham House: £20,000
  - Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR): £14,500
  - Local Government Information Unit (LGiU): £12,500
  - New Local Government Network (NLGN): £12,400
  - Whitehall and Industry Group (WIG): £5,000
  - Open Europe: £10,000
  - The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS): £10,000
13. Members are asked to agree to sponsor the Chatham House Europe Programme for an additional £10,000, which will include:
  - a. Monthly Brexit Breakfasts roundtable series exploring the dynamics and implications of the UK's withdrawal from the EU, with senior figures from politics, policy, and the media (two places per event);
  - b. Three private tailored briefings in London with their experts;
  - c. Take part in other regular expert led and policy focused discussions covering European issues across the institute;
  - d. Receive written commentary from experts from the Europe Programme;
  - e. Attend an annual high-level dinner for supporters, discussing key political developments, as well as other private dinners with high-level speakers over the course of the year
  - f. Multiple hard copies of Programme research publications;

- g. Network with external experts and leading figures from Britain and the rest of the world

14. Forthcoming events include

- a. March 2019 (date tbc) - Business, Trade, and Brexit - Clement Beaune, Europe Adviser to President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron (Private Dinner)
- b. April 2019 - European Parliament Elections 2019: The Outlook So Far - Speaker tbc
- c. Further 2019 roundtables and private dinners to be announced

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

- 17. Proactive engagement and focused relationship-building with think tanks of relevance to the City Corporation's priorities will enhance our visibility, enable us to contribute effectively to the policy debate and contribute positively to our political engagement programme.
- 18. Renewing the membership of these think tanks will provide the City Corporation with opportunities to engage with government on key issues of concern, by facilitating events, meetings and occasions for policy discussion. It will also enable the City Corporation to participate in policy debates.

### **Financial Implications**

- 19. It is proposed that the required funding of £99,400 is drawn from your Committee's 2019/20 Policy Initiatives Fund, categorised under Events and charged to City's Cash. The current uncommitted balance available within your Committee's Policy Initiatives Fund 2019/20 amounts to £484,865 prior to any allowance being made for any other proposals on today's agenda.

### **Conclusion**

- 20. Renewing these eight think-tank memberships for 2019/20 will strengthen the City Corporation's political engagement programme and allow it to contribute more effectively to key policy debates.
- 21. Sponsorship of Chatham House's 2019/20 Brexit programme accords well with the City Corporation's role in engaging with high level stakeholders and contributing to policy debates in areas of importance to the City Corporation and the financial and related professional services sector.