

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUB (POLICY & RESOURCES) COMMITTEE

Thursday, 16 February 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the Public Relations and Economic Development Sub (Policy & Resources) Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 12.00 pm

Present

Members:

Mark Boleat (Chairman)
Deputy Catherine McGuinness (Deputy Chairman)
Keith Bottomley
Anne Fairweather
Stuart Fraser
Wendy Hyde
Edward Lord
Jeremy Mayhew

Officers:

John Barradell	-	Town Clerk and Chief Executive
Bob Roberts	-	Director of Communications
Giles French	-	Assistant Director of Economic Development
Eugenie De Naurois	-	Head of Corporate Affairs
Emma Sawers	-	Economic Development Officer
Sheldon Hind	-	Communications Team
Henry Tanner	-	Communications Team
Nigel Lefton	-	Remembrancer's Office
Angela Roach	-	Principal Committee and Members Services Manager

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Hugh Morris and Doug Barrow.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

The Chairman declared an interest in item No. 4 as a member of the Advisory Council of the European Policy Forum.

3. MINUTES

The public minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2016 were approved.

4. THINK TANK MEMBERSHIP

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Economic Development concerning the City Corporation's future membership of think tanks.

Members were advised that arrangements had been made for the Corporate Affairs Team to now fall within the remit of the Director of Communications. It was therefore suggested that the report be deferred to enable the Director to contribute to the review. The Chairman supported this and suggested that the approval of any subscription that needed to be renewed in the interim be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

RESOLVED – That it be recommended to the Grand Committee that the report be deferred for further work, subject to the approval of any subscriptions to think tanks which needed to be renewed in the interim being delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

5. PARTY CONFERENCES 2017

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Economic Development reviewing the arrangements for the 2016 party conferences and setting out proposals for participating in the conferences in 2017.

RESOLVED – That it be recommended to the Grand Committee that:-

1. the City Corporation continues hosting events at the Liberal Democrat, Labour and Conservative conference, with slight changes to the format; and
2. activities at the SNP conference be extended.

6. HIGH LEVEL BUSINESS PLAN - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Economic Development submitting the High Level Business Plan for his office.

The Sub-Committee noted that as part of improving the business planning process the challenge for officers had been to distil their departmental business in no more than two pages. Members acknowledged that the format of the business plan had improved, including its direction of travel. Nevertheless, the plan would benefit from the inclusion of more detail to explain the top-line objectives.

During detailed discussion Members raised the merits of including the following activities:-

- Brexit, particularly given its importance and the volume of work being undertaken by the City Corporation to support its outcomes;
- the City Corporation's relationship with London government;
- the impact of the devolution of powers to London;
- the relationship with external partnership organisations such as TheCityUk.

The Assistant Director of Economic Development noted the comments and pointed out that an additional plan sat below the high level one. He undertook to ensure that the inclusion of any detail that supported the overview was adequate.

RESOLVED – that subject to the above-mentioned comments it be recommended to the Grand Committee that the High Level Business Plan be approved.

7. UPDATE AND FORWARD LOOK ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY STEERING GROUP (IRSG)

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Economic Development on the work of the International Regulatory Strategy Group (IRSG).

Several Members commended the work of the IRSG and noted that it was now a highly sought after organisation. The Assistant Director of Economic Development added that the industry had held together better than anticipated on Brexit. The IRSG was working with other organisations on an international basis and work was currently being undertaken on how to retain and attract investment in the industry in the medium to long term.

Reference was made to the Sub-Committee providing input to the IRSG via Chairman of the Sub-Committee and it was noted that this should be the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee.

RESOLVED – That the work of the IRSG Council as set out in the appendix to the report be noted.

8. GOVERNANCE OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Communications concerning the governance and editorial control of the City Corporation's website and digital platforms.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the website needed to be improved particularly in terms of its content and navigation. The City Corporation should not be afraid to invest in order to achieve what was needed.

RESOLVED – That:-

1. overall responsibility for the content and design of all the City Corporation's websites and digital platforms rest with the Director of Communications;
2. the Communications Team oversee and regulate all digital output (as the office had ultimate responsibility for all communication originating from the City Corporation); and

3. all digital assets including the intranet, apps and social media be included in the arrangement.

9. **COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Communications updating it on the future structure of the Communications Team.

Reference was made to the City Corporation's officer spokespeople. The Sub-Committee was advised that this was usually the role of relevant Members. In response to a suggestion to increase the number of Member spokesmen, the Sub-Committee was reminded that not everyone was suited to the role and that whilst Members coming forward was welcomed, there were risks associated with this.

RESLOVED – That the report be noted.

10. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There were no urgent items.

12. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Item	Paragraph
13	3

Part 2 - Non-Public Agenda

13. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2016 were approved.

14. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

15. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE SUB COMMITTEE AGREES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 12.45pm

Chairman

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