

Committee(s)	Dated:
Policy and Resources	3 May 2018
Subject: Think tank review and memberships, 2018-19	Public
Report of: Director of Communications	For Decision
Report author: Colton Richards, Corporate Affairs Officer	

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 15 years and is currently a corporate member of ten think tanks.
 - Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation (CSFI)
 - Chatham House
 - European Policy Forum (EPF)
 - Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)
 - Local Government Information Unit (LGiU)
 - New Local Government Network (NLGN)
 - Reform
 - Whitehall and Industry Group (WIG)
 - New Financial (as part of the Women in Finance sponsorship)
 - Legatum Institute Business Forum
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 that the City Corporation continues its membership of 6 think-tanks, discontinues its membership of 3 think tanks and becomes a member of two new think-tanks. It is also proposed the City Corporation does not take a decision regarding the membership to the think tank New Financial that the City

of London Corporation recently joined as part of the Women in Finance Charter sponsorship.

5. Approval of the above would imply that the City Corporation would be a member of the following 9 think-tanks for 2018/2019:

- 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)
- New Financial (as part of the Women in Finance sponsorship)
- Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) (*New proposed membership*)
- Open Europe (*New proposed membership*)

Recommendation

Members are asked to agree to:

- Renew six existing think-tank memberships and take on two new memberships at a total cost of **£84,500**. This is to be met from your Committee's 2018/19 Policy Initiatives Fund categorised under events and charged to City's Cash.
 - 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)
 - New Financial (as part of the Women in Finance sponsorship)
 - Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) (*New proposed membership*)
 - Open Europe (*New proposed membership*)
- Discontinue its membership to the Legatum Business Forum, The European Policy Forum and Reform
- To not take a decision regarding the think tank New Financial as our membership is currently attached to the Women in Finance Charter sponsorship

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 ten 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. In 2017’s review, members approved continued membership of eight think-tanks, and two new memberships, the Legatum Business Forum and Open Europe, and discontinuing two memberships, The European Policy Forum and Reform.
7. 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.

8. 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

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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 six think tanks and takes up membership of the IFS and Open Europe for 2018/19 and 2019 for a total cost of **£84,500**.

13. Members are asked to agree to renew six existing think-tank memberships

- Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation (CSFI): £5,000
- Chatham House: £14,500
- Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR): £15,000
- Local Government Information Unit (LGiU): £12,000
- New Local Government Network (NLGN): £12,000
- Whitehall and Industry Group (WIG): £6,000

14. In addition, this report proposes the City Corporation take up membership of two new think tanks, at an additional cost of £20,000 for the two.

- a. *The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS)*

Launched in 1969, the IFS is an independent research institute with the stated aim of "better informing public debate on economics in order to promote the development of effective fiscal policy." The IFS has a considerable public profile and is regularly cited in the media, particularly in the wake of major fiscal events such as the Autumn Statement and policy debates concerning issues such as tax and public spending. The IFS is led by Paul Johnson whose career has included

spells at HM Treasury, the Department for Education and the FSA. Between 2004 and 2007 he was deputy head of the Government Economic Service. Paul is currently also a member of the committee on climate change, the Banking Standards Board and of the executive committee of the Royal Economic Society. The cost of corporate membership is **£10,000** annually (excl. VAT).

b. Open Europe

Open Europe is an independent and non-partisan think-tank, founded over a decade ago, with a stated mission to “conduct rigorous analysis and produce recommendations on which to base the UK’s new relationship with the EU and its trading relationships with the rest of the world.” It publishes reports covering in-depth analysis of key policy EU issues, research on public attitudes towards the EU. With offices in both London and Brussels, Open Europe is well-placed to maintain close links with the continent and a lot of its work focuses on post-Brexit issues. Open Europe is led by Henry Newman, former adviser to Michael Gove during his time as Secretary of State for Justice. Members of its Advisory Council include Lord Wolfson, the CEO of Next plc (who also chairs), leading economist Dr Gerard Lyons and prominent business figure Sir Simon Robertson. The cost of corporate membership is **£10,000** annually (excl. Vat).

15. Members are asked to discontinue the membership to the Legatum Institute Business Forum which cost **£10,000** per year. While we intend to continue to work with the Legatum institute Business Forum on specific projects or events, the review has highlighted that the cost of membership outweighs the benefits.
16. Members are also asked to discontinue the membership with Reform, which costs £10,000/year, and the European Policy Forum, which costs £7,500, considering that we work with both think tanks on an annual basis on a number of different events, including private roundtables, Cumberland Lodge to name just a few.

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 and becoming members of the IFS and Open Europe 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 £84,500 is drawn from your Committee’s 2018/19 Policy Initiatives Fund, categorised under Events and charged to City’s Cash. The current uncommitted balance available within your Committee’s Policy Initiatives Fund 2018/19 amounts to £571,441 prior to any allowance being made for any other proposals on today’s agenda.

Conclusion

20. Renewing current think-tank memberships and taking up membership of the IFS and Open Europe will strengthen the City Corporation's political engagement programme and allow it to contribute more effectively to key policy debates. Having these 10 think-tank memberships for 2018/19 will contribute to the improvement of the City Corporation's targeted engagement with Government and participation in policy-making in areas of significant for our stakeholders.