

Committee(s): Policy and Resources Committee – For decision	Date: 6 June 2024
Subject: City Corporation’s Coat of Arms – Applications Pause	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Providing Excellent Services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Town Clerk	For Decision
Report author: Rhys Campbell, Town Clerk’s Department	

Summary

The current process for the use of the City of London Corporation’s Coat of Arms (City Arms) has not been reviewed in many years, with applications considered on an *ad hoc* basis by individual Chief Commoners in accordance with guidelines set down over 50 years ago.

A branding review, looking at establishing a more controlled and coherent approach to the use of the City Corporation brand, is currently underway, led by the Director of Communications & External Affairs. In the interests of ensuring that no decisions are taken around use of the City Arms which might potentially cut across the eventual outcomes of that review, it is proposed that the existing approval arrangements should be paused. This report also proposes temporary delegated authority arrangements to allow for any exceptional applications to be considered in the event it should prove absolutely necessary, albeit this is not anticipated.

This report is being submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee for consideration as responsibility for the armorial bearings rests with the Policy and Resources Committee under its Terms of Reference (section 4(e)).

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked:

- To agree to halt the existing Coat of Arms application arrangements, pending the outcomes of a wider branding review;
- To agree to, in the interim, delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Chief Commoner, and Director of Communications & External Affairs, to consider any exceptional applications only.

Main Report

Background

1. The City Corporation's Coat of Arms ("the City Arms") are what is known as "anciently recorded" by the College of Arms, reflecting the fact that there had never been any official grant of arms to the City, as they were in use prior to the foundation of the College of Arms in 1484 and the crest and supporters were not recorded there.
2. The City Corporation, therefore, resolved in the 1950s to obtain a formal grant of crest and supporters and a confirmation of the arms "anciently recorded as of right appertaining to them" from the College. The grant is dated 30 April 1957.
3. The City's Arms as granted are as follows:-
 - *Arms - Argent a cross gules, in the first quarter a sword in pale point upwards of the last.*
 - *Crest - On a wreath argent and gules a dragon's sinister wing argent charged on the underside with a cross throughout gules.*
 - *Supporters - On either side a dragon argent charged on the undersides of the wings with a cross throughout gules.*
 - *Motto - Domine Dirige Nos - Lord Direct Us.*
4. A stylised version is, today, used as the "logo" of the City Corporation; however, the Arms themselves remain widely-recognisable and distinct from the logo.
5. As such, different approval processes have long been in place in respect of applications for usage. For the Coat of Arms, the process has remained unchanged for at least 50 years, with applications considered against criteria set down by the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen in 1974.
6. Those applications are assessed by the Chief Commoner of the day, against the answers provided in respect of these questions, and subsequently processed by the Town Clerk in accordance with the view expressed.
7. This process stems from when responsibility for the Armorial Bearings sat with the City Lands & Bridge House Estates Committee; following the abolition of that Committee in 2011, this responsibility transferred to the Policy & Resources Committee (Terms of Reference sub-section 4(e)).
8. Approval for the use of the logo is a separate process, and is overseen by the Communications & External Affairs team. Both the logo and the Coat of Arms are copyright protected.

Current Position

9. A review into the City Corporation's approach to Branding is currently underway and, as part of this, it is considered sensible to place a pause on the consideration of any further requests for usage until such time as that review is

complete: it would be unfortunate were, for instance, an approval for external use to be granted which later proved to be contrary to the outcomes of the Branding review.

10. In addition to this, as part of its Resources and Priorities refresh, the City Corporation is developing a comprehensive Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) strategy to protect, support, and enhance its brand and assets. This strategy will include mechanisms for identifying, addressing, and preventing unauthorised IP use, maintaining an IP register, developing a licensing strategy and optimising retail offerings. A comprehensive review of the City Corporation's brand and associated sub-brands is near completion and will recommend a strengthening of the brand, which will enhance the organisation's reputation and increase recognition. Alongside this, there will be refreshed brand identity and management guidelines to provide clarity when utilising the brand and assets.
11. By strengthening IP protection, creating cohesive brand management, and capitalising on income opportunities, the City Corporation seeks to safeguard its brand and resonate with target audiences, in line with the Corporate Plan Outcomes and the Branding review. Pausing further approvals at this time, therefore, also plays into this area of activity.
12. In any event, it is unsatisfactory in terms of governance best practice that these approval arrangements have not been reviewed substantively for such a lengthy period of time. Several Chief Commoners have, in recent years, expressed some surprise at the process and, regardless of the outcome of the Branding review, it would be prudent and long-overdue to assess the approvals process more completely.
13. Currently, applicants are asked to answer the following questions:
 - *What is the intended use of the City Arms?*
 - *Has the application any connection to the City?*
 - *Is the use of the City Arms intended for commercial purposes?*
 - *Will the proposed use of the City Arms give good publicity to the City Corporation or will it adversely affect the dignity of the Corporation?*
 - *Is the City Arms to be used in such a way as to indicate that any particular function is a Corporation one when such is not the case?*
14. If answered to the satisfaction of the Chief Commoner of the day, the applicant is informed, and a copy of the City Arms is then provided to them on agreement that it is strictly used for the purposes mentioned in their application.
15. There is no further verification undertaken, and usage is granted at nil cost.

Options

16. To continue with the current Coat of Arms application process; or,

17. To agree to postpone the current application process and conduct a review with the intention of establishing a new up-to-date application procedure.

Proposal

18. It is therefore proposed that this Committee agrees to postpone the current application process whilst a wider branding review is undertaken, with a new Coat of Arms application process being established in the near future (subject to the further approval of this Committee).

Corporate and Strategic Implications

- Strategic implications – This proposal aligns with the “Providing Excellent Services” outcome as well as the “brilliant basics” ambition of the Corporate Plan: it is clear that we need to refresh the outdated process for City Arms approvals and align an approach with the outcomes of any new Branding strategy; being able to provide a consistent and clear approach to all branding opportunities will be important.
- Financial implications - N/A
- Resource implications - N/A
- Legal implications - N/A
- Risk implications - The risk of not pausing the application process at this point includes the potential for reputational damage or practical complications to arise for the City Corporation in future, in the event an unsuitable applicant is granted use of the City Arms.
- Equalities implications - N/A
- Climate implications - N/A
- Security implications - N/A

Conclusion

19. It is recommended that an agreement to halt the current Coat of Arms application arrangements be confirmed so as not to cut-across the ongoing Branding review and so that that officers may conduct a review and establish a new application process, pending the outcome of that process.

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