

Committee(s): Public Relations and Economic Development Sub Policy and Resources	Date(s): 20 February 2014	Item no.
Subject: The City of London Corporation Annual Reception in Brussels	Public	
Report of: Director of Economic Development	For Decision	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Summary</u></p> <p>This paper provides Members with the history and purpose of the City of London Corporation’s annual reception in Brussels, explains how it is organised, and makes recommendations for future Member participation.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>a) That Members of the Sub-Committee note the content of the report.</p> <p>b) Members agree that Member representation at the annual Brussels reception is by the Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee, and the Member who sits on the IRSG Council as an observer.</p>		

Main Report

Background

1. This paper provides Members with information on the City of London Corporation’s annual reception in Brussels, how it has evolved, and how it is organised. It also makes a recommendation as to how Members should be represented at future annual receptions.
2. The first annual reception in Brussels was held in 2005, to coincide with the opening of the City Office in Brussels. The purpose of the event is to raise the profile of the City of London Corporation amongst the EU institutions, Members of the European Parliament, policy makers and permanent representatives, and to provide an opportunity for them to meet with stakeholders from the financial and professional services industry.

3. The first annual reception was held in the European Parliament and the guest speaker was Commissioner Charlie McCreevy. A list of all of the guest speakers can be seen at Appendix 1. The event was organised by our then retained political consultancy, Houston Consulting.
4. The reception was followed by a private dinner, hosted by the Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee, for around 20 – 24 of the most senior guests attending.

Development of the Annual Reception

5. This was the format that was followed for the first three years of the annual reception, until 2007. Attendance at the reception was occasionally disappointing, which reflected the challenge of raising the profile of the City Office in Brussels when it first opened, but also some logistic challenges associated with bringing guests into the European Parliament building.
6. From 2008 onwards, the annual reception and dinner has been organised in-house, by City Corporation officers, predominantly from the EU team in the Economic Development Office, with support from colleagues in the Public Relations Office. Since 2008, the event has also been held in a venue outside of the European Parliament.
7. Since the organisation for the annual reception has been brought in-house, no fee is paid to an external consultant. However, by using a venue outside of the European Parliament, there has been an increase in the hire charge.
8. The annual reception has gone from strength to strength and is an established event on the Brussels calendar. In November 2013, the reception attracted over 200 guests from the European Parliament, European Commission, permanent representations in Brussels, think tanks, HM Government, trade associations and the financial and professional services industry. Many of our senior City stakeholders, including members of the IRSG Council and Executive Board have attended and view the event as an important opportunity to engage with EU institutions. The guest speaker was Hannes Swoboda MEP, leader of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament.
9. The dinner hosted by the Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee after the reception, had Ivan Rodgers, the UK Permanent Representative to the EU, as the guest of honour. The other guests were senior representatives from the European institutions and from the financial services industry, including Rachel Lomax, Chair of the International Regulatory Strategy Group (IRSG).

10. The event is supported by 10 officers of the City of London. No outside support is used. This includes: the Director and Assistant Director of EDO, the members of the European Affairs team and a member of PRO to handle media interviews. A member of the events team, assisted by two administrators from EDO also attended to assist with the logistics of putting on such a large event, including preparing the badges and manning the registration desk. By using our own resources to stage the event we have built up considerable expertise and can now host such events without outside assistance. For the EU team members the event also provides an excellent opportunity to network with key EU officials, Members of the European Parliament and Council officials.
11. In 2013, the total cost for the Annual Reception was 17,900 EUR (£14,800 approx.) excluding VAT. This includes room hire, equipment hire (PA system etc.) and catering.

Member representation

12. The Chairman of Policy & Resources attends the annual reception and dinner in Brussels. Whilst in Brussels, the Chairman participates in a full programme of meetings with European institutions and policy makers.
13. As with the annual party political conferences, any Member who is in Brussels for non-Corporation business, would be welcome to attend the annual reception. However, space is limited for the dinner.
14. The *approximate* cost for attendance is £490 Eurostar return, and £200 for accommodation.

Recommendation

15. It is recommended that:
 - a) Members of the Public Relations and Economic Development Sub-Committee note the content of the report.
 - b) Agree that Members will be represented at future annual receptions in Brussels by the Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee and the designated Member who sits on the IRSG Council as an observer.

Contact:

paul.sizeland@cityoflondon.gov.uk | 0207 332 3605

Appendix 1

Keynote speakers:

- 2005 Commissioner Charlie McCreevy
- 2006 Commissioner Peter Mandelson
- 2007 Commissioner Gunther Verheugen
- 2008 Pervenche Beres MEP
- 2009 Adair Turner, FSA
- 2010 Sharon Bowles MEP
- 2011 Verena Ross, ESMA
- 2012 HMA Jonathan Brenton
- 2013 Hannes Swoboda MEP