

<b>Committee:</b> Policy & Resources Committee	<b>Date:</b> 19 February 2015
<b>Subject:</b> Supporting the Commonwealth	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Town Clerk & Chief Executive	<b>For Decision</b>

### Summary

The Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council (CWEIC) was established by Lord Marland, former UK Trade Envoy and Business Minister, in July 2014 to replace the Commonwealth Business Council. The creation of the CWEIC provides a good opportunity for the City Corporation to further develop its work in the Commonwealth, something which is supported by both Number 10 and the FCO. For example, through more Mayoral visits to the Commonwealth and facilitating a more extensive programme of events on the Commonwealth for City businesses. In particular, it is proposed to become a founding partner of the CWEIC; to provide office accommodation within Guildhall for the CWEIC; to increase the number of City Corporation events on the Commonwealth, and; to provide administrative costs for a secondment of a senior Commonwealth government official to the City Corporation.

### Recommendations

Members are recommended to approve founding partnership of the CWEIC and the overall funding package for the City Corporation's support for the Commonwealth at a cost not exceeding £73,000 to be met from your Committee's Contingency 2015/16.

## **Background**

1. In June 2014, the Commonwealth Business Council (CBC) was placed into liquidation. The City Corporation had wide range of contact with the CBC over the 17 years of existence, jointly staging events and liaising over Mayoral visits to Commonwealth countries and the bi-annual Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). The Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council (CWEIC) was established by Lord (Jonathan) Marland in July 2014 to replace the CBC. Lord Marland is a former UK Trade Envoy and Business Minister. The CWEIC is non-partisan, not-for-profit organisation, supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat and HM Government. Day-to-day operations will be vested in a small team within the Commonwealth Secretariat; an

independent Advisory Council of senior business and diplomatic figures will also oversee its affairs.

2. The CWEIC will focus on promoting business practices and governance; supporting SMEs to create trading opportunities in Commonwealth countries; encouraging sustainability with particular reference to island states; helping Commonwealth governments to find funding for major infrastructure programmes, and; advising on trade development throughout the Commonwealth. The UK, Maltese and Lesotho governments are “Founding Strategic Partners” and will financially support the CWEIC. In addition, De La Rue is the first corporate organisation to sign up as a “Founding Strategic Partner”. Further partners will be announced in due course. The CWEIC’s objectives align with the City Corporation’s work in the UK and overseas. Recent City Corporation visits to the Commonwealth have included India, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana, and Cyprus.

## **Proposal**

3. The creation of the CWEIC provides a good opportunity for the City Corporation to further develop its work in the Commonwealth, something which is supported by both Number 10 and the FCO. In particular, it is proposed that the City Corporation should work in four ways with the CWEIC:
  - a. “Founding Strategic Partner” membership of the CWEIC. It is proposed that the City Corporation would formally join the CWEIC and be acknowledged as a “Founding Strategic Partner”, alongside national governments and leading corporate institutions. In return, a City Corporation representative would be invited to join the CWEIC’s Advisory Board and the City Corporation would be given significant recognition on the homepage of the CWEIC website and all of its marketing materials. The Corporation would be invited to participate in CWEIC events and activities across the Commonwealth, some of which could be organised to coincide with Corporation overseas visits, thus highlighting our membership of the CWEIC to a wider overseas audience. Total cost: £10,000’
  - b. Provision of start-up office accommodation. It is proposed that desk space be made available within the Guildhall Complex to allow the CWEIC should the need to arise. This will be provided in a similar arrangement to other organisations, such as the Global Law Summit, who are currently operating out of Guildhall. It is proposed that this accommodation arrangement is offered on an

initial 2-year basis (which represents a contribution of approximately £20,000 over the 2-year period).

- c. Commonwealth events. It is proposed to work through the CWEIC to facilitate an enhanced series of City Corporation events related to the Commonwealth. These events will include follow up sessions from City Corporation-led visits to Commonwealth countries, working with the CWEIC and other Commonwealth organisations to facilitate events at Guildhall. Total cost: £30,000
- d. Secondment opportunity to the City Corporation. It is proposed that a 2-year secondment opportunity be offered for a senior Government official from a Commonwealth country to join the City Corporation, providing an individual with the opportunity to play a key part in delivering the City Corporation's work in relation to the Commonwealth. Such secondments are common practice within HM Government and the Royal Household. Even though the post-holder would be salaried by their host Government, some basic funding is required in order to establish this post, meet various HR requirements, equip the post-holder with the necessary equipment for the role and give the potential to offer accommodation to the post-holder, should it be required. Total cost: £13,000

## **Financial Implications**

4. As outlined above, it is proposed that the required funding of £73,000 is drawn from your *Contingency Fund 2015/16* and charged to *City's Cash*. The current uncommitted balance available within your Committee's *Contingency Fund 2015/16* amounts to (£232,000) prior to any allowance being made for any other proposals on today's agenda.

## **Conclusion**

5. The creation of the CWEIC provides a good opportunity for the City Corporation to further develop its work in the Commonwealth, something which is supported by both Number 10 and the FCO, through the activities outlined above.

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