

Notes for Advisory Council on the TGP Office Location Working Group Final Report October 2015

Policy and communications committee (PCC), asks Advisory Council to take account of the following when considering the 'TGP Office Location Working Group Final Report October 2015':

1. The brief included consultation with RIBA and the RTPI. This is not reported. As both fulfil policy functions from their London offices, the findings should be of material consideration in the analysis contained in the report.
2. There is no mention of the significance of a London base to the credibility and standing of the LI. PCC considers weight to this should be given.
3. There is no suggestion that the policy resource for the devolved nations be anywhere but their national capitals. A policy function needs ease of access to government, the press/radio etc. If we are less visible or seen as less accessible we may miss out.
4. The report sets out findings regarding the policy function. PCC notes inaccuracies, omissions and points of disagreement:
 - a. Stephen Russell is head of policy not the policy officer.
 - b. The report states that a move from London would '*impact on the effectiveness of the policy officer's work*'. No further explanation is given, other than Appendix K, which lists numbers of London meetings for key personnel.
 - c. The report fails to mention the advantages of:
 - having a London office from where the LI can host meetings;
 - being able to offer a meeting room as resource in kind;
 - ad hoc meetings being arranged at short notice with key stakeholders;
 - the ability for impromptu social meetings with stakeholders.
 - d. The report states the majority of the CEO's meetings are internal and do not need to be in London. This may be the case at present because of internally-driven priorities. It cannot be deemed always to be the case. From PCC's perspective, the CEO is a resource that we want to use for advocacy, marketing and intelligence gathering.
 - e. The report states that the deputy CEO (also director of comms) attends a significant number of London-based events. Appendix K shows that the deputy CEO attended more London-based events/meetings than the head of policy. Yet there is no mention that there would be an impact on the effectiveness of the deputy CEO's work.
 - f. PCC **disagrees** with the conclusion that the effectiveness of the work of the principal staff other than the policy officer would **not** be affected if the office were located outside London. PCC considers that conclusion is not based on the evidence presented.
5. The report explains how theoretically the LI's London functionality could continue whilst its head office and secretariat staff (except the policy officer) are based elsewhere. PCC considers this shows a fundamental lack of understanding of a number of issues as follows:
 - a. The role of head of policy does not operate in isolation from the rest of the secretariat team. The policy function is intrinsically linked with roles of other staff and needs to be proximate. (The HR report notes that most LI secretariat roles are not suited to home-working).
 - b. A hot desk in London for 75 days per year with access to lounge areas for informal meetings would not necessarily meet the requirements for the head of policy's job.
 - c. Creating a post that requires the post-holder to oscillate between hot-desks in London, some other city and working from home does not seem logical or good practice.
 - d. Working from home (as opposed to occasional home working) carries health and safety issues and costs which are not considered.

- e. PCC disagrees with the positive slant in the following: *'On the positive side it would allow a more flexible approach for its key staff to occasionally work from London and maintain contact with the head office through the use of modern technology.'* We consider the lack of a stable office base with the benefits of familiarity and colleague support would be a disadvantage.
 - f. The report states that if the CEO or deputy CEO regularly worked in London there may be a loss of cohesion to the secretariat's working. The costing scenarios do not allow for three senior members of staff to work in London regularly. Stating that additional costs of room hire and travel would be offset by office cost savings, whilst probably true is mathematically inexact.
 - g. There is no consideration of where any expanded policy resource would be located or how they would be managed.
 - h. Issues associated with remote line management are not addressed at all.
6. The policy and communications functions of the LI are from where the advocacy, and professional influence emanate. This report makes no mention of the LI being a membership organisation. It makes no mention of member aspiration for more influence. It ignores the location requirements for exerting influence from a stable, resourced, collaborative base.
7. The report makes no mention of impact on committee members.

Note: *This note was discussed and agreed by the chartered members of PCC as a briefing note for its representative at Advisory Council.*