

Unlock Democracy Council Meeting
5th Floor 9 King Street London EC2V 8EA
28 October 2017 11am- 4.00 pm

Present: Ian Driver, Phil Starr, Danny Zinkus Sutton, Jack Maizels, James Grindrod, Rachel Collinson, Andrew Blick, Vicky Seddon, Peter Hirst, Lisa French, Debbie Chay, Stephen Carter (phone)

Apologies were received from Andrew Manning, Sepi Golzari-Munro and Jenny Cronin

Staff in Attendance: Alexandra Runswick (Director), Sarah Clarke, Sam Coates, Zahia Guidoum Castiblanque (morning session) and Malene Bratlie (afternoon session)

1. Apologies Minutes and matters arising

ii) Council minutes for approval

The minutes were approved unanimously.

iii) Matters Arising

Alexandra Runswick apologised for not having brought a paper on Unlock Democracy's reserves policy to this meeting as requested. However delays with the audit meant this was not possible. She confirmed that the paper would be presented to the next Council meeting in January.

Council agreed unanimously to send congratulations to Sepi Golzari-Munro on the birth of her baby.

2. Finance

i) Budget

Alexandra Runswick briefed Council on the budget, the changes that had been made and the reasons for it. Grant income had been increased as additional funding had been secured for the repeal Bill Alliance, while estimated income from mailings decreased as mailing targets have not been met.

Vicky Seddon asked about cash flow and whether Alex had any concerns about UD's financial position. Alex reassured her that cash flow is not currently an issue although as always it is carefully monitored. The increase in grant funding and continued tight control of expenditure meant that there weren't any serious concerns about the organisation's finances so far this year. The main challenge so far in this financial year had been liaising with 7 different grant funders but that this was a nice problem to have.

Stephen Carter asked whether it would be possible to delegate some of the funding admin? Alex replied that building the relationships was important and in practice there was little that could be

effectively delegated.

Rachel Collinson asks about including a line in budget specifically for the costs of implementing GDPR.

Alexandra Runswick agreed in that this could be useful when it has been agreed what changes are necessary but at present there is not enough information for it to be meaningful.

The budget was approved.

11. Rodell update

(moved from 3.40pm)

Phil Starr gave an update on Rodell Properties Ltd. The main issue for Rodell at the moment is that the second floor of the Cynthia St property remains unlet. This causes a loss of £8000/month and appears to be a result of the uncertainty created by Brexit. There are not many people viewing the space despite a reduction in the rent and an advertising campaign. Whilst it won't affect the budget dramatically in this financial year, in the longer term, it is very significant. There does not seem to be an easy solution but it is something the Rodell Board will be reflecting on.

Rachel Collinson raised the idea of using it as a co-working space. [Indycube](#) could be a solution as is trying to expand to London. Phil Starr accepts that is an interesting proposition and that is something to look at although it would require a significant increase in management by Rodell.

Danny Zinkus Sutton stated that a Rodell meeting will be needed.

Phil was thanked for his report.

3. Director's report

Alexandra Runswick introduced her written report and invited questions.

Danny Zinkus Sutton raises two questions about the Repeal Bill - (1) if the Repeal Bill is withdrawn what's our time table looking like? Given that we have approached this as a brexit neutral position, (2) If we were instrumental in the withdrawal of the Repeal Bill, will this not affect our perception of being Brexit neutral?

Alexandra Runswick reminded Council that there are no agreed criteria for Brexit neutrality. UD has defined it as not taking a position on the outcome of the referendum, focusing on the process of Brexit and ensuring that we are always working on a cross party basis. There are some for whom any call for scrutiny of Brexit is opposing Brexit and so would not see our current work as Brexit neutral. UD has to be transparent about what it is doing and why. If the government were to withdraw the EU Withdrawal Bill then our focus would move to the Trade Bill which raises similar issues about parliamentary scrutiny of royal prerogative powers. This is addressed later in the agenda.

Rachel Collinson welcomed the recent work of UD and asked how the big achievements and impact the organisation is having has been communicated to UD's supporters.

Andrew Blick commented on the possibility of a Parliamentary vote on the final deal and asked whether it would be helpful for Council to debate this at the next meeting. .

Alexandra Runswick replied that this could be helpful but that there were too many potential situations at the moment for the debate to be meaningful. Andrew agreed saying that when the time came it was important that the position taken was consistent with the values of the organisation and on the basis of clear criteria. .

Vicky Seddon congratulated Alex and the team on UD's work but raised concerns about commenting on stories about House of Lords reform at the moment. She stressed that while House of Lords reform is important, it may not be the right time to do that as UD they are allies re the Repeal Bill.

Alexandra Runswick acknowledged her concern and explained that she have the issue serious consideration before commenting, including discussing it with the Repeal Bill coordinator. However, on balance she decided that it would be more damaging not to comment on an issue that has been a significant campaign for UD for a number of years, that to offend some peers.

Lisa French asks about when the online direct debit issue is going to be reviewed and what is the Santander scheme for interns. Alex answered that there is a deadline in place for discussions at both Council and Management Board re online direct debits. The Santander scheme is an opportunity to recruit interns who are partly funded by Santander.

5. What next after the Repeal Bill? Trade and democracy

Sarah Clarke presented the Trade and Democracy paper. She outlined the relevance of the forthcoming trade bill, and highlighted the commonalities between issues in the UK's current trade setups, whereby trade is a prerogative power, and the EU Withdrawal Bill. Sarah set out proposals for trade democracy being the next focal point for Unlock Democracy after the Repeal Bill Alliance work comes to an end. She also highlighted a specific proposal for Unlock Democracy to seek funding to coordinate a civil society wide response, in a similar way to the Repeal Bill Alliance. Sarah flagged that much of the preparatory work would happen concurrently to the Repeal Bill Alliance work.

Council responded positively to the paper. Members highlighted that while there was initial scepticism about how trade related to the work of Unlock Democracy, the paper had clarified the connection and how this built on the Alliance work. It was emphasized that the case for a written constitution should still underpin arguments being made about trade.

Council approved unanimously the proposal

6. TI Indicators

Rachel Collinson explained her involvement in developing the Transformational Index and how

important it is that organisations meaningfully measure impact. Unlock Democracy chose the following five indicators:

- Integrity
- Engagement
- Inspiration
- Proliferation
- Systemic Change

Alexandra Runswick commented on why those indicators were chosen and explained why the staff team felt that the measures being used raises concerns about the parliamentary engagement were not capturing the right information for reasons set out in the paper. The staff team were keen to change it and she invited suggestions.

Alexandra Runswick pointed out is that we need to make sure that Unlock Democracy also collects trend data rather just quarterly. Lisa French stated that journalist and media engagement should also be measured. Sarah Clarke replied that there is already an overview of which journalists have contacted Unlock Democracy, so this could easily be translated into TI. Alexandra explained that media engagement needs to be broken down into proactive and reactive engagements otherwise the figures can be distorted by events which are actually nothing to do with UD's work.

Action: Sarah Clarke to compile data on media engagement.

7. Unlock Teams & Campaigning Tactics

Sam Coates spoke to his papers about the current status of Unlock Teams and current campaigning tactics. These are inspired by American campaigning, such as town hall meetings, turning up to surgeries and other public spaces where elected representatives are present and can be held accountable. The idea of Unlock Teams- i.e. four people coming together in their constituency and holding their MP accountable- has had quite a slow take up and a number of people who have come forward has fallen off after the initial stage. It is thought that the 'Unlock Team' label creates a barrier to understanding what Unlock Democracy is trying to achieve. Instead, Unlock Democracy should ask supporters to take direct actions such as calling their MP, rather than promoting the structure of Unlock Teams.

Danny Zinkus Sutton agreed and said that he would not be surprised if people get a bit daunted of creating a team and then acting, so reversing it sounds like a good idea.

Alexandra Runswick asked members of Council if they would be willing to take actions such as meeting with their MPs and share it on social media. If we are going to mobilise our supporters we need to lead by example. There was a general consensus that members are willing to meet with their MP or take some form of action. Vicky Seddon asked if Unlock Democracy was able to email Unlock Democracy supporters in Council members' constituency so that they could join Council members when meeting with their MP. This idea was welcomed by Council.

Jack Maizels asked if there was an indication of over what time period Council should take these actions. Alexandra Runswick responded that now that we know when Committee Stage will be, a timetable can be given and added that materials can be provided for when members of Council go and see their MP.

Action: Sam Coates to brief Council on when to take action and provide materials for Council members meeting with MPs

Phil Starr said it was not clear what Unlock Democracy's campaigning tactics were trying to achieve in the long-term. Sam Coates responded that the short-term outcome is to organise around MPs that speak out on the Repeal Bill and the long-term goal is having groups of people who will regularly go out and campaign and take actions on behalf of Unlock Democracy's issues..

Phil Starr left at 15.05.

8. GDPR- general data protection regulations

Alexandra Runswick introduced the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). GDPR requires tougher regulations around data protection, particularly around consent. Although there were not specific plans to be agreed at this stage it was important that Council, as company directors, were aware of the issues.

There was a wide ranging discussion about data protection principles and practices, how the changes may impact on UD's work and the role that Council need to take in ensuring compliance.

10. AGM and anniversary

Alexandra Runswick introduced the programme of the AGM, which consist of a formal AGM in the morning, where constitutional and policy motions will be discussed. In the afternoon, a 'Democracy Day' will be open to all and consist of one session on the Repeal Bill and other more interactive sessions that will put Unlock Democracy issues in the broader context of current politics. Around 80-90 people have signed up. Alexandra Runswick encouraged council members to invite everyone they know on Facebook and also attend the Facebook event themselves.

Council response to policy motions from the 2016 AGM:

Council voted in favour of the Brexit Process response as drafted.

Jack Maizels asked Council if they had any comments on the referendums response. Vicky Seddon expressed concern that the response did not endorse the use of thresholds in future referendums. Debbie Chay said the response to the referendum policy motion was a good representation of what the council thinks about referendums. Stephen Carter said Council needs to have a proper position on referendums. Danny Zinkus Sutton also pointed out that there may be future referendums (in Scotland, Ireland, and potentially a second EU referendum), therefore Council needs to reach a view on referendums. Vicky Seddon said she would be content with the policy motion on referendums if a

point about thresholds were included.

Jack Maizels asked Council to approve a response that reflect that Council debated referendums, agreed on the broad principles outlined in the referendum policy response but did not come to a firm view.

The vote was largely carried with one vote against.

As concerns continued to be raised by Council members, Jack Maizels asked Council to vote again on the referendum response as originally drafted.

The vote was largely carried with one vote against.

Council further agreed that it would be necessary to revisit the issue of referendums.

Vicky Seddon asked for an amendment to the parliamentary boundaries motion to include the deadline for the current consultation. Alexandra Runswick indicated that she would be happy to accept an addition and agreed to correspond with Vicky about this to agree the exact wording. The parliamentary boundaries motion, with Vicky's amendment, was approved.

12. AOB

Lisa French, James Grindrod and Peter Hirst informed Council that they are standing for election to the ERS Council.