



PUBLIC BODY REVIEW

AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF WILTON PARK
AUGUST 2023

Recommendations

Efficacy: mandate and strategy

1. (FCDO) As part of ongoing work, provide additional guidance to policy teams on the strengths and capabilities of individual thought leadership institutions, and periodically assess their relative impact and value for the FCDO.
2. (FCDO) Support Wilton Park's desire to build and diversify its HMG client base, and to attract core funding from a broader range of HMG stakeholders.
3. (Wilton Park) In the current year, simplify its approach by focusing on new sectors and thematic categories to drive event alignment and support evaluation rather than identifying additional future 'areas of work'.
4. (Wilton Park) For future years (i) consider whether to retain sector and thematic categories, or adopt FCDO and HMG priorities wholesale; and (ii) if it retains sectors and thematic categories, ensure that they not only align with the latest FCDO and HMG priorities, but that they reflect the USP and relative advantage of Wilton Park vis-à-vis other organisations.
5. (FCDO and Wilton Park) Ensure that the FCDO plays a bigger supporting role in informing priorities in annual Strategic Plan updates and ensure that the final plans are explicitly agreed with FCDO Ministers.
6. (FCDO and Wilton Park) Ensure outreach is appropriately addressed through communications plans to help senior officials understand Wilton Park's offer and make best use of it.
7. (Wilton Park) Urgently update the Theory of Change (ToC), linking clearly to the Strategic Plan, and with clear key performance indicators against each level, ensuring agreed and implemented prior to 2024-25. The ToC should sit alongside a MEL framework that formalises reporting and learning and sets out clear processes for feeding into decision-making.
8. (Wilton Park) Continue to track and take steps to boost diversity of event participants to maximise its effectiveness and impact.
9. (FCDO and Wilton Park) Create a systematic feedback loop with relevant policy teams and embassy staff post-event to feed more directly into policy work and monitor impact, as part of the Theory of Change refresh and MEL Framework.
10. (Wilton Park) Review to what extent the Friends of Wilton Park network forms part of Wilton Park's USP and offer, how it manages this network to maximise benefits and how those benefits are measured.

Efficacy: delivery model

11. (FCDO and Wilton Park) Strengthen working links between Wilton Park's policy team and FCDO Research Analysts to realise synergies across both teams.

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12. (FCDO and Wilton Park) Continue to work with the Government Property Agency on other possible like-for-like venues - including leased, ad hoc and to buy options - to ensure they have fully explored and costed alternatives as part of the Spending Review 2024 planning process.

Efficiency

13. (FCDO) Continue to cap annual core funding at £500k in the medium-term.
14. (Wilton Park) Strengthen incentives to spread events more evenly through the year, including reviewing the events pricing policy on an annual basis, drawing on benchmarking data. The next review in autumn 2023 should include a reassessment of varying rates through the year.
15. (Wilton Park) Undertake a full assessment of the benefits of customer interface and information management system by March 2024.
16. (Wilton Park) Consider the costs and benefits of adopting the FCDO's HR system.
17. (FCDO) Begin listing Wilton Park vacancies under the FCDO on the Civil Service Jobs portal as soon as possible.
18. (FCDO and Wilton Park) Clarify and publicise internally by end 2023 the model by which staff can move between the two organisations.
19. (Wilton Park) Set a stretch target of 60% occupancy by 2025.
20. (Wilton Park) Develop a clearer model for commercial activity, defining the target customer base and event type, for 2024-25.
21. (Wilton Park) Agree by December 2023 an outreach programme to raise Wilton Park's profile across other government departments, showcasing successful delivery against departmental international objectives.
22. (Wilton Park) Agree at Board level by March 2024 a new policy on funding from foreign governments and militaries, including criteria for funding partnerships, an approach to security and reputational risk management, and ensuring alignment to HMG objectives by end 2023-24.
23. (Wilton Park) Agree at Board level by March 2024 a new policy on private sector funding, including criteria for funding partnerships, an approach to reputational risk management, and ensuring alignment to HMG priorities.

Accountability and Governance

24. (FCDO and Wilton Park) Work through the Arm's Length Body sponsorship code of good practice to identify areas for further improvement in sponsorship outcomes and behaviours.
25. (FCDO and Wilton Park) Review the framework document at least every three years, going forward.

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26. (FCDO and Wilton Park) Review, and where necessary, amend framework document provisions highlighted by the Review Team, ensuring that the Principal Accounting Officer, Cabinet Office and Treasury are content.
27. (FCDO) Review FCDO membership of Wilton Park's Board, with the aim of ensuring clear lines of accountability, ensuring that the Principal Accounting Officer, Cabinet Office and Treasury are content.
28. (Wilton Park) Put in place a clear action plan for board effectiveness no later than December 2023.
29. (Wilton Park) Ensure that Board and Committee papers identify clearly, what is being recommended to Board members; minutes focus on recording decisions/conclusions and the rationale for those, rather than on views expressed by individuals; and clear ownership is assigned for implementation.
30. (Wilton Park) Update its published board register of interests at least quarterly.
31. (Wilton Park) Set specific aspirations for Board and Advisory Council diversity – including age, gender, ethnic, cultural, socio-economic and geographical diversity – as part of the Board effectiveness action plan no later than December 2023.
32. (Wilton Park) State baseline figures and specific aspirations for workforce diversity clearly in workforce plans and future Annual Reports.

Wilton Park Public Body Review
Independent Review Team
August 2023