

Edinburgh Chamber urged to rethink on Sputnik

Councillor John McLellan asked the council today to review the council's association with Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce if news agency Sputnik's membership is not ended.



There have been other calls demanding a fresh look at Russian media outlets such as that by LibDem MSP Alex Cole-Hamilton [at Holyrood](#). There have also been other calls to rescind the recently awarded membership of the Chamber to the news outlet which has a place of business in the capital from the Scottish Conservative Party.

Councillor McLellan referred to the agency during the debate today as one of Russian Government propaganda.

As a member of the Chamber of Commerce the agency would get the same benefits as any other member. One of these is gaining access to insights from key city stakeholders including the local council and Councillor McLellan said he objected to this. He has already written extensively on the subject in his Edinburgh Evening News column [here](#).

He wanted the council to encourage the Chamber to kick Sputnik out as a member of the business organisation but in the end

the council agreed by 36 votes to 25 only to implement part of the motion. The coalition removed paragraph 4 of the motion which demanded that the council review its association with the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce if they did not terminate Sputnik's membership.

Independent councillor Lewis Ritchie said he supported Cllr McLellan's motion and referred councillors to a recent pronouncement of the European Parliament which said that Sputnik is a pseudo news agency.

He also pointed out that Edinburgh has links with both the Ukraine and Kiev. He said : "Given that Edinburgh has Kiev as its sister city we should act appropriately."

A spokesperson for Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce said : "Edinburgh Chamber notes the comments of Councillor McLellan. "The Chamber is conducting its own review, and any decision we take will be made based on our constitution, on the legality or otherwise of member activities, and on the position taken by the Scottish and UK Governments regarding the trading licences of any organisation. We have nothing further to add at this time."

Full text of the motion by Councillor John McLellan

- 1) Deeply regrets that the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce has accepted the Russian Government propaganda agency Sputnik UK as a corporate member.*
- 2) Notes that prominent amongst the Chamber of Commerce's member benefits is to "gain access to insights from key city stakeholders including local council".*
- 3) Asks the Chamber to terminate its agreement with Sputnik forthwith.*
- 4) Instructs the Chief Executive to review the council's association with the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce should Sputnik's membership not be terminated within the next cycle and report to the following Corporate Policy and Strategy*

Committee."