

Committee(s)	Dated:
Public Relations and Economic Development Sub-Committee	11 June 2019
Subject: Parliamentary Team update	Public
Report of: Paul Double, City Remembrancer	For Information
Report author: Michael Comba, Parliamentary Officer	

Summary

This report has been prepared to update Members on the main elements of the Parliamentary Team's activity in support of the City of London Corporation's political and parliamentary engagement. An oral update will be provided at the meeting on the Government's Brexit parliamentary programme.

This report is written with reference to the top line parliamentary objectives and deliverables of the Remembrancer's Office Departmental Business Plan 2019-20. For the Committee's reference, these are set out in the appendix.

This report spans the period since the last meeting of the Public Relations and Economic Development Sub Committee on 7 May.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Brexit legislation (Objective 1)

1. The scale of objection to the content of the proposed Withdrawal Agreement (Implementation) Bill, including from some of her own Cabinet, precipitated Theresa May's announcement on 24 May of her intention to resign as Leader of the Conservative Party. Her resignation takes effect on 7 June, after which a leadership election will take place. She will remain as Prime Minister until that election is concluded. The fate of the Withdrawal Bill remains uncertain, but it is unlikely that it will be presented to Parliament in the near future.
2. The Office continues to monitor Brexit legislative developments. In addition, the Office will, in conjunction with other departments, continue to engage where legislation impacts on City Corporation and stakeholder interests.
3. European Parliamentary Elections were held on 23 May. The Brexit Party topped the poll with 32%, followed by the Lib Dems on 20%. The Conservatives came fifth on 9%, behind Labour and the Greens.

City Corporation legislation (Objective 2)

4. Work on the refinements to the drafting of a Private Members Bill relating to air quality, following the approval of the intended provision by London Councils' Transport and Environment Committee on 21 March, is in hand. A parliamentary engagement plan is being prepared ahead of the Bill's anticipated introduction in the next parliamentary session.
5. Preparatory work on a private bill relating to the relocation of the City Corporation's markets continues, following the decision of the Court on 25 April. Initial contact has been made with relevant MPs and will be followed up in connection with the public consultation which is due to begin on 11 June.

Parliamentary inquiries (Objective 3)

6. The Office responded to the following Committee inquiries, working with relevant teams across the City Corporation:
 - The Treasury Select Committee inquiry into the future of UK financial services. The City's written submission, drawn up in consultation with EDO, made a number of recommendations covering areas including UK-EU trade relations, international trade policy and skills;
 - The Environmental Audit Committee inquiry into invasive species. The submission, drafted in consultation with Open Spaces, was referenced in a subsequent oral evidence session and the Committee has followed up with an invitation for the City Corporation to give oral evidence.
 - The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee inquiry into plastic food and drink packaging. The submission highlighted the progress of the Plastic Free City Initiative.
7. A report on the Policy Chair's recent visit to the US was also circulated to the relevant select committees and APPGs, with particular interest being shown by the International Trade Select Committee who are currently running an inquiry into the UK's trade in services.
8. The Lords debated the EU Sub-Committee on Energy and the Environment's report on Brexit and UK biosecurity, in which the City Corporation's submission was referenced, on 15 May. During debate, Committee Chairman Lord Teverson (Lib Dem) highlighted the Committee's recent visit to London Gateway port, hosted by the City Corporation, and the concerns raised there over post-Brexit staffing resources.
9. Peers also debated the EU Committee's report on Brexit and the movement of people in the cultural sector. Lord Bilimoria (Crossbench) referenced the City Corporation's submission and its concerns about the unsuitability of the non-EU visa regime for the cultural sector.

Responding to issues raised in Parliament (Objective 4)

10. The Office provided briefing notes to relevant MPs ahead of the following debates:
 - UK policy towards China held by Leo Docherty (Con) on 7 May. The Office briefed Richard Graham (Con), Chair of the China APPG and Trade Envoy for Indonesia, ASEAN Economic Community, Philippines and Malaysia;
 - Negotiations on the UK leaving the EU during the extension period held by Julia Lopez (Con), on 22 May. The note covered the City Corporation's priorities for UK-EU trade relations, following discussions with Julia Lopez.
11. Contact was made with the following peers in advance of their parliamentary questions:
 - Lord Dubs (Lab), proposals to reduce the use of plastics, on 7 May;
 - Lord Fox (Lib Dem), people currently registered as undertaking Intermediate, Advanced, Higher and Degree apprenticeships, on 13 May;
 - Baroness Quin (Lab), Government discussions with the UK's creative industries about future access to European markets, on 15 May;
 - Lord Greaves (Lib Dem), eradicating Japanese knotweed, on 16 May;
 - Baroness Ludford (Lib Dem), preventing fraud perpetrated on bank customers, on 20 May.

Enhancing Parliamentary engagement (Objective 5)

12. The Office arranged the annual Parliamentary Terrace Reception hosted formally by City MP Mark Field. A number of guests noted both the higher turnout and the high calibre of guests attending this year (including a number of senior Ministers and frontbenchers). The event continues to provide an opportunity for the City Corporation and City guests to engage with Parliamentarians on a cross-party basis and across both Houses.
13. Following correspondence concerning Brexit 'cliff-edge' risks, the Office has co-ordinated a meeting between the Policy Chair and Angus MacNeil (SNP), Chair of the International Trade Select Committee, to discuss financial services and port health.
14. Meetings between the following MPs and the Policy Chair are also being supported:
 - Chris Leslie, Change UK Treasury Spokesman, alongside trade association representatives to discuss Change UK's post-Brexit policy agenda and key priorities for the financial and professional services

sector. The Office will also support a meeting with Chuka Umunna, Change UK Spokesman, on 4 June.

15. The Office has co-ordinated the Lord Mayor's speaking engagement at the China APPG, on 10 June. This will cover the Lord Mayor's recent visit to China as part of the Overseas Visits Programme.
16. Office representatives attended a meeting of the China APPG on 13 May with the British Chambers of Commerce in Beijing to discuss their recent position paper on British firms in China.

GLA and the devolved institutions (Objective 6)

17. Working with Open Spaces, the Office is preparing a submission to the GLA Environment Committee's inquiry into green spaces.
18. Florence Eshalomi (Lab), Chair of the Transport Committee, was briefed on the installation of the City's rapid electric vehicle charging points.

Key priorities over the next month

19. Work will continue in support of the markets' relocation programme and the introduction of a private bill, and in respect of the Private Members Bill relating to air quality bill.
20. Meetings are being arranged between the Policy Chair and the following MPs:
 - Wes Streeting (Lab), member of the Treasury Select Committee and Chair of the APPG on Wholesale Finance, to discuss the work of the APPG and opportunities for further engagement;
 - Yvette Cooper (Lab), Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee, to discuss the UK immigration system, particularly the City Corporation's recent visa research;
 - Tom Tugendhat (Con), Chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, to discuss the Committee's ongoing inquiry into Global Britain and the City Corporation's international engagement programme. A meeting is also being arranged with Alec Shelbrooke, Conservative Vice-Chair (International), on the same subject.
21. Progress of the following relevant legislation, and their next parliamentary stages, is awaited:
 - Financial Services (Implementation of Legislation) Bill (Commons' Report Stage);
 - Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill (Commons' Report Stage);
 - Trade Bill (Commons consideration of Lords' amendments).

29 May 2019

Michael Comba

Parliamentary Officer, Office of the City Remembrancer

T: 020 7332 1200

E: michael.comba@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Appendix One: Parliamentary Team Objectives

1. Propose amendments or new clauses to Brexit-related legislation to reflect City Corporation views and report on the progress of such legislation to Members.
2. Draft and secure the passage through Parliament of City Corporation legislation, with a particular focus on securing legislation on relocating the City's markets and gaining support for the provisions included in a Private Members Bill on air quality.
3. Make submissions to Parliamentary committee inquiries into relevant City Corporation issues in collaboration with the Economic Development Office and other departments.
4. Respond to any issues or concerns raised in Parliament in either debates or tabled questions through briefing relevant MPs and Peers.
5. Enhance Parliamentary engagement through direct contact with members of both Houses on key issues and with relevant All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs).
6. Enhance engagement with the Greater London Assembly (GLA) and the devolved institutions on matters of interest to the City through briefings and submissions to relevant inquiries.