

Committee(s): Policy and Resources	Date(s): 24 September 2020
Subject: Commitment to UN Sustainable Development Goals	Public
Report of: Chamberlain	For Decision
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Summary

Officers were asked by members of the Policy and Resources Committee to produce a paper outlining how the City Corporation can demonstrate its commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This paper summarises current action by the City of London Corporation to promote achievement of the SDGs and reviews a set of actions that would make our commitment more visible and increase future ambition around and contribution towards achieving the SDGs.

Based on guidance from the Local Government Association, Business in the Community, and the London Sustainable Development Commission, a multi-faceted approach to demonstrating our commitment to the SDGs is recommended, which includes the following three aspects:

- Embed relevant SDGs into strategy development, implementation and reporting processes.
- Demonstrate the actions the City Corporation is taking to achieve the SDGs, by reporting actions on SDG partnership platforms – both UK and Global.
- Take part in business initiatives focused on the SDGs and use our influence to encourage other businesses to take part.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

1. Approve the three themes of action for the City Corporation.
2. Request the Chair of Policy and Resources makes a statement on the City Corporation's commitment to play its role in achieving the SDGs by 2030 and commits the organisation to embed relevant SDGs into strategy development, implementation and reporting.
3. Release £10k per annum for 3 years from the Policy Initiative Fund for the membership fee to the UN Global Compact.

Main Report

Background

1. The 17 SDGs have been set to achieve dramatic change and significantly improve outcomes at a global scale by 2030. They are very wide ranging – from addressing world hunger and poverty to climate change and biodiversity to inclusive growth and economic prosperity. All the SDGs have targets that are directly or indirectly related to the daily work of local governments. Local governments are often the level of government best placed to translate the global goals to local communities.
2. At a UN Level, the SDG's are ratified by Member States, with individual Countries responsible for developing their own sustainable development, policies, plans and programmes and monitoring progress. The UK played a key role in developing the SDGs and formally adopted them in 2015.
3. The UK's actions and progress are jointly overseen by the Cabinet Office and the Department for International Development. An overview of the UK's current progress can be found [here](#). An estimated two thirds of the 169 targets that accompany the SDGs need local stakeholders, such as councils, to be engaged if they are to be achieved in the UK.¹
4. There is not a formal adoption or ratification process of the SDGs for non-Member states. Cities and corporations around the globe have adopted various approaches to show their support and commit to action. Following review, most cities have acted in multiple ways. Three areas for action have been identified to increase the City Corporation's visibility of its ongoing commitment to supporting the delivery of the SDGs and help increase its impact. These elements are not mutually exclusive and will be most impactful in combination.
5. The Policy Initiative Fund has an uncommitted balance of £614,582 for 2020/21, £1,053,365 for 2021/22 and £1,250,000 for 2022/23 allowing ample resource to support this request.

Current Position

6. Similarly, to many other Local Authorities and business, the City Corporation does not currently have a formal plan for addressing the SDGs nor has made a political commitment or endorsement of them. However, this is changing with cities globally announcing their commitment.
7. There is already strong alignment of action by the City Corporation with SDG targets. Each of the 12 outcomes of the City Corporation's Corporate Plan (2018-2023) contribute to progress in one or more of the 17 SDGs. When developing the Responsible Business Strategy, the City Corporation undertook a materiality assessment and selected 9 of the SDGs that it had the greatest influence over to address in the Responsible Business Strategy. Numerous other of the City

¹ UK Voluntary National Review, 2019

Corporation's strategies also contribute to achieving the SDGs, but many without the explicit linkages (See Appendix 1).

8. The first guidance for how local authorities could respond to the SDGs was released in July 2020 by the Local Government Association². They recommended that Councils (1) plan and prioritise, (2) engage and partner, (3) implement and monitor, and (4) advocate for the SDGs and report on progress.
9. In addition to the guidance from the LGA, Business in the Community and the Government's Inclusive Economy Partnership recommend that businesses use the SDGs as a framework to help build back better. A multi-faceted approach to how the City Corporation can demonstrate its commitment, which considers these sources of guidance, and provides a strong foundation to speak credibly on SDGs is centred around three areas:
 - Embedding SDGs into our strategies to achieve progress
 - Demonstrating our progress through reporting on SDG partnership platforms – both UK and Global.
 - Using our influence to encourage other businesses to commit to progress on the SDGs.

Embedding SDGs into our strategies to achieve progress

10. The guidance for Local Authorities recommends an initial step of prioritising the SDGs upon which the greatest impact can be made locally. The City Corporation has already undertaken the first part of this step. When developing its Responsible Business Strategy, a materiality assessment was completed and the nine SDGs that the City Corporation has the greatest ability to influence were identified.
11. The City Corporation's strategies are a key mechanism for prioritising work, and as such provide an excellent vehicle for ensuring progress against the SDGs. The following actions are proposed to ensure the ongoing embedding of SDGs into our strategies:
 - Conduct an in-depth review of the resources required to achieve meaningful progress in all nine areas.
 - Continue and enhance the on-going work to embed the SDGs into new and existing Corporate Strategies (e.g. already in Responsible Business, Responsible Procurement, Social Mobility and the draft Climate Action Strategy) and departmental delivery plans.
 - Establish a baseline by identifying what indicators can be used to monitor progress against the prioritised SDG targets that you have prioritised and use the targets in the SDGs to help set interim milestones to track progress.
12. The ability to monitor the City Corporation's progress on SDGs will be embedded into the development of the new Corporate Performance Framework. The progress

² <https://www.local.gov.uk/un-sustainable-development-goals-guide-councils>

towards achieving the SDGs would be annually reported in the Responsible Business Strategy Annual Review.

Demonstrating our progress through reporting on SDG partnership platforms – both UK and Global.

14. The City Corporation can use its convening voice to advocate for the advancement of the SDG agenda. To publicly show its commitment to the SDGs, the City Corporation could commit to making measurable progress on one or more SDG objectives by registering specific Corporate actions/programmes on Partnership Platforms.
15. The UK has recently launched its own partnering and goal declaration platform - the [In³clusive Growth Partnership](#) focused on UK specific action. It has asked UK businesses to make declarations through that, but businesses are currently doing both.
16. The outcomes associated with many of our current strategies could apply as a starting point for this option. For example, implementing the City Corporation's Air Quality Strategy would contribute to progress on [SDG](#) 3 and 11 or the City's or the Social Mobility Strategy contributes to achieving SDG 5, 8, 10 and 11. With the launch of the Climate Action Strategy, the City Corporation could make a commitment under SDG 13 (Climate Action) as well as progress in the 11 other goals directly linked to taking Climate Action.
17. The UN Global Compact launched the [SDG Ambition](#) at Davos 2020, which increases the focus of signatories on achieving the SDGs. Signing up to this would commit the City Corporation to abiding by and championing the 10 Principles of the Compact as well as looking to imbed relevant SDGs into the City Corporation's business strategy, operation and stakeholder engagement.
18. Joining the UN Compact would provide significant international credibility for the City Corporation to speak about SDGs, both as a business and local authority as well as supporting the wider Responsible Business agenda. Members are required to pay an annual fee of £10k, which provides access to national and international networks. In order to be eligible, a review of the City Corporation's current investments would be required to ensure that the Corporation meets the Compact's eligibility criteria.

Using our influence to encourage other businesses to commit to progress on the SDGs.

19. Businesses are a key stakeholder group for the City Corporation. They have an important role to play in achieving the SDGs and it has been recognised globally by the UN and in the UK by Business in the Community (BITC) that there are not enough businesses aware or strategically engaged with the SDGs for the Global Goals to be met by 2030. Given the City Corporation's strong

relationship with businesses there is potential to contribute to significant progress in this area.

20. In order to achieve progress on this, it is recommended that the City Corporation work closely with Business in the Community (BitC) to develop a plan to engage more directly with businesses in the Square Mile around this issue. Initial conversations on supporting BitC's work in this area have been positive.

Proposals

21. It is recommended that the above combination of actions is adopted as it meets the asks of the City Corporation as both a Local Authority as well as a Corporation. This would provide the City Corporation with a multifaceted platform to credibly engage both within the UK and internationally with a relatively low resources ask.
22. To publicly demonstrate the City Corporation's commitment to taking these steps towards achieving the SDG, the Court of Common Council could make a statement expressing its commitment to play its role in achieving the SDGs by 2030 and commit the City Corporation to embed relevant SDGs into strategy development, implementation and reporting, and will encourage others to do the same.
23. Currently there are no additional requirements for Local Authorities from Central Government or the GLA, but this should be monitored in case of change.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

24. There is clear strategic alignment between the 12 outcomes of the Corporate Plan and other corporate strategies with the 17 SDGs as shown in Table 1 (Appendix 1). The SDGs would need to take a greater prominence in our strategies and reporting going forward.

Implications

Equalities, Inclusion and Diversity Implications:

25. A test of relevance was conducted and indicated that a full EQIA was not needed. However, when considering how we work with our communities to deliver the approach, care should be taken to ensure that interventions are inclusive.
26. One of the primary aims of the SDGs is to help create a more inclusive and equal world. Taking action to help achieve the SDGs should lead to positive Equalities, Inclusion and Diversity outcomes.

Security Implications:

27. There are no security implications from this approach.

Resource and Financial Implications:

28. Implementation and monitoring will be undertaken within current resources in Chamberlain's, TCs and IG. In particular, the Responsible Business Strategy Officer (RBSO) will be responsible for coordinating and monitoring the progress of the approach. Members should note that the RSBO post is currently only funded through January 2021.

29. For the different strands of the proposed approach, the following leadership would be expected:

- a. Embed the SDGs in the Corporate Plan and other relevant Strategies (Corporate Strategy Team – TC)
- b. Embed actions that contribute to SDG progress in business plans (Responsible Business – CHB)
- c. Engage with businesses and the UN Compact (Senior Relationship Management Team – IG)
- d. Showcase action on the Inclusive Economy Partnership's [Digital Hub](#) and SDG Partnership Platform (Responsible Business – CHB)

30. Membership for the UN Global Compact SDG Ambition is £10,000 per annum. This report seeks the approval for funding for 3 years from the Policy Initiative Fund to cover this cost, categorised as 'Promoting the City' and charged to City's Cash. The PIF has an uncommitted balance of £614,582 for 2020/21, £1,053,365 for 2021/22 and £1,250,000 for 2022/23. The allocation for the multiyear PIF allocation currently has £64,365 available for 2020/21, £403,365 for 2021/22 and £600,000 for 2022/23.

Conclusion

31. Without focused action globally, the SDGs are unlikely to be achieved. While the City Corporation is strategically aligned in terms of outcomes, it does not currently have a formal position. Members, Officers and external stakeholders have all asked for clarity about what the City Corporation is doing and can do to contribute to the SDGs. The approach recommend in this paper will clarify and focus the City Corporation's actions and increase the associated impact.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Relationship between the Corporate Plan, other relevant strategies and the SDGs

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Appendix 1

Table 1 relationship between the Corporate Plan, other relevant strategies and the SDGs. SDGs in **bold** are prioritised in the Responsible Business Strategy

SDG	Corporate Plan linkages	Other relevant strategies and policies
1 No Poverty	<p>3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential</p> <p>4. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Business • Housing Strategy • Social Mobility Strategy
2 Zero Hunger	4. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need	
3 Good Health and Wellbeing	<p>2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing.</p> <p>3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Quality Strategy • Responsible Business • Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy • City Plan • Policing Plan • Transport Strategy
4 Quality Education	<p>3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential</p> <p>8. We have access to the skills and talent we need.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCCS Business Plan • Education Strategy • Social Mobility Strategy
5 Gender Equality	3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Business • Social Mobility Strategy • Equality and Inclusivity Policy
6 Clean Water and Sanitation	11. We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Permitting (Port Health)
7 Affordable and Clean Energy	11. We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement Strategy

8 Decent Work and Economic Growth	<p>3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.</p> <p>6. We have the world's best legal and regulatory framework and access to global markets.</p> <p>7. We are a global hub for innovation in finance and professional services, commerce and culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Business • City Plan • Transport Strategy
9 Industry Innovation and Infrastructures	<p>5. Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible.</p> <p>8. We have access to the skills and talent we need.</p> <p>9. We are digitally and physically well-connected and responsive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Plan
10 Reduced Inequalities	<p>3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Business • Social Mobility Strategy • DCCS Business Plan • Housing Strategy • Transport Strategy • Equality and Inclusivity Policy
11 Sustainable Cities and Communities	<p>1. People are safe and feel safe.</p> <p>4. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.</p> <p>12. Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Business • City Plan • DCCS Business Plan • Culture Strategy • Policing Plan
12 Responsible Consumption and Production	<p>5. Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Business • Sustainability Policy • Waste Strategy
13 Climate Action	<p>1. People are safe and feel safe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Business

	<p>5. Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible.</p> <p>7. We are a global hub for innovation in finance and professional services, commerce and culture.</p> <p>10. We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration.</p> <p>11. We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment.</p> <p>12. Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Plan • Sustainability Policy • Climate Action Strategy (under development)
14 Life below water	11. We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability Policy
15 Life on Land	11. We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Business • City Plan • Open Space Strategy • Biodiversity Action Plan • Sustainability Policy
16 Peace Justice and Strong Institutions	6. We have the world's best legal and regulatory framework and access to global markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policing Strategy
17 Partnership for The Goals	<p>5. Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible</p> <p>11. We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Business