

Committee(s)	Dated:
Public Relations and Economic Development Sub-Committee	14 January 2021
Subject: Parliamentary Team Update	Public
Report of: Paul Double, City Remembrancer	For Information
Report author: William Stark, Parliamentary Engagement Officer	

Summary

This summary updates Members on the main elements of the Parliamentary Team's activity in support of the City of London Corporation's political and Parliamentary engagement since the last update in November 2020. Parliament rose for the Christmas Recess on 17 December and returned for one day on 30 December to consider the EU (Future Relationship) Act. At the time of writing, Parliament is due to return on 6 January, having been recalled in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The summary is written with reference to the top line Parliamentary objectives and deliverables of the Remembrancer's Office. For the Committee's reference, these are set out in the appendix.

Recommendation

Members are recommended to note the report.

Main Report

Legislation Pertaining to the UK's Future EU Relationship (Objective 1)

1. Legislation in several areas is particularly affected by the UK's departure from the EU, examples include:

Trade Bill – The Bill was introduced in the previous session of Parliament. It was re-introduced in March following the General Election and has passed through the Commons and is in the later stages of its progress through the Lords. The Bill makes provision for the UK to enter into trade agreements with countries with which the EU has existing trade agreements and establishes a UK Trade Remedies Authority which will handle trade disputes. The Government has suffered several defeats on the Bill, for example over a Lib Dem amendment requiring further parliamentary approval of trade agreements and a Labour proposal to assess compliance with international obligations. A submission to the Bill's Public Bill Committee was made in June.

Immigration Act – Submissions based on the City Corporation's two pieces of visa research were made to the Government consultation, the Commons Public Bill Committee and during the Bill's Second Reading in the House of Lords.

Financial Services Bill – The Bill's objective is to ensure that the UK's regulatory framework continues to function effectively for the UK after leaving the EU. The Office provided a Second Reading briefing to a number of MPs and facilitated the Policy Chair's oral evidence session to the Public Bill Committee.

Private International Law (Implementation of Agreements) Act – The Act, which received Royal Assent on 14th December, implements the 1996 and 2007 Hague Conventions applicable to family law and the 2005 Hague Convention on Choice of Court Agreements relating to commercial law. Additionally, the Act provides Ministers with delegated powers to implement the 2007 Lugano Convention – and other agreements – in domestic law. This provides cross border recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters. It is, however, subject to the agreement of other contracting states, including the EU. The Act has a substantial commercial law interest on which both briefings to parliamentarians and technical input was provided in liaison with the professional institutions. Work on the implementation of the Lugano Convention continues following Royal Assent.

United Kingdom Internal Market Act – This Act received Royal Assent on 12th December 2020. It makes provision in connection with the internal market for goods and services in the United Kingdom, and in connection with provisions of the Northern Ireland Protocol relating to trade and state aid. Certain controversial clauses, which the Government had admitted would breach international law if implemented, were dropped from the Bill by the Government during Parliamentary ping-pong once agreement in principle had been reached between the co-chairs of the EU-UK Joint Committee. The Remembrancer's Office briefed Members of Parliament on the potential effects of these clauses on rule of law issues.

European Union (Future Relationship) Act – This Act, which implements and makes provision in connection with the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) and other Agreements with the EU, received Royal Assent on 30th December. Parliamentary proceedings were completed within one day, in order to pass the Act before the end of the post-Brexit transition period on 31st December. The Act makes provision in connection with the UK's future relationship with the EU and its member states, enabling the implementation of arrangements and agreements that are either foreseen in the current Agreements, or which are agreed by the UK and EU to be 'supplementary' to the TCA. The Bill also creates powers to make secondary legislation, where appropriate, to enable the Agreements to be implemented domestically or for domestic law to be interpreted in light of the Agreements. Parliamentarians were briefed on the City's general position and a summary of the Act's parliamentary proceedings was circulated to Members of the PRED Sub-Committee.

Corporation legislation (Objective 2)

2. The Emissions Reduction (Local Authorities in London) Bill, which had its First Reading in the Lords on 13 January still awaits a date for Second Reading following the disruption to parliamentary business caused by the pandemic. The Bill creates discretionary powers for London's local authorities to control emissions from combustion plants where the air quality in their area exceeds World Health Organization Guidelines and they choose to declare their area an 'air quality improvement area'.
3. The Environment Bill currently awaits a date for Report in the Commons. In liaison with London Councils, the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee and the Chair of the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee, the Office is planning to table new clauses to the Bill in the Lords, mirroring the provisions of the Emissions Reduction (Local Authorities in London) Bill.

4. Work continues in respect of the private bill required to enable the relocation of the Corporation's wholesale markets to the new site at Dagenham Dock. Recognising that there are a number of matters still to be resolved (such as issues relating to transport and planning) the Policy and Resources Committee decided at its meeting on 22 October 2020 that a bill should be deposited in November 2021. The Office anticipates significant work on this project over the next year. Support is being given to the programme directorate in collating and building the evidence basis and support for a bill promotion.

Parliamentary and Government Inquiries (Objective 3)

5. The Office has submitted the following pieces of written evidence to Select Committees since the last report:
 - to the Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union's inquiry into the progress of the negotiations on the UK's future relationship with the EU. The submission set out the City Corporation and FPS sector's priorities for the ongoing negotiations, on matters such as equivalence decisions, mutual recognition of qualifications and data adequacy decisions.
 - to the House of Lords EU Services Sub-committee's inquiry into financial services after Brexit, again reflecting the City Corporation and FPS sector's priorities for the ongoing negotiations.
 - to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee's inquiry into tree planting and forestry. The submission made recommendations on the Government's approach to tree planting targets and set out priorities for established ancient forests such as Epping Forest and Burnham Beeches, as well as for tree planting in city centres.
 - to the Treasury Committee's inquiry into economic crime. The submission set out the City of London Police's role as national lead force for fraud and the work of Action Fraud in countering COVID-19 related fraud and cybercrime, among other matters.
 - A submission highlighting City Corporation concerns regarding proposed changes to the local planning processes and the protections afforded to open spaces was made to the Government's planning White Paper.
6. City of London Police representatives gave oral evidence at two meetings of the Work and Pensions Committee, as part of their inquiry into pension scams. In December, Neil Postins, Service Delivery Manager at National Economic Crime Victim Care Unit, and Pauline Smith, Director at Action Fraud, gave oral evidence focussing on victims' experience of crime. This was followed in January by oral evidence from Commander Clinton Blackburn, National Coordinator for Economic Crime.

Responding to Issues Raised in Parliament and Enhancing Parliamentary Engagement (Objectives 4 and 5)

7. Parliamentarians were provided with a briefing ahead of Commons consideration of the European Union (Future Relationship) Bill, which implements the EU-UK trade agreement in domestic law. A number of members raised financial services and the City Corporation was referenced in the debate by Justice Committee Chair Sir Bob Neill and the City's MP Nickie Aiken.
8. The Office supported the Policy Chair in her oral evidence to the Public Bill Committee for the Financial Services Bill, alongside Emma Reynolds, Managing Director, Public Affairs, Policy and Research at TheCityUK. The Policy Chair raised suggestions from

the International Regulatory Strategy Group for the establishment of a joint Select Committee on financial regulation.

9. City MP Nickie Aiken tabled a written question following concerns raised with her by the Office regarding the impact of the end of the transition period on port health authorities. A reply is awaited.
10. Nickie Aiken was provided with a briefing ahead of her Westminster Hall debate on rough sleeping. The briefing included details of the City Corporation's work to house rough sleepers during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the latest statistics on rough sleeping in the City.
11. The Office prepared other briefings for MPs and peers since the last report:
 - to Lord Howell of Guildford ahead of a question on the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy
 - to Yvonne Fovargue MP following her Westminster Hall debate on online scams to highlight the work of Action Fraud and the City of London Police, highlighting Action Fraud's campaigns on investment fraud and ahead of the Christmas period.
 - to officers of the Japan APPG, Nickie Aiken MP, and those on the speaking list for a Commons debate on the UK-Japan Trade Agreement. This briefing was also shared with Peers speaking in a Lords Grand Committee debate on the same matter.
 - to Karen Buck MP ahead of her debate on homelessness and temporary accommodation details of the City Corporation's work to house rough sleepers during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the latest statistics on rough sleeping in the City.
 - to Peers ahead of an oral question promoting a green economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The briefing highlighted the Green Horizon Summit and the City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy.
 - Briefings were offered to Elliot Colburn MP ahead his debates on support for live events venues and SMEs during the pandemic.
12. The Office contacted a number of parliamentary stakeholders to promote the joint City Corporation and TheCityUK paper Tax Policy for the Recovery. Stakeholders contacted include the Treasury Committee, Lords Economic Affairs Committee and APPGs on Taxation, Financial Markets and Services, Financial Technology, and Business in a Pandemic (COVID) World. The latter has offered TCUK and City Corporation representatives the opportunity to speak on the paper at an event in February.
13. The Policy Chair made a presentation on the City's visa research at an APPG on Migration event, attended by over 100 guests drawn from Parliament and related policy areas. Politicians and others discussed how the business migration system could best fit the needs of employers.
14. A member of the office attended the SNP virtual annual conference. A report on the conference was prepared, including insights from the Corporate Affairs team, which was circulated to Members of the PRED Sub-Committee and with the weekly Parliamentary Brief.
15. The Treasury Committee staff received an update on a number of City Corporation workstreams, including the Green Horizon Summit, Climate Action Strategy and London Recharged report.

GLA and the Devolved Institutions (Objective 6)

16. The Office prepared a briefing for Innovation and Growth's Laura Davison ahead of her appearance before the London Assembly's Economy Committee, at which she gave evidence on the changing nature of work after COVID-19. The invitation to the Corporation to give evidence to the Committee followed an informal briefing session arranged by the Office at which the Policy Chair discussed the impact of COVID on the City.
17. The Office arranged an informal briefing session for the Policy Chair and Port Health and Environment Committee Chairman Keith Bottomley to discuss the City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy with the London Assembly's Environment Committee. As well as actions to be taken by the City Corporation, the importance of working in collaboration with partners across London in reaching 'net zero' was also discussed.

Key priorities over the next month

18. The Office will work with colleagues in Innovation and Growth on the promotion of the forthcoming report on the total tax contribution of UK financial services in 2020 and an IRSG discussion paper on the financial services sector's priorities for the UK's G7 presidency. Consideration will be given to key parliamentarians to engage with and scope for virtual events such as online roundtable discussions.
19. Work will continue in support of the markets' relocation programme and the introduction of a private bill.
20. Submissions from the City Corporation will be drawn up for the Treasury Committee's inquiry into the future of financial services, the HCLG Committee's inquiry into planning, the International Trade Committee's inquiry into Digital Trade and Data and the Housing Community and Local Government Committee's inquiry into local authority financial sustainability and the Section 114 regime.
21. The Office will work to support the case for UK access to the Lugano Convention and other rule of law issues relevant to the City in liaison with the International Law Committee and the related professional bodies.
22. The Office will work with the SNP Westminster Office to arrange a roundtable early in the year.
23. While social distancing guidelines remain in place, preventing face-to-face meetings, engagement with parliamentary stakeholders will remain predominantly online.

**The Parliamentary Team
City Remembrancer's Office
14 January 2020**

Appendix: Parliamentary Team Objectives

1. Propose amendments or new clauses to Brexit-related legislation to reflect Corporation views and report on the progress of such legislation to Members.
2. Draft and secure the passage through Parliament of 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 Member's Bill on air quality.
3. Make submissions to Parliamentary committee inquiries into relevant Corporation issues in collaboration with the Economic Development Office (now Innovation and Growth) 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.
6. Enhance engagement with the Greater London Assembly and the devolved institutions on matters of interest to the City through briefings and submissions to relevant inquiries.