

Committee(s)	Dated:
Public Relations and Economic Development Sub-Committee	4 March 2021
Subject: Parliamentary Team Update	Public
Report of: Paul Double, City Remembrancer	For Information
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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 February 2021. Given continued national Coronavirus restrictions, Parliament continues to sit using a mix of virtual and in-person proceedings, with much reduced physical presence at the Palace of Westminster. Owing to limited virtual participation facilities, Westminster Hall debates and Private Members' Bill Friday sittings in the Commons and Lords have been suspended. Both Houses were in recess between 12 February and 22 February.

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 – At the time of writing, the Bill is shuttling between Commons and Lords. Currently, disagreements remain over the extent of parliamentary scrutiny of trade deals and whether trade deals should be curtailed where a court has determined that a state has committed genocide.

Financial Services Bill – This framework 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 in the Commons and a separate briefing to Peers for the recent Second Reading in the Lords. The Office facilitated the Policy Chair's oral evidence session to the Public Bill 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 2020, 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. Following the suspension of proceedings on the Environment Bill as noted in the following paragraph, the possibility of progressing the Private Members Bill in the Lords has been investigated. At the time of writing, this option remains unavailable due to the decision to suspend Friday Private Members' Bill sessions until further notice. The situation is being monitored.
4. Consideration of the Environment Bill has been postponed to the next parliamentary session, following a carry-over motion in the Commons. The delay has been attributed to pressures on the parliamentary timetable and changes to parliamentary procedure as a result of the pandemic. 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 if the Lords' Private Members' Bill cannot progress.
5. 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. Substantial 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)

6. The Office has submitted the following pieces of written evidence to Select Committees since the last report:
 - To the Treasury Select Committee's inquiry into the future of financial services. This wide-ranging submission covered topics including financial services priorities in free trade agreements, possible changes to FS regulatory frameworks, priorities for FS skills policy and the UK's approach to equivalence decisions among other matters.

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

7. The Office issued a Public Policy Bulletin to Members and Officers summarising the key announcements of the Budget statement on 3 March.
8. The DCMS Committee was provided with a briefing ahead of their oral evidence session on EU visa arrangements for creative workers. The briefing set out concerns expressed by the Barbican Centre, the London Symphony Orchestra and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama about UK performers and other creative workers operating in the EU, such as restrictions on the haulage of musical instruments and the ability for students to perform on the continent.
9. The Office is in further communication with the Barbican Centre to discuss possible areas of parliamentary engagement ahead of announcements on the reopening of cultural venues.

10. The Office contacted a MPs and Peers to share an invitation to the Launch of the City of London Corporation and EY report “The City of London: An ecosystem enabling international trade”.
11. The Office contacted various committees and APPGs to promote the launch of the IRSG report “How the trend towards data localisation is impacting the financial services sector”. The report’s findings also formed part of a submission to the International Trade Committee’s inquiry into Digital Trade and Data, as reported in the last update.
12. The Office made contact the APPG on the Rule of Law, following its inaugural meeting earlier this year. The APPG is supported by the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law, with which the City Corporation held an online event in September 2020.
13. A briefing note was provided to former Lord Mayor Lord Mountevans ahead of committee stage of the Financial Services Bill in the Lords. Further short briefings on the Bill’s provisions were provided to Peers who had submitted relevant amendments.
14. City MP Nickie Aiken was provided with suggested parliamentary questions regarding the funding of Transport for London, Port Health concerns, and the Planning White Paper following Ms Aiken’s meeting with the Policy Chair in February.
15. An online roundtable with SNP MPs entitled “Civic Leadership and Green Finance in the transition to net zero” has been scheduled for **date to be confirmed**. The roundtable will be chaired by an SNP MP with the Policy Chair and Emma Harvey, of the Green Finance Institute, speaking.
16. The APPG for the Night Time Economy referenced a briefing produced by the Office in their report “COVID-19 and UK Nightlife”. The report mentioned feedback received from City hospitality businesses in a series of Lord Mayor-led roundtables in December 2020 on the need for a campaign to encourage workers and visitors back to the City, once restrictions are eased.
17. The Office wrote to the Chair of the Work and Pensions Select Committee detailing some of the City Police’s overseas activity following comments made by the Pensions Minister during oral evidence querying the extent to which the City force works with overseas partners.
18. The Office prepared other briefings for MPs and peers since the last report:
 - To Peers ahead of Lord Clark of Windermere’s question on balancing carbon sequestration and biodiversity in government plans to plant 30,000 hectares of trees annually. The briefing set out priorities for tree management and planting on City Corporation managed land, including Epping Forest and Burnham Beeches.
 - To MPs ahead of a general debate on COVID 19 and the cultural and entertainment sectors.

GLA and the Devolved Institutions (Objective 6)

19. The Office circulated to members and officers of the London Assembly’s Economy Committee the City Corporation’s recent benchmarking and total tax contribution reports.

Key priorities over the next month

20. The Office will compile a joint submission to the Government's new Taskforce on Innovation, Growth and Regulatory Reform (TIGRR). The taskforce, established at the beginning of February, will consider changes to regulation enabled by the UK's departure from the European Union.
21. Submissions from the City Corporation will be drawn up for the the HCLG Committee's inquiry into planning, the Lords International Agreements Sub Committee's inquiry into UK Accession to the CPTPP and the EFRA Committee's inquiry into moving animals across borders.
22. Work will continue in support of the markets' relocation programme and the introduction of a private bill. Work on the Lords' Private Members Bill will re-engaged if the opportunity arises.
23. 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.
24. 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
4 March 2021

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.