

Committee(s): Public Relations and Economic Development Sub-Committee	Date(s): 04/03/2021
Subject: Corporate Affairs Update	Public
Report of: Bob Roberts, Director of Communications	For Information
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Summary

This report provides a summary of the work of the Corporate Affairs Team over the last month.

After feedback from Members, it does not list all the meetings and activities of the Lord Mayor and the Policy Chair but highlights major activities undertaken to support the team's priorities.

The priorities are guided by documents such as the Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023, the updated Lord Mayor's Theme approved by P&R in July 2020 and the Policy Chair's Policy statement to the Court of Common Council on 10th September 2020.

The priorities can be summarised as:

- Recovery: dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and planning for the recovery of the Square Mile.
- Supporting the Lord Mayor's theme *Global UK – The New Future* with its three pillars of trade, innovation and culture and aims of building on our international reputation for openness and ensuring that everyone is welcomed to the City and can thrive.
- Supporting the competitiveness agenda to champion the UK FPS sector including the innovative areas of tech and business services, in line with our corporate plan that we are a global hub for innovation in financial services, commerce and culture.
- Working to support London in line with our corporate plan that we support a diverse and sustainable capital.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note this report.

Main Report

The priority workstreams of the Corporate Affairs Team in the last month covered by their report are listed below with examples of activities that support this.

Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic

Since the start of the pandemic, the Gold Command Group for Recovery from COVID-19 has been working with partners to preserve life and facilitate an effective recovery.

Alongside this work, we have also launched a Recovery Taskforce to draw up a five-year blueprint for ensuring the City remains an attractive place in which to invest, work, live and visit.

And we are supporting efforts to get workers back to COVID-secure workplaces in the City as soon as it is safe to do so and in line with the Government's Roadmap. As part of this officers are discussing tentative plans for a 're-opening campaign' later in the year, subject to COVID restrictions.

Amongst the key activities to support this work the Corporate Affairs Team have been:

- Preparing speeches for the address to the annual business ratepayers consultation, the London Real Estate Forum Investment Summit session to mark the launch of the report, 'Opportunity London', published by the New London Architecture, an address to the London & Partners Seminar on 'Promoting London' and a speech to the London Councils roundtable on 'London as a World City'.
- Working with colleagues in Innovation and Growth to produce a corporate submission ahead of the Budget.
- Writing briefings for meetings of the London COVID Business Forum, and with the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, on the roadmap for the safe and full reopening of London's economy.

Promoting the Competitiveness Agenda

The Corporate Plan commits the City Corporation to ensuring that we are a global hub for innovation in financial and professional services, commerce and culture as well as having the world's best legal and regulatory framework and access to global markets.

The Fraser 2.0 Report, supported by the Policy and Resources Committee, also outlined the next steps to steward the financial, tech and professional services sector through future challenges.

To support this work the Corporate Affairs Team has focused on building and strengthening relationships with influential politicians and policymakers who are well placed to maintain and enhance the competitiveness of London and the City.

Key activity includes:

- Providing briefing and support for the regular meeting between the Lord Mayor and Policy Chair and the Investment Minister Lord Grimstone on issues relating to his departmental roles in both the Department for International Trade and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.
- Circulating the Total Tax report and Benchmarking report to key Government, Opposition and London stakeholders.
- Writing a letter to the Government's new Taskforce for Innovation, Growth and Regulatory Reform and securing a meeting to discuss how the City Corporation can contribute to this work.
- Briefing and supporting the Policy and Chair and the Lord Mayor for their first meeting with the Northern Ireland First Minister Arlene Foster MLA to discuss areas of mutual interest.
- Briefing and supporting the Policy Chair for meetings with Anneliese Dodds MP, Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, and engagement with Sir Keir Starmer QC MP, Leader of the Opposition – both activities were part of our wider strategic engagement work with the Labour Party, and provided an opportunity to update both on our current priorities ahead of the Budget.
- Drafting letters to Dr Okonjo-Iweala, the new Director General of the World Trade Organisation and to Lord David Frost, Minister of State at the Cabinet Office, welcoming both to their new posts.

Delivering on the Lord Mayor's Theme

The Mayoral Theme, as updated for the July 2020 meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, is *Global UK – The New Future*, and it has three pillars of trade, innovation and culture. The aim is to build on our international reputation for openness and ensure that everyone is welcomed to the City and can thrive.

The Corporate Affairs Team continues to support Mansion House with the delivery of the Mayoral Theme.

The work to do this has included:

- Supporting the Lord Mayor's political engagement on the Culture and Commerce Taskforce report launch - through briefing relevant stakeholders, the purpose of the written engagement was to amplify the work of the taskforce and encourage political partners to share it within their networks. This will be an ongoing piece of political engagement as the recommendations are implemented.
- Collating briefing for the Lord Mayor's Board of Trade meetings with representatives of the governments of the devolved nations and their investment bodies.
- Providing briefing and support for the Lord Mayor's meeting with the Prisons Minister Lucy Frazer QC MP, to discuss the returning citizens aspect of his Mayoral Theme.

Supporting and Engaging with London

The Corporate Plan confirms that the City Corporation is committed to supporting a diverse and sustainable London. This aim cross cuts all three strands of the strategy, contributing to a flourishing society, supporting a thriving economy and shaping outstanding environments.

Much of the cross-London work the City Corporation is involved with is closely related to the recovery from the pandemic, particularly through the Policy Chair's involvement in a large number of pan-London bodies. There also continues to be additional activity that contributes to our wider work to support the capital.

This activity includes:

- Supporting the Policy Chair ahead of regular pan-London meetings such as the London Transition Board, London Recovery Board, London Leaders' COVID-19 Committee and the London Councils' Executive.
- Discussing with the Mayor of London and several of the Deputy Mayors the recovery of the Central Activity Zone. The meeting was also attended by the leaders of Westminster, Camden and Kensington and Chelsea.
- Working closely with the Deputy Mayor for Culture and Creative Industries on market development plans around released sites in central London.
- Supporting the Policy Chair in her meeting with the Transport for London Commissioner, Andy Byford.
- Supporting the Policy Chair in her regular programme of London Borough engagement including with Cllr Julian Bell, Leader of Ealing, Mayor Phil Glanville of Hackney and Cllr Richard Watts of Islington.

Other highlights of the work of the Corporate Affairs Team include:

- Attending online events on subjects of interest to the Corporation hosted by think tanks including Politeia on future regulation, and Centre for Policy Studies on investment in the North, circulating notes to relevant officers.
- Continuing engagement with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on the issue of contested heritage. Following the Secretary of State's public letter to the City Corporation, the Corporate Affairs team drafted a response articulating our current position on the Tackling Racism Taskforce recommendations pertaining to statues, including the resolution supported by Policy and Resources in February.
- Continuing close engagement with the IPPR Environmental Justice Commission – liaising with the IPPR, through regular commission meetings and additional engagement, to provide feedback on provisional recommendations for the Commission's final report, ensuring our key external messages on climate action are noted.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

1. Engaging with political stakeholders, organising events associated with the party political conferences and working with the thinktanks and other third-party organisations to produce events and associated policy reports provides an opportunity for the City Corporation to engage with key audiences on important global, national and local government issues and to demonstrate the Corporation's involvement in relevant debates. Sponsorship and political engagement would also help deliver outcomes 2 – 10 of the 2018-23 Corporate Plan.

Implications

2. The Corporate Affairs Team has an established budget for all party conference and engagement related activity. Any sponsorship of ad-hoc policy projects is currently funded via the Policy Initiatives Fund according to decisions of the Policy and Resources Committee.

Appendices

None

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