

Committee(s)	Dated:
Public Relations and Economic Development Sub-Committee	5 November 2019
Subject: Parliamentary Team Update	Public
Report of: Paul Double, City Remembrancer	For Information
Report author: Bruce Hunt, Parliamentary Briefings Manager	

This report 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. 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 covers the period since the last meeting of the Public Relations and Economic Development Sub Committee on 10 October.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

The Queen's Speech

1. An overview of The Queen's Speech on 14 October was sent to Members, highlighting those Bills likely to be of principal interest to the City Corporation.

Party Conferences

2. A member of the Parliamentary Team attended the SNP Conference in Aberdeen. His report was incorporated with the Policy Chair's reflections and Corporate Affairs' commentary and sent to Members following the end of the conference.

Brexit legislation (Objective 1)

3. The Queen's Speech contained a number of Brexit related Bills. Although they are yet to be introduced in the new Parliamentary Sessions, several of them – Trade Bill, Agriculture Bill, Fisheries Bill, Immigration Bill – appear to be the same as Bills which were stalled in the last Parliamentary Session.
4. For the first time since the Falklands War in 1982, Parliament took the rare move to sit on a Saturday in order to debate the Prime Minister's revised deal. Following the debate, MPs supported a motion tabled by independent Conservative Sir Oliver Letwin to withhold approval for the revised deal until legislation implementing it has been passed. The withholding of approval compelled the Prime Minister to send a letter to Brussels requesting a three-month Brexit delay under the terms of the so-called Benn Act.

5. When Parliament returned on the following Monday, the Speaker refused to allow a second 'meaningful vote' on the Government's deal, which, it was argued, had received conditional approval when the motion had proceeded 'on the nod' and without division after the Letwin amendment had been passed. The Government subsequently introduced the EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill, the passing of which before 31 October would satisfy the need for a 'meaningful vote' and the Letwin amendment. However, while Parliament then voted in favour of the Withdrawal Agreement Bill at Second Reading, it refused to approve the Government's timetable motion for the Bill, leading the Government to 'pause' it.
6. The EU27 has agreed to extend the Brexit deadline until 31 January 2020, with the option of leaving earlier if a deal is agreed, while the Prime Minister has indicated his desire for a General Election to resolve the parliamentary deadlock. To trigger an election, however, under the Fixed Term Parliament Act the Government would need the support of two thirds of MPs in Parliament for such a move. Other techniques to trigger an election in the absence of such support are a vote of no confidence (including one called by the Government itself, though this would be an extreme step of self-criticism for any government to take) or specific legislation to provide for an election, which would also require Parliament's agreement.

City Corporation legislation (Objective 2)

7. Lord Tope, who has agreed to sponsor the City's Emissions Reduction (Local Authorities in London) Bill, was drawn 15th in the House of Lords Private Members' Bill Ballot and (subject to any intervening general election) will receive parliamentary time for debate. He formally introduced the Bill on 22 October and is awaiting a date for Second Reading. The text of the Bill, which has now been printed, can be found at www.services.parliament.uk/bills.
8. Following the decision of the Court on 25 April that the City Corporation's three wholesale markets should be relocated, work on a private bill relating to the relocation of the City Corporation's markets is being further developed. The Remembrancer wrote to relevant MPs, All-Party Parliamentary Groups, Committees, and GLA Assembly Members to draw their attention to the public consultation. The Remembrancer and Director of the Markets Consolidation Programme met with the Chair of the Markets All-Party Parliamentary Group (who agreed to promote the Bill) to discuss procedural aspects of the City Corporation's plans.

Parliamentary and Government inquiries (Objective 3)

9. Working with colleagues in Innovation & Growth the Office is preparing submissions to several select committee inquiries, including UK-China trade (International Trade Committee), the UK's strategic engagement in Africa (Foreign Affairs Committee), and prosperity, peace and development in sub-Saharan Africa (Lords International Relations Committee).
10. Following a written submission to the EFRA Committee on puppy smuggling, the City Corporation was invited to give oral evidence to the Committee. The team helped to prepare Rob Quest from Markets & Consumer Protection for the oral hearing which took place on 22 October.
11. In cooperation with IG, GSMD, the Barbican and other stakeholders, a response to the Immigration White Paper consultation is being prepared.

Responding to issues raised in Parliament (Objective 4)

12. The Office will respond to new Bills announced in The Queen's Speech as they are introduced in Parliament. Those likely to be of interest include:

- **Private International Law (Implementation of Agreements) Bill**
The Bill's aim is to maintain the UK's role as a world leader in delivering justice across borders on civil and family justice issues. It will implement international conventions relating to cross-border commercial contracts and family law in domestic legislation.
- **Sentencing Bill**
The Bill will change the point at which prisoners are automatically released from halfway to two-thirds of their sentence for those serving 4 or more years. It will extend the circumstances where the starting point for murder sentencing is a whole life order. It will also strengthen community orders.
- **Foreign National Offenders Bill**
The Bill aims to disrupt the activities of organised criminal networks which facilitate the illegal return of foreign national offenders. It will increase the maximum penalty for foreign national offenders who return to the UK.
- **Animal Welfare**
The Speech referred to proposals to improve the welfare of animals in agriculture and in the wild and to increase maximum sentences for animal cruelty from six months to five years, though this measure would be implemented under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, rather than new legislation.
- **Environment Bill**
The Bill will establish a new Office for Environmental Protection. Measures will be designed to improve air and water quality, tackle plastic pollution and restore habitats. Legislation will also create new legally-binding environmental improvement targets. A briefing from the City Corporation on its air quality initiatives was sent to MPs ahead of the Bill's scheduled Second Reading on 28 October.
- **Extradition (Provisional Arrest) Bill**
This Bill will give police officers powers to arrest individuals who are wanted by "trusted international partners". In the event that the UK no longer had access to the European Arrest Warrant after leaving the EU, the Bill would replicate the immediate power of arrest currently available in respect of persons wanted by EU Member States when a European Arrest Warrant has been issued.
- **Police Protections Bill**
The Bill will place a Police Covenant on a statutory footing, in support of police officers, and allow special constables to join the Police Federation.
- **Serious Violence Bill**
The Bill will place a new duty on public sector bodies, in fields such as local government, education, social services, youth offending, and health and probation, to work collaboratively, and share data and information, in order to tackle crime. Combatting serious violence will become a specific priority for Community Safety Partnerships, which include local police, fire and probation services, as well as local

authorities and wider public services. The Government's intention is that an emphasis should be placed on intervention with young people.

Enhancing Parliamentary engagement (Objective 5)

13. The Office organised a breakfast reception for the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Digital Skills which took place on 23 October. The Group aims to emphasise the urgency of upskilling the work force in digital skills to enhance the UK's productivity, competitiveness and social mobility. The meeting was addressed by the Lord Mayor, Deputy Tom Sleigh, APPG Chair Julie Elliott MP and Chris Green MP, vice-chair of the Group and a Parliamentary Private Secretary in the Department of Education. Guests at the event included other parliamentarians, the APPG's sponsors – BT, City and Guilds, Google, and The Education Technology Association – and industry representatives.
14. The Office arranged a reception on 21 October in the House of Commons to discuss the Lord Mayor's role in supporting commercial diplomacy, allowing him to look back on his year as an ambassador for UK financial and professional services. The reception, jointly organised with the Industry and Parliament Trust, drew guests from the Lord Mayor's business delegations, business stakeholders, policy and parliament. Asia and the Pacific Minister Heather Wheeler also spoke, highlighting where the Government perceived international trade opportunities to lie.

GLA and the devolved institutions (Objective 6)

15. Caroline Russell (Green), the chair of the GLA's Environment Committee, has accepted a meeting to brief her on the City Corporation's environmental initiatives, including the Emissions Reduction Bill. This is currently scheduled for 1 November.

Key priorities over the next month

16. To ensure Lord Tope is fully briefed ahead of the second reading of the City's Emissions Reductions Bill;
17. To assess new Bills as they are introduced into Parliament for their impacts on the City Corporation;
18. To continue work in support of the markets' relocation programme and the introduction of a private bill;
19. To organise a roundtable meeting between the Policy Chair and the SNP Westminster Group to discuss global trade in financial services, which is likely to take place in December;
20. To find another date for the private roundtable with the International Trade Committee to discuss UK-US-China trade, which was due to take place on 22 October and which was postponed following the scheduling of the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill's Second Reading for the same day.

Bruce Hunt

Parliamentary Briefings Manager, Office of the City Remembrancer

T: 020 7332 1196

E: bruce.hunt@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Appendix: 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 Member's Bill on air quality.
3. Make submissions to Parliamentary committee inquiries into relevant City 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.