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| Committee(s): Public Relations and Economic Development Sub-Committee – For information | Date(s): 16/09/2020 |
| Subject: Corporate Affairs update | Public |
| Report of: Bob Roberts, Director of Communications | For Information |
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Summary

This report provides an update of the Corporate Affairs Team's activities in supporting the City of London Corporation's strategic political engagement, including a summary of planned activity at the forthcoming political party conferences. The Corporate Affairs Team coordinates and organises the City Corporation's political engagement and supports both Members and Officers in its delivery. The focus of this report is on the activity undertaken by the Lord Mayor and Policy Chair.

The activities documented in this report focus largely on those led by the Corporate Affairs Team but delivered with the support of a number of teams across the Corporation. Each area of activity is linked back to the objectives outlined in the Communications Business Plan. The timeframe of this report spans the period lapsed between the previous and current meetings of this Sub Committee.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note this report

Main Report

Overview

1. Based on developments in the domestic political and economic landscape and in line with the City Corporation's corporate priorities, the Corporate Affairs Team has focused its activity in the areas of engagement listed below. This activity has been significantly affected by the lockdown and continued restrictions on face-to-face engagement due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Where possible mass gatherings have either been postponed or modified into an online format and one-to-one engagement has instead been held via video conferencing applications.

Domestic Political Engagement

Ministerial and opposition spokespeople engagement

2. The Corporate Affairs Team has delivered the following activity to engage and build relationships with ministers, opposition spokespeople and their advisers during the period:

- a. Provided briefing for the Chair of the City of London Police Authority James Thomson meeting with the Security Minister James Brokenshire MP
- b. Provided briefing for the Lord Mayor's meeting with the Secretary of State for International Trade Liz Truss MP, and separately for meetings with Trade ministers Greg Hands MP and Graham Stuart MP and Foreign Office ministers Wendy Morton MP and Nigel Adams MP.
- c. Organised briefing and support for Policy Chair meetings with key Opposition spokespeople including Shadow City Minister Pat McFadden MP and Shadow International Trade Secretary Emily Thornberry MP
- d. Co-ordinated briefing for Lord Mayor and Policy Chair meetings with senior No10 advisors including Sir Eddie Lister and Alex Hickman
- e. Provided briefing for the Policy Chair and Lord Mayor meeting with the Lord Chancellor Robert Buckland QC MP
- f. Provided briefing for Lord Mayor's attendance at a roundtable with the Prime Minister
- g. Providing ongoing briefing and support for the Policy Chair in her membership of the London Transition Board, chaired jointly by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick MP, and the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan.
- h. Co-ordinated a letter to the Chancellor ahead of the Summer Economic Statement
- i. Led on correspondence to the Home Secretary on the quarantine regulations and to Ministers on the scope of the discretionary grant funding for small businesses.
- j. Prepared a briefing for the Policy Chair's meeting with Lord Kerslake to discuss the markets programme
- k. Provided support to the chair of the Hampstead Heath committee in preparing correspondence with relevant political stakeholders
- l. Corresponded with Sir Ed Davey, to congratulate him on this appointment as leader of the Liberal Democrats

Engagement with the devolved nations and regions

3. The Corporate Affairs Team has helped facilitate meetings with key leaders in national and regional government:
 - a. Co-ordinated briefing for a Lord Mayor and Policy Chair call with the First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon MSP.
 - b. Contributed briefing and support for a Lord Mayor and Policy Chair meeting with the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, and also for meetings with the office of the Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street and the Leader of Leeds City Council, Cllr Judith Blake.

London engagement

4. The Corporate Affairs Team seeks to actively maintain and develop the Corporation's engagement with political stakeholders, think tanks and other bodies across London. As part of this work, the team have and continue to:
 - a. Meet regularly with Nickie Aiken, Member of Parliament for the Cities of London and Westminster at both officer level and Policy Chair level.

- b. Maintain strong links with Unmesh Desai AM, London Assembly for City and East.
 - c. Support the Policy Chair in her membership of the London Recovery Board which is jointly convened by the Chair of London Council Cllr Peter John and the Mayor of London, and also supporting the Policy Chair in her role as Vice Chair of London Councils
 - d. Engage with the GLA, updating colleagues within the GLA on cross working and other developments.
 - e. Grow and build on relations with political stakeholders including Leaders and political advisers across the 32 London Boroughs.
 - f. Meet regularly with the Minister for London, updating the Minister on major developments, including the Markets relocation project.
 - g. Close working relationship with London Councils, ensuring that they are appropriately updated on the City Corporation's work.
 - h. Develop and commission think tank reports on areas of interest to the City Corporation.
 - i. Provide up to date COVID-19 related political intelligence to internal colleagues, offering advice and engagement guidance.
 - j. Understand the working of City Corporation colleagues, which may have political implications, opportunities or risks.
5. The team has worked with the Tackling Racism Taskforce to support the launch of a public consultative exercise to assess the future suitability of historic landmarks in the City of London that are connected to slavery and other forms of racism. This forms part of the seven workstreams established by the Taskforce.

Think tanks and third-party influencers

6. As part of the City Corporation's ongoing engagement with think tanks, the Corporate Affairs Team has:
- a. Arranged sponsorship of a panel at the Centre for Policy Studies' Going for Growth virtual conference on 11th September addressed by the Policy Chair
 - b. Provided support and media input to New Financial's Women in Finance Charter Review held virtually on 23rd June addressed by the Policy Chair alongside the City Minister John Glen MP
 - c. Continue to contribute to the IPPR's Environmental Justice Commission, which included the launch of an interim report and the planning of future events to support the work of this commission.
 - d. Held regular discussions with a wide range of think tanks to consider projects and partnership opportunities including Politea, the Fabian Society, Demos, Centre for Policy Studies, Centre for London and others
 - e. Attended a number of virtual roundtables and events on subject matters of interest to the City Corporation and briefed colleagues on the key points.

2020 Autumn Party Conferences

7. At the virtual Liberal Democrat Party autumn conference, the City Corporation is holding a virtual roundtable in conjunction with the Social Market Foundation on the future of the creative industries post-Covid and post-Brexit. The Policy

Chair will be one of the main speakers and relevant Lib Dem spokespeople have been invited as well as key industry figures.

8. At the Labour Party Conference, the City Corporation is holding an invitation only roundtable focused on how London can become a net-zero city in terms of carbon emissions. This is in partnership with the IPPR think-tank. This roundtable will look to demonstrate the ways London can lead the way through climate action policies. It will include political stakeholders from the shadow frontbench, the GLA, London Councils, business groups and climate advocacy groups.
9. The City Corporation is holding two events at the virtual Conservative Party Conference. The first is a virtual roundtable in conjunction with the Centre for Policy Studies and will cover whether it is possible to have free trade in services as well as goods. The Trade Minister Greg Hands MP has been invited to be the main contributor alongside the Policy Chair, and other political and industry figures will also be invited. The second is a virtual open fringe event in conjunction with the Onward think-tank, which will cover levelling up and London's role in regional economic growth. The Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Steve Barclay MP, has been invited to be on the panel, along with a backbench MP from the North of England, a business journalist and the Policy Chair.
10. In addition to the Policy Chair speaking at each event, there will also be the chance for one or members of PRED to attend and participate in the wider discussion subject to the decision of the Policy Chair. In addition to events organised by the City Corporation, opportunities are being actively sought for the Policy Chair and other members to contribute to other roundtables and fringe events across the whole Party Conference season.
11. The Corporate Affairs Team will continue to monitor the conference activities of the Scottish National Party and Green Party and plan suitable engagement programmes when these activities have been finalised.

Sport

12. As part of the City Corporation's sport engagement programme various to build partnerships with key organisations and partners promoting major sporting events in the Capital are being organised. Further details are provided in a separate update report to Members at this meeting.

Priorities for the next quarter

13. Priorities for the Corporate Affairs Team over the next four months are:
 - a. Continuing a plan of engagement for the Policy Chair and Lord Mayor with key Ministers, political spokespeople, devolved and regional government leaders across all parties.
 - b. Supporting the Policy Chair in her engagement with London Government - Mayor and borough leaders - focussing on speeding London's recovery.

- c. To continue preparations for the upcoming party conference season through courting the views of potential think tank partners, and to consider other opportunities for physical events when possible including the potentially the 2021 Spring Conferences
- d. Support the Corporation with political intelligence and relationship building as the UK changes its formal relationship with the EU and moves to increase its engagement with international rule setting organisations such as the WTO
- e. Continuing with as much preparation as possible for the sports engagement programme which is the subject of a separate report to this Committee.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. 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 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

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

Appendices

None

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