

Committee(s): Public Relations and Economic Development Sub-Committee	Date(s): 14/01/2021
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.

The focus over the past two months has been on responding to the worsening COVID 19 pandemic.

We have been urging the Government to keep the public health measures under evidence-based review, calling for support for businesses and cultural institutions as well as ensuring we are doing all we can to speed the recovery.

We have also been able to continue to promote the Climate Action Strategy, stress the importance of creative industries to Government and we have pressed forward with the Policy Chair's engagement with the leaders of all of the 32 London Boroughs.

The activities documented in this report focus largely on those led by the Corporate Affairs Team but they are delivered with the support of several teams across the Corporation for which we are grateful.

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(s)

Members are asked to note this report.

Main Report

Domestic Political Engagement

Ministerial and opposition spokespeople engagement

1. The Corporate Affairs Team has delivered the following activity to engage and build relationships with ministers, opposition spokespeople and their advisers during this period:
 - a. Organised a letter to the Prime Minister from the Lord Mayor and the Policy Chair, calling for more support for the cultural sector as COVID-19 restrictions in London increase
 - b. Co-ordinated a letter to Robert Jenrick MP, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, raising the way the discretionary grant funding scheme was calculated and the disproportionately small amount of funding the City Corporation received
 - c. Drafted a letter from the City Corporation to the Environment Minister Lord Goldsmith highlighting several issues experienced by the Corporation's Port Health function in anticipation of changes to the trading relationship between the UK EU from 2021 onwards.
 - d. Worked with Innovation and Growth to provide briefing for the joint Policy Chair and Lord Mayor meeting with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Alok Sharma MP, on COP26 and green finance
 - e. Provided briefing for the joint Policy Chair and Lord Mayor meeting with the No10 Business Adviser Alex Hickman and Chief Executive of the Green Finance Institute, Rhian-Mari Thomas
 - f. Drafted a letter to the Trade Minister Greg Hands MP inviting him to be the keynote speaker at the launch of a report on international trade
 - g. Drafted a letter to Treasury Minister John Glen MP and Business Minister Nadhim Zahawi MP, accepting the Government's commission to run the social mobility taskforce
 - h. Provided briefing and support for the Policy Chair's regular meeting with the Labour Shadow Economic Secretary to the Treasury, Pat McFadden MP
 - i. Arranged sponsorship of the annual Labour Business Christmas event with Shadow Chancellor Anneliese Dodds
 - j. Co-ordinated briefing and support for the Policy Chair's meeting with the Shadow Immigration Spokesperson Holly Lynch MP to discuss the recent EY/City Corporation report on visa reform
 - k. Assisted other departments with political engagement in relation to forthcoming reports such as the total tax report
 - l. Monitored and provided updates on Government COVID-19 related announcements
 - m. Monitored the Chancellor's economic statements including the 2020-21 one-year spending review, in conjunction with colleagues from the Media Team and the Remembrancer's Team
 - n. Continued to prepare for the City Corporation's engagement at the 2021 autumn Party Conferences.

Engagement with the devolved nations and regions

2. The Corporate Affairs Team has contributed to the ongoing work to engage with the City Corporation's partners around the UK:

- a. Organised the City Corporation fringe meeting at the annual SNP Conference, where the Policy Chair spoke alongside the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Kate Forbes MSP. Two weeks later a subsequent roundtable event was organised with the Scottish Government on sustainable finance roundtable, also addressed by Kate Forbes which the Policy Chair attended
- b. Assisted with briefing for the Lord Mayor's meeting with the Mayor of the West of England, Tim Bowles and the Mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees

London engagement

- 3. 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. Grow and build on relations with Leaders and political advisers across the 32 London Boroughs, supporting the Chair of Policy and Resources in this engagement Recent engagement included recent meetings with the Leaders of Barnet, Bexley, Camden, RBKC, Brent, Bromley and Lambeth. Meetings with other Borough leaders will take place in the coming weeks and months
 - c. Meet regularly with the Minister for London, updating the Minister on major developments, including the Markets relocation project
 - d. Begin a new engagement programme for the Policy Chair with the Deputy Mayors at the GLA in the coming months
 - e. Maintain strong links with Unmesh Desai AM, London Assembly for City and East
 - f. Provide briefing for the Policy Chair's membership of the Mayor of London's new London COVID Business Forum
 - g. Prepare briefings for the Policy Chair's ongoing membership of the London Transition Board, jointly chaired by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, and the Mayor of London
 - h. Provide London Recovery Board briefing support to the Policy Chair. This Board is co-chaired by the Mayor of London and the Chair of London Councils
 - i. Regularly share intelligence to the Policy Chair for the twice weekly COVID related London Leader's Conference
 - j. Engage with the GLA, updating colleagues within the GLA on cross working and other developments
 - k. Ensure close working relationship with London Councils, ensuring that they are appropriately updated on the City Corporation's work.
 - l. Provide up to date COVID-19 related political intelligence to internal colleagues, offering advice and engagement guidance
 - m. Understand the working of City Corporation colleagues, which may have political implications, opportunities or risks including supporting

the Port Health and Markets & Consumer teams in response to changes flowing for the UK's departure from the EU's single market, as well as the markets relocation project.

Think tanks and third-party influencers

4. The Corporate Affairs Team continues to work with think tanks and other third-party influencers and have:
 - a. Engaged with the Centre for European Reform and took part in this year's virtual Ditchley conference, sponsored by the City Corporation, and circulated notes to officers
 - b. Provided briefing and support for the Policy Chair's participation in a virtual panel hosted by Chatham House on Brexit and the Future of Finance in Europe
 - c. Held discussions with the think tank Onward about joining their Business Leaders Network and sponsoring an event as part of the forthcoming levelling up programme
 - d. Continued our engagement and active contribution to the IPPR Commission on Environmental Justice
 - e. Held discussions with a wide range of think tanks to consider future projects and partnership opportunities including a proposed Fabian Society commission on levelling-up
 - f. Agreed to sponsor the Police Foundation's strategic review into the future of policing on behalf of the City of London Policy Authority, including a role for Authority Chair James Thomson to sit on the review's steering group

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. The 12-week consultative exercise recently concluded, and a final report was presented to the Tackling Racism Taskforce with recommendations for future action

Sport

6. The Sport Engagement Manager continues to work on plans for Major Sport Events in 2021 and beyond with our key partners. In addition, he is overseeing the research work being carried out by EY on the trade and soft power benefits of hosting sport events in the UK, as well as the survey being conducted by UKactive, the trade association for the fitness industry, on the leisure and active travel needs of City workers. A more thorough update will be provided to Members on this work at the next meeting of the Sub Committee.

Priorities for the next quarter

7. 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 consider opportunities for physical events when possible at the 2021 Autumn Party 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 and in anticipation of the UK's role as Chair of the G7 in 2021.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

8. 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

9. 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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