

<b>Committee(s):</b> Public Relations and Economic Development Sub-Committee	<b>Date(s):</b> 29/04/2021
<b>Subject:</b> Corporate Affairs Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Bob Roberts, Director of Communications	<b>For Information</b>
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### Summary

This report provides a summary of the work of the Corporate Affairs Team since the last meeting of the Public Relations and Economic Development Sub-Committee. It 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 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

The priorities since the last meeting of PRED can be summarised as:

- Planning for recovery in support of the five major work strands:
  - Recovery Task Force
  - Business Recovery Fund
  - Reopening events
  - COVID-19 Business Accreditation Scheme
  - City of London recovery campaign.
- Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Working to support London in line with our corporate plan that we support a diverse and sustainable capital.
- Supporting the competitiveness agenda to champion the UK financial and professional services 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.
- Promoting the City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy.
- Working to reframe the current understanding of "levelling up" as a question of regional inequalities to a more nuanced UK-wide picture.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to note this report.

## **Main Report**

The major workstreams of the Corporate Affairs Team in the two months covered by this report are listed below with examples of activities that support this.

### **Planning for Recovery**

Across the City Corporation work has been ongoing to prepare for the recovery from COVID-19.

The five major work strands we have been supporting are:

- Recovery Task Force: Its mission is to ensure the Square Mile is the *world's most innovative, inclusive and sustainable business eco-system, and an attractive place to invest, work, live and visit*.
- Business Recovery Fund: A fund worth £50million launched on 12<sup>th</sup> April to provide critical support to businesses that contribute to the City's vibrancy and provide services to residents and workers.
- Reopening events: The Lord Mayor and Policy Chair are leading the way in promoting the return of activity to the Square Mile by highlighting the City's venues and attractions that are ready to welcome people back, in line with Government guidelines.
- COVID-19 Business Accreditation Scheme: Supporting firms with their reopening and providing reassurance to customers that their premises are safe to visit.
- City of London recovery campaign: A promotional campaign aimed at workers encouraging the return to the office in line with Government guidelines, highlighting the City's diverse and exciting offer.

As part of the key activities to support this work the Corporate Affairs Team have been:

- Preparing speeches for the launch of the Recovery Task Force recommendations and planning engagement with political stakeholders to amplify the recovery and reopening work.
- Organising a joint roundtable with the Institute for Government on "Building a Green Recovery" and writing the Policy Chair's speaking remarks for the event. Planning for the forthcoming public panel event as part of this partnership is also taking place.
- Preparing briefing for the Vice Chair of Policy and Resources for a panel event on reopening and recovery.
- Preparing speaking notes for the London and Partners seminar on "Promoting London".
- Supporting Mansion House with the planning of the reopening campaign, led by the Lord Mayor and the Policy Chair.

## **Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The work of the Corporate Affairs Team in relation to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic has focused on providing briefings for the Policy Chair for a wide range of London crisis meetings.

In particular, this has included:

- Supporting the Policy Chair ahead of regular pan-London meetings such as the London Transition Board chaired by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the London Recovery Board chaired by the Mayor of London, the London Leaders' COVID-19 Committee and the London Councils' Pandemic Steering Committee.
- Writing briefings for meetings of the London COVID Business Forum on the roadmap for the safe and full reopening of London's economy and working with GLA officials to support the Policy Chair in chairing the April meeting of the Forum.

## **Working to Support 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.

The Corporate Affairs Team continues to undertake activity that contributes to our wider work to support the capital.

This activity includes:

- Organising meetings for the Policy Chair with the key London mayoral candidates, in order to discuss their priorities for London if they are elected.
- Supporting the Policy Chair in her regular programme of London Borough engagement including with Cllr Kieron Williams, Leader of Southwark and Cllr Ian Edwards, Leader of Hillingdon. Further engagement across London Boroughs is planned.
- Continuing to engage closely with Nickie Aiken MP and Unmesh Desai AM, ensuring they are kept up to date with the City Corporation's activity.
- Supporting the Policy Chair for a London Councils meeting with Transport Minister Baroness Vere to discuss funding for TfL.
- Engaging with London based think tanks like Centre for London to ensure that City Corporation positions influence pan-London policy work.

## **Supporting 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 continued to focus 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.
- Writing to International Trade Minister Ranil Jayawardena MP to invite him to speak at the launch of a forthcoming City Corporation report on digital trade.
- Collating briefing for the Policy Chair's meeting with the Skills Minister Gillian Keegan MP, to discuss issues raised in the Corporation's recently published benchmarking report.
- Working with the Innovation Team to provide briefing for the joint Lord Mayor and Policy Chair meeting with the Minister for Energy and Clean Growth, Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP.
- Preparing speeches for the Shenzhen green finance virtual dialogue, the IBDE annual conference on the Kalifa Review, the welcome address for UK Fintech Week and the RegTech report launch.
- Assisting with engagement with the Scottish Government through supporting the Policy Chair for her meeting with the Scottish Trade Minister Ivan McKee MSP and preparing speaking remarks for the roundtable with the Scottish Government on the "Race to Net Zero".
- Continuing preparation for engagement at the autumn 2021 Party Conferences, as well as sponsoring a panel event at the Labour Party Spring Forum where the Policy Chair provided pre-recorded remarks.
- Agreeing a partnership with the Centre for Policy Studies to produce a paper for distribution to MPs on the future regulation of financial services.

### **Promoting the Climate Action Strategy**

The City Corporation has developed an evidence-based Climate Action Strategy for the City Corporation and the Square Mile. We have committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions in our own operations by 2027 and 2040 for all our investments and supply chain.

This mission to reach net zero in the Square Mile is aligned with the City Corporation's wider commitment for London and the UK to become a global centre for green finance and a world class business environment.

The Corporate Affairs Team has continued to work with colleagues to promote the strategy through its external engagement work.

Work to do this included:

- Providing briefing to the Deputy Policy Chair for the London Councils Core Cities Commission on pan-London climate action.
- Continuing to engage and attend meetings of the IPPR Environmental Justice Commission and correspond our priorities regarding climate action. The Commission is cross-party and the City Corporation will continue to engage and influence final policy recommendations.
- Providing communications support to the internal COP26 group, including oversight on ministerial engagement as well as working to help align industrial and business engagement work on COP26 with broader political communications and engagement.

### **Working to Reframe Levelling Up**

The “levelling up” agenda forms a key part of the Government’s programme but is often framed in terms of inequalities between the regions of the UK. The Corporate Affairs Team is working to encourage a more nuanced approach that looks at levelling up within regions as well as between regions.

Work in this area has particularly been with think tanks from across the political spectrum.

Key activity in this area has included:

- Agreeing to support a Commission on “Poverty and Place” to be managed by the Fabian Society.
- Working with the think tank Onward ahead of the levelling up series event the City Corporation is sponsoring on “Who Funds Levelling Up?”.

### **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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