

Committee(s): Policy and Resources Committee	Dated: 16 September 2021
Subject: External Climate Action Commitments and Memberships	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	5 - Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£NA
What is the source of Funding?	Fees for memberships will be covered from existing budgets under CAS
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Deputy Town Clerk & Chief Executive and Director of Innovation & Growth	For Decision
Report author: Julia Makin, Climate Stakeholder Engagement Lead, Innovation and Growth	

Summary

This paper presents 2 new externally facing commitments for consideration. These will facilitate outcomes for the Corporation's Climate Action Strategy (CAS) in its inaugural year:

- United Nations Cities Race to Zero – Pledge
- UK100 - Pledge

These commitments have been proposed for potential for impact. They are endorsed by the Communications Office, the Corporate Treasurer and Innovation and Growth for their potential for impact. Members are provided with the detail of each commitment and their alignment with CAS outcomes. The pledges involve the recognition of a global climate emergency. These decisions are being brought to Committee given the previous corporate decision not to declare a climate emergency in the Square Mile.

Recommendation(s)

The Policy and Resources Committee is asked to:

- Approve pledges to Cities Race to Zero and UK100 and the proposed senior level sponsors.

Main Report

Background

1. In January 2020, the City Corporation set out on a fast-paced, cross-Corporation journey to develop an ambitious Climate Action Strategy (CAS). The resulting Climate Action Strategy was adopted at Court of Common Council on the 8th October 2020.
2. The CAS marked the start of a new and transformative programme of action. It set out three interlinked primary objectives for the City Corporation and the Square Mile:
 - to support the achievement of net-zero emissions,
 - to build resilience, and
 - to champion sustainable growth.
3. The Climate Action Strategy also set out 4 targets for the City Corporation and Square Mile:
 - Net zero by 2027 in the City Corporation's operations
 - Net zero by 2040 across the City Corporation's full value chain
 - Net zero by 2040 in the Square Mile
 - Climate resilience in our buildings, public spaces and infrastructure

Current Position

4. To date, the CAS Programme benefits from a wider range of memberships and commitments. These include:
 - Better Buildings Partnership, UK Green Buildings Council, RE100 and New London Architecture
 - Principles of Responsible Investment (PRI)
 - Town and County Planning Association and Royal Town Planning Association
 - Arboriculture Association, London Environment Directors Network, and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA)
5. Reviewing new commitments was a planned action within the Y1 CAS stakeholder engagement plan. Several new commitments have been identified to signal the Corporation's ambition and collaborative stance. They are platforms where we can exchange learning and amplify our work. Engagement will also strengthen external communications in the lead up to COP26. For instance, the Corporation will also formally become a supporter of the Taskforce on Climate Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). This is ahead of submitting first TCFD disclosure later this year. Becoming a public TCFD supporter is a clear statement of support for HMG ahead of COP26. Similarly, BHE became a signatory in July 2021 of the Association of Charitable Foundations (ACF) hosted Funder Commitment on Climate Change (FC).
6. Any additional decisions will be reviewed and actioned on an operational level but there are two which have arisen with policy implications.

Proposals

Join and endorse key campaigns ahead of COP26

7. United Nations Cities Race to Zero is the cities track of a global campaign run by the COP26 Presidency. Race to Zero aims to rally leadership and support from businesses, cities, regions and investors.
 - Due diligence has been conducted on the ability to adhere to the pledge criteria and a full list of Race to Zero pledge criteria is included at Appendix 1.
 - The sponsor is C40 Cities who are credible and authoritatively engaged in the issues. The City Corporation has also been in close dialogue with HM Government, who are supportive of the City Corporation becoming a formal signatory of the Race to Zero scheme. Subject to Committee approval, there is an opportunity to announce this commitment during Green Horizon Perspectives on 21 September 2021.
 - Race to Zero also has a business track and establishing signatories in the Square Mile will be leverage in achieving the Corporation's net zero target for the Square Mile.
8. UK100 is a network for UK locally elected leaders who have pledged to play their part in addressing climate change. They work with residents and businesses to bring wider communities' emissions in line with Net Zero as soon as possible (and by 2045 at the latest).
 - A full list of UK100 pledge criteria are included as Appendix 2. They have been checked to ensure for alignment to CAS. The commitment would also see the Corporation engage with UK100 to advocate for more powers, funding and resources for local government to tackle the climate emergency
9. Both UK100 and Cities Race to Zero require a senior level sponsor. It is recommended that the Chair of Policy and Resources and the Vice Chair of Policy and Resources, Deputy Keith Bottomley, serve as sponsors.
10. The language of 'climate emergency' is used in the defining principles of both the Cities Race to Zero and UK100 pledges. To join Cities Race to Zero, the Corporation is asked to 'recognise the global climate emergency'. For UK100, the Corporation is asked to pledge responsibility to 'tackle the global climate emergency'. Neither pledge makes declaring a climate emergency a condition of joining.

11. When the CAS was adopted at the Court of Common Council on the 8th October 2020, a Motion to declare a climate emergency was debated and defeated. The public minutes record arguments that declaring an emergency only in October 2020 following an earlier trend by local authorities gave the impression that the City Corporation had been slow to act. This was thought to trivialise the significant leadership role of the City Corporation in finding tangible and practical ways to mobilise investment into climate action.
12. The value of declaring a climate emergency was also queried when it was understood that only half of the councils who had declared had published action plans. Fewer still had committed any associated funding. There was a majority desire not to be associated with this trend. A decision was made to focus on the proposed strategy and its funded action plan based on science- based targets.
13. It is therefore concluded that joining these two organisations is not in contravention of the previous decision. Nor does it require the Corporation to declare a climate emergency. It is recommended that we join UK 100 and Race to Zero with immediate effect.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. Strategic implications This proposal aligns principally with Corporate Plan Outcome 5 - Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible. By publicly committing to both UK and international campaigns, the Corporation is demonstrating its credibility on taking climate action.
15. Financial implications No new implications. Costs for membership covered by existing CAS budget levels.
16. Resource implications Officer time to undertake due diligence, collect evidence and submit pledges.
17. Legal implications None. All evidence submitted to campaigns is already in the public domain.
18. Risk implications The Corporation has committed to transparent annual reporting under CAS. The reporting cycles of the Race to Zero and UK100 align with this commitment.
19. Equalities implications – None. Cities Race to Zero and UK100 position equity, justice and inclusive climate action at the centre of all urban decision-making, to create thriving and equitable communities for everyone. Alignment with these campaigns amplifies the Corporation's commitment under CAS to ensuring no-one gets left behind in tackling climate change.
20. Climate implications None. All external commitments outlined in this paper serve and amplify the delivery of the Corporation's commitments under CAS.

21. Security implications None.

Conclusion

22. Making these new commitments strengthen the execution of the Corporation's Climate Action Strategy. They will increase the visibility of the work and give access to new networks and platforms. Joining will help to shape best practice with a wider set of collaborators.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – CAS External Commitments – Cities Race to Zero Criteria

Appendix 2 – CAS External Commitments – UK100 Criteria

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