

<b>Committee(s):</b> Public Relations Sub (Policy & Resources) Committee	<b>Dated:</b> 18 October 2021
<b>Subject:</b> Six-month media update	Public
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	[1-12]
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	N
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b> Bob Roberts, Director of Communications	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Helen Turnbull, Media Officer	

## **Summary**

This report summarises the media output from the City of London Corporation's Media Team between April and October 2021 and gives a breakdown of which subject areas dominated the media coverage about the City Corporation and the Square Mile.

Most media focus was, unsurprisingly, dominated by Covid-19 and the Extinction Rebellion protests but there was also extensive - and mainly positive coverage - of our open spaces, the education achievements of pupils at the City Corporation's family of schools and the work of the Police Authority Board.

This report also attempts to give some qualitative analysis of the coverage's tone and content.

On the dominant subject of Covid-19 the tone in the period covered was initially negative focusing on lack of footfall and questions around the City's future. In recent months there has been a noticeable rise in interest in the return of office workers and increasing pick up of our promotion of the Square Mile as a vibrant and thriving City with a world-class business eco-system and outstanding environments.

Analysis of other subjects is below.

## **Recommendation(s)**

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. The Weekly Media Summary produced every Friday measures and records the main print, broadcast and digital media output of the Media Team. It is distributed to Members and senior officers.
2. This report collates and summarises the findings of the Weekly Media Summary from April 2021 and October 2021.

## **Current Position**

### **Print**

3. There have been more than 550 articles relating to the City of London Corporation in national, regional and local newspapers.
4. Advertising Value Equivalent (equivalent if we paid for coverage) is £6,259,183 (this excludes radio, TV broadcasting and international print coverage).
5. Additionally, there have been at least 95 articles in international media which are not collated by the cuttings agency and which are not included in the AVE figure.

### **Broadcast**

6. There have been at least 44 pieces of broadcast media coverage achieved including in BBC London News, BBC Radio 4, The Today Programme, CNBC and Sky News.

### **Digital**

7. The corporate Twitter feed now has 53,800 followers - up by 3,302 in the last six months. For comparison Westminster Council now has 29,000 followers.
8. Our corporate Facebook pages have 11,147 followers up from 9,234 in the last six months. Westminster Council now has 5,745.
9. Our corporate LinkedIn page now has 27,148 followers; up by 5,293 followers. This is more followers than any London Borough.
10. The most visited page on the corporate website between April and October 2021 was swimming at Hampstead Heath with 126,019 views.

### **Options**

11. None.

### **Proposals**

12. None.

### **Key Data**

13. See current position.

## 14. Analysis of Media Coverage

### COVID-19

#### Content Analysis

- a. The majority of coverage achieved was around COVID-19 on subjects including the future of the City and the return of office workers. Both internationally and nationally, the Lord Mayor and Policy Chair were frequently quoted and interviewed in major media such as The Times, The Sunday Times, City A.M., Bloomberg Radio, Financial Times, Financial News, The Economist, City Matters, BBC Radio 4 Today, Financial News, BBC Radio London, Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph, Reuters, This Is Money, Metro, Yahoo! News UK, Associated Press and Independent. Coverage was included on the Covid Business Recovery Fund, the future of the City workers returning to the office and the Square Mile reopening.
- b. City A.M. ran an opinion piece from the Lord Mayor discussing the reopening of the City and the plans for a return of office workers.

#### Qualitative Analysis:

- a. The tone of media coverage was initially negative, reflecting the lack of footfall in the Square Mile through much of the reporting period due to Covid-19 restrictions. The Covid Business Recovery Fund was well received as an initiative to support City SMEs, while the reopening activities in line with the Government's roadmap received widespread positive coverage in national and London media.
- b. In recent months there has also been a noticeable rise in interest in the return of office workers and increasing pick up of our promotion of the Square Mile as a vibrant and thriving City with a world-class business eco-system and outstanding environments

### Extinction Rebellion

#### Content Analysis

- a. There was extensive coverage of Extinction Rebellion protest activity in the Square Mile. Coverage appeared in over 300 outlets including The Guardian, Mail Online, Daily Mirror, Daily Express, Independent, Metro, Evening Standard, City A.M., Sky News and LBC News. There were also protests at Smithfield Market, where around 500 people gathered as part of an animal rights march, which Sky News reported. This protest was also covered by LBC News, Mail Online, Evening Standard, Yahoo! News, The National and mentioned in ITV London News. Mail Online reported on continuing protests by Extinction Rebellion on Friday 27 August, which included daubing fake

blood over Guildhall. This protest also featured in The Independent, Energy Live News in Yahoo! News and more than 50 other outlets.

#### Qualitative Analysis

- a. Coverage focused on the efforts of protestors to disrupt high-profile organisations. Coverage was factual, with protestors criticising the financial sector for not doing enough to tackle climate change. The protest activity at City Corporation sites generated some coverage, but the bulk focused on other organisations.
- b. Overall, we were pleased the coverage of the protests did not distract from our work on the Climate Action Strategy and did not portray the City Corporation as an opponent of those trying to tackle climate change

#### Climate Action

##### Content Analysis

- a. Lord Mayor William Russell wrote in City A.M. about London Climate Action Week and the City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy which will make the Square Mile an international leader in the fight against carbon emissions.
- b. City A.M., London Loves Business and City Matters reported on the City Corporation strengthening its commitment to climate action by signing up to the Race to Zero campaign and UK100 network. Policy Chair Catherine McGuinness was quoted.
- c. The Lord Mayor was quoted in a City A.M. article about applications opening for a free course aimed at helping small and medium-sized businesses in the City of London play their part in tackling global warming. Further coverage in City Matters.
- d. The Independent reported that the City of London Corporation is "leading by example" in its efforts to cut carbon, stating that the organisation aims to reach net zero by 2027 and make its financial portfolio net zero by 2040.

##### Qualitative Analysis

- a. Coverage was positive, highlighting the work that the City Corporation is doing to combat climate change and publicising the Climate Action Strategy. However, we still believe our Climate Action Strategy is not achieving the media focus it deserves and we will continue to prioritise this as we approach COP26.

#### Barbican Centre External Review

##### Content Analysis

- a. Coverage on the City of London Corporation's launch of an External Review into staff experiences of racism at the Barbican Centre appeared in a wide range of arts trade publications including Art Forum, The Stage, Arts Professional, The Arts Newspaper and Art News. There was further coverage in City Matters.
- b. The Stage reported on interim findings of an external review into staff allegations of racism at the Barbican. Town Clerk and Chief Executive John Barradell and a City Corporation spokesperson were quoted. The same publication ran a separate piece publishing staff claims that the arts centre was in "freefall" and hit by a "mass exodus" of employees.

#### Qualitative Analysis

- a. Coverage of the External Review launch was neutral and factual in tone and showed the City Corporation is taking decisive action to ensure the Barbican is a fully inclusive organisation. One report in The Stage report, which carried claims that staff are leaving the arts centre in "droves", was negative but carried a CoLC statement.

#### Barbican Renewal project

##### Content Analysis

- a. The Evening Standard and the AJ ran a joint exclusive reporting that the City Corporation launched a search for a design team to develop and deliver plans for a major renewal of the Barbican Centre. Chair of the Barbican Centre Board, Tom Sleight, was quoted. Further coverage appeared in a range of architecture and arts trade titles.

##### Qualitative Analysis

- a. Reporting was positive and positioned the City Corporation as putting arts and culture at the forefront of the recovery from the pandemic.

#### Planning and Transportation

##### Content Analysis

- a. Evening Standard, Press Gazette, Yahoo News Construction Index *and* Construction Enquirer, Planning and Construction News, PBC Today on the plans for a new 18-room courthouse and police headquarters and the publication of the contract notice for the construction of its Salisbury Square Development in the Square Mile. Policy Chair Catherine McGuinness was quoted in the Evening Standard welcoming the proposals for the new 'Justice Quarter' off Fleet Street which were formally approved. Further coverage in The Times, City A.M., MSN UK and Building Design.

- b. The Policy Chair and Planning and Transportation Chair Alistair Moss wrote in the Financial Times about the importance of offices to the City's recovery plans, stressing strong demand from developers and investors. He was also quoted in Lighting in Design reporting that improving public lighting is key to economic recovery.
- c. Lord Mayor William Russell was quoted ITV London in a piece about the re-opening of the Waterloo & City line and future of the City. Policy Chair Catherine McGuinness was also quoted in over 200 pieces of national, international and regional coverage on the reopening of the Waterloo and City line. This included The Guardian, Daily Mail, Metro, and City A.M., BBC Radio London, Daily Mail, Head Topics, Yahoo! News UK, Yahoo! Sports Canada and Rail Technology Magazine
- d. Extensive coverage including the Guardian, Sky News, Evening Standard, Jewish Press, Yahoo Canada, in Sky News Breakfast and New York Times Daily Telegraph Jewish News, My London, City Matters, BBC Radio London and LBC News on planning permission being sought for two new tower blocks next to Bevis Marks Synagogue. The City Corporation was referenced in the New Statesman and FT in continuing coverage of the plans.
- e. Chair of the Planning and Transportation Committee Alastair Moss was quoted in PBC Today and Construction Review Online in a story about planning permission being granted for two schemes at a site on Fetter Lane, near Chancery Lane. Also in Property Week and Construction Enquirer.

#### Qualitative Analysis

- a. The widespread coverage of recent planning applications that could impact the Bevis Marks synagogue was negative and critical. Plans for the 'Justice Quarter' were well received as a project that could help to support the City's recovery. The widespread coverage of the decision to reject the application impacting Bevis Marks was neutral.

#### Police Authority Board

#### Content Analysis

- a. The Telegraph reported on comments from James Thomson, Chair of the City of London Police Authority Board, urging online platforms to take a legal responsibility to remove and prevent fraudulent activity on their websites. Widespread further coverage in over 200 outlets including the Independent, Daily Mail and Yahoo Finance.
- b. Police Professional Magazine quoted the Chair of the Police Authority Board Chair in an article on plans to increase the diversity of the City of London Police force. Further coverage in City A.M., Eastern Eye and City Matters.

- c. The Chair of the City of London Police Authority Board was interviewed in the Daily Telegraph in a call for more to be done by technology firms to tackle online fraud.
- d. The Times published a letter from the Chair of the Police Authority Board on the need for greater resources to tackle fraud and the procurement of a new reporting system to replace Action Fraud. Separately, the Chair wrote to the Financial Times about the need to step up the fight against ransomware attacks.
- e. Police Professional, City Matters and Police Oracle reported on the appointment of Angela McLaren as the new City of London Police Commissioner, taking over from Commissioner Ian Dyson, who has served nearly six years in the role. Chair of the City of London Police Authority Board, James Thomson; Commissioner Designate Angela McLaren; and Commissioner Ian Dyson were quoted.

#### Qualitative Analysis

- a. Coverage was positive communicating the work of the Police Authority Board in the media and promoting the status of the City of London Police as national lead force for fraud.
- b. The volume of coverage of the work of the Police Authority Board has increased significantly in the last six months due to a new focus and much-improved working relationships with the police.

#### Education

#### Content Analysis

- a. Extensive coverage appeared in media outlets about the A-level and GCSE success of City of London Academies Trust schools. Coverage appeared in City A.M., Channel 4 News, City Matters, Islington Gazette, Southwark News, Hackney Gazette, Daily Mail Online, Ham&High, South London Press, Ilford Recorder and FE News.
- b. The City Corporation was referenced in a Times article about the City of London Academies Trust working to open sixth forms in two existing schools – City of London Academy Shoreditch Park and City of London Academy Highgate Hill. Further coverage featured in Evening Standard, MSN, Yahoo, Islington Gazette, Hackney Gazette and Ham&High.

#### Qualitative Analysis

- a. Coverage was positive, giving a platform to successful students from a range of backgrounds and promoting the role of the City of London Academies Trust in providing excellent education for young Londoners.

## Open Spaces

### Content Analysis

- a. The Independent reported on an Open Spaces Learning Programme study into educating autistic children in nature. The Chairman of the Open Spaces Committee Oliver Sells QC was quoted.
- b. BBC Radio London's Vanessa Feltz Breakfast Show and BBC London Radio Robert Elms Show interviewed Director of Open Spaces Colin Buttery who urged Londoners to socially distance when visiting parks. BBC Berkshire also interviewed Chairman of the City Commons Committee, Graeme Doshi-Smith. The interviews were part of a pan-London campaign, led by the City Corporation, together with Lee Valley Regional Park, London's boroughs, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, The Royal Parks and the London Strategic Coordination Group. Further coverage on LBC News, BBC London TV, The Guardian and a range of media outlets across London.
- c. Director of Open Spaces Colin Buttery was interviewed on BBC Radio Berkshire about work to repair damage to Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common. Further coverage in Horticulture Week, Bucks Free Press, Slough Express and Maidenhead Advertiser where Chairman of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee, Graeme Doshi-Smith, was quoted.
- d. Chairman of Epping Forest & Commons Committee Graeme Doshi-Smith was quoted in a BBC London News story about dozens of people being fined for picking wild mushrooms in Epping Forest. Further coverage in The Times, Times Radio, Independent, news bulletins on BBC Radio 2, Radio 4, BBC 5 Live and LBC, Metro, Daily Mail, The Sun, City Matters, Essex Live, Epping Forest Guardian and many more online outlets.
- e. Chair of the Hampstead Heath Management Committee Anne Fairweather was interviewed live on BBC Radio London's Robert Elms Show about the Heath 150 celebrations. Camden New Journal carried an eight-page feature celebrating the anniversary. The story also featured in Horticulture Week and received extensive coverage in Ham&High.
- f. Ham&High published a piece about a swimming group announcing a legal challenge to the City of London Corporation's decision last year to impose mandatory fees to swim in Hampstead Heath's bathing ponds. A City of London Corporation spokesperson was quoted. The story was mentioned in BBC London TV and BBC London Radio news bulletins.

### Qualitative Analysis

- a. Coverage on the Open Spaces Learning Programme was positive, highlighting how the City Corporation is helping young Londoners with autism. There was extensive coverage, neutral in tone, on COVID-19, with the City

Corporation being presented as a leading London green spaces provider. Media coverage on illegal fungi picking at Epping Forest focused on enforcement and habitat protection. And there was extensive positive reporting in major London broadcasters about the Hampstead Heath 150 celebrations.

- b. Heavy coverage on compulsory charging at the Heath's swimming ponds was negative, with articles focusing on criticism from swimmers.

## Tower Bridge

### Content Analysis

- a. The Daily Telegraph reported that the first-ever Muslim call to prayer took place on Tower Bridge. The City of London Corporation was referenced. Further coverage featured in a number of international media outlets including Arab News, The Daily Pakistan, The News International, Global Village Space, Morocco World News, Khaleej Times, Pakistan Observer, The Foxhole News, Daily Sun, World Today News, Al Khaleej Today, Sylhet Mirror, Ajib.fr, UAE News, Bebas News, Suara Merdeka, Shampratik Deshka, The World News, Fdesouche.com, Al Gulf, Laptrinhx, Daily Muslim, Aljazeera.net, Bold Medya and Daily Advent. Social media videos across four platforms, led by Tower Hamlets council and supported by the City Corporation, are estimated to have reached 20 million views.

### Qualitative Analysis

- a. The widespread coverage was positive and factual and showed the city as diverse and inclusive.

## Air quality

### Content Analysis

- a. Port Health and Environmental Services Committee Chairman Keith Bottomley was quoted in City Matters, London Loves Business and LocalGov after proposals for new powers to tackle non-traffic air pollution in the Square Mile, drawn up by the City Corporation and London Councils, were debated in the House of Lords. Further coverage in Air Quality News and MJ.
- b. City Matters reported on comments made by Port Health and Environmental Services Committee Chairman Keith Bottomley as he promised the City Corporation would continue to work tirelessly to eliminate dirty air.
- c. The City of London Corporation was mentioned in Planning Resource, which reports that the High Court has dismissed a legal challenge from a local resident to the 24/7 zero-emission project on Beech Street, introduced as an

experiment by the City Corporation. Further coverage ran in the Local Government Lawyer.

#### Qualitative Analysis

- a. Coverage was factual and balanced, with a focus on the City Corporation's work to combat non-traffic sources of air pollution.

#### Bridge House Estates

#### Content Analysis

- a. BBC London News featured the 100th anniversary of Southwark Bridge, which was specially lit by the City Corporation to mark the occasion. Lord Mayor William Russell and Assistant Director of Engineering Paul Monaghan were interviewed. Further coverage in Daily Telegraph, City A.M., Southwark News and South London Press. Bridge House Estates Board Chairman Giles Shilson was quoted.
- b. BBC Radio London covered a £60,000 City Bridge Trust grant to Deptford-based Heart n Soul for an arts project for young people with learning disabilities. Also covered in City Matters, FE News and London Post with quotes from City Bridge Trust Chairman Giles Shilson.
- c. Architects' Journal mentioned the City Bridge Trust as a funder for a new £2.5 million scheme to expand the National Youth Theatre's home in Islington.

#### Qualitative Analysis

- a. Coverage was positive and featured the main roles of Bridge House Estates. City Bridge Trust coverage continues to align to the funding priorities as set out in its Bridging Divides funding strategy.

#### Arts and Culture

#### Content Analysis

- a. City A.M. and City Matters carried a column by Policy Chair Catherine McGuinness, writing about the importance of the City's cultural and creative sectors and how they are reviving as COVID-19 measures continue to ease.
- b. The Times, Broadway World, Theatre Weekly, What's On Stage, Arts Professional covered the launch by the New Diorama Theatre in partnership with British Land in July of a major new artist development complex, supported by the City Corporation.
- c. Chair of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee, Wendy Hyde, was interviewed on Bloomberg Radio about the return of lunch markets to

Guildhall Yard as part of the City's reopening. The story also featured in City A.M. and City Matters.

- d. The City of London Corporation was referenced in the Daily Express which reports on Bengali culture celebrations. The Chair of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee was quoted.
- e. Planning and Transportation Committee Chair Alastair Moss was quoted in an article in Metro on the City Corporation Lunchtime Streets initiative.
- f. BBC Radio London interviewed Chair of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee Wendy Hyde about the City of London Corporation-commissioned 'Celebrating City Women' documentary. Further coverage London News Time and We are the City.

#### Qualitative Analysis

- a. Coverage was positive and positioned the City Corporation as putting arts and culture at the forefront of the recovery from the pandemic.

#### Conclusion

15. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

#### Appendices

None

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