

Committee(s): Public Relations Sub Committee	Dated: 18/10/2021
Subject: Party Conference Update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Corporate Plan outcomes 2-10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Bob Roberts, Director of Communications	For Information
Report author: Tom Regan, Corporate Affairs Officer	

Summary

The below report provides a summary of the work of the Corporate Affairs Team in supporting the City of London Corporation's activity across the main party-political conferences.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Purpose of Engagement

1. Party conferences are an important part of the Corporation's engagement programme as they allow the City Corporation to use a national forum to actively engage with a number of political and business stakeholders.
2. Members and officers attend these party conferences on behalf of the City Corporation, representing the organisation through attendance of City Corporation organised events, fringe events, and bilateral meetings with relevant stakeholders.
3. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the City Corporation attended Labour and Conservative conferences in person this year, as well as virtually attending the Liberal Democrat conference. The City Corporation plans to also attend the Scottish National Party and Green conferences, later this Autumn.

Conservative Party Conference 2021

4. Conservative Party conference took place in Manchester. The City Corporation hosted its set-piece dinner, a private roundtable and an open fringe. In addition, the Corporate Affairs Team supported the Policy Chair and PRED members across separate engagements to promote the work of the City of London Corporation.

Overview of City Corporation Events

5. The City Corporation hosted its set-piece dinner at the Manchester Art Gallery. The dinner welcomed guests from Parliament, London Government, the diplomatic sphere and the financial and professional services sector (FPS). The keynote speaker was Economic Secretary to the Treasury, John Glen MP.
6. The City Corporation hosted a private roundtable in conjunction with the Centre for Policy Studies, entitled “Financial services of the future: digital, sustainable, open?”. The keynote speaker was Economic Secretary to the Treasury, John Glen MP.
7. In addition, an open fringe was held in conjunction with Onward and UK Finance entitled “Competitive advantage: how to keep the UK financial and professional services sector firing on all cylinders?”. The panel consisted of the Policy Chair, the Trade Minister Ranil Jayawardena MP, Baroness Nicky Morgan, Gareth Davies MP, David Postings from UK Finance, and it was chaired by Anthony Browne MP.
8. The Corporate Affairs Team also provided briefing for events attended by other members of PRED, including a private roundtable on fintech and a lunch hosted by the City Property Association.

Key Objectives

9. Our key objective was to ensure the Government’s continued support for the competitiveness of the City, in line with the City Corporation’s own strategic priorities in this area to ensure the Square Mile is a vibrant and thriving City with a world-class business eco-system and outstanding environments.
10. In addition, and in the context of the Government’s priority to “Level Up” the UK, the City Corporation engaged with stakeholders to promote the role of the FPS sector in delivering on this agenda.
11. A specific focus was also placed on the need to support the delivery of the Chancellor’s vision for the sector, as he set out in the 2021 Mansion House speech. Notably, to support the delivery of programmes to support tech and innovation within the FPS sector, global trade, and Green Finance.

12. Overall, our view is that the engagements at the Conservative Party Conference met our objectives, were well received by stakeholders and were well-attended.

Labour Party Conference 2021

13. Labour Party Conference took place in Brighton, their first in-person conference since 2019. The City Corporation hosted a set-piece dinner and private roundtable at Labour Party conference. In addition, the Corporate Affairs Team supported the Policy Chair and PRED members with separate engagements to promote the work of the City Corporation.

Overview of City Corporation Events

14. The City Corporation hosted its set-piece dinner at The Grand Hotel. The dinner welcomed guests from Parliament, London Government, the diplomatic sphere and the financial and professional services sector (FPS). The keynote speaker was Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Jonathan Reynolds MP.
15. A roundtable was organised by the City Corporation, in partnership with the Fabian Society and considered the topic 'Financial Services and the Recovery'. The discussion was focused on how the sector could support people, places and businesses to thrive. The keynote speakers were Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Bridget Philipson MP and Angela Eagle MP.
16. In addition, the Corporate Affairs Team supported the Policy Chair in her participation in an open-fringe event sponsored by Bloomberg on how businesses can support the UK's net-zero commitments. The Corporate Affairs Team also supported the Policy Chair's participation at the Labour Party's annual business reception.

Key Objectives

17. Our key objective across all of the City Corporations engagement, was to promote impact of the FPS sector and how it can support inclusive and sustainable growth across the UK.
18. In addition, a broader emphasis was placed on the potential of Green Finance in the context of the UK meeting its net zero emission targets and the role of the City and the FPS sector in supporting the delivery of this.
19. Given the change in personnel within the Labour Party, since the last in-person conference, our activity in Brighton presented a good opportunity to speak to new political stakeholders about the fundamental strengths of the UK's FPS sector and the important role of the industry in supporting the UK economy and society in general.
20. Again, we believe our conference engagements were relatively successful in achieving their objectives with the dinner becoming recognised as a key forum

for London's political leaders to engage with the City Corporation and FPS leaders.

Liberal Democrat Conference 2021

21. The 2021 Liberal Democrat conference took place virtually, for the second consecutive year, owing to the impact of COVID-19. The City Corporation hosted a private roundtable, as well as using the conference as an appropriate forum to conduct relevant one-on-one political engagements between the Policy Chair and political stakeholders.

Overview of City Corporation Events

22. The City Corporation held a virtual roundtable during the conference on climate resilience and local government. Hosted by the Social Market Foundation, the roundtable's main speaker was Wera Hobhouse MP, the Liberal Democrat spokesperson for the climate emergency.
23. The Policy Chair had additional meetings with Liberal Democrat stakeholders to brief them more broadly on the work of the City Corporation.

Key Objectives

24. A key aim of the City Corporation's conference activity was to ensure political stakeholders had visibility of our work on climate resilience, and the formation of the City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy. In particular, the pan-London nature of this work and the partnership between the City Corporation and local government stakeholders to support the delivery of the Climate Action Strategy.
25. Recognising the relative size of the Liberal Democrats presence throughout London, a specific focus across all our engagement was placed on how the City Corporation exercises its role within London to support the wider work of the capital.
26. While there are limits on what can be achieved through virtual engagement, the events went well but we plan to step up engagement when physical Liberal Democrat conferences return.

Green Party Conference 2021

27. Green Party conference is scheduled to take place in a hybrid capacity, with in-person events held in Birmingham between 22nd - 24th October. A further update will be provided in future Corporate Affairs updates.

Scottish National Party Conference 2021

28. SNP conference is scheduled to take place virtually between 26th – 29th November. The City Corporation will attend and hold a virtual fringe event on

the “Future of Financial Services in Scotland” in partnership with Holyrood Magazine and the TCUK.

Key Data

None

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

1. Engaging with political stakeholders through organising events associated with the party-political conferences. Events which 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.

Financial implications

2. The Corporate Affairs Team has an established budget for all party conference related activity.

Resource implications

None

Legal implications

None

Risk implications

None

Equalities implications

None

Climate implications

None

Security implications

None

Conclusion

Members are asked to note the ongoing work of the Corporate Affairs Team across the national Party Conferences.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

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