

Committee(s): Communications and Corporate Affairs Sub Committee	Dated: 07/06/2022
Subject: Party Conferences 2022	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?	Local budget
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Bob Roberts, Deputy Town Clerk and Executive Director of Communications and External Affairs	For Information
Report author: Sarah Bridgman, Senior Corporate Affairs Officer	

Summary

The City of London Corporation delivers a programme of engagement at the annual Liberal Democrat, Labour, Conservative, Scottish National Party (SNP) and Green party conferences.

Members and officers attend these party conferences on behalf of the City Corporation, representing the organisation through attendance at City Corporation organised events, other fringe events, bilateral meetings with political and business representatives and other networking opportunities.

This report provides Members with a summary of the events to be hosted by the City Corporation at this year's conferences.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked:

- To note the plans for the City Corporation's events at this year's party conferences.

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London Corporation attends annual political party conferences, including the Conservative, Green, Labour, Liberal Democrat and SNP party conferences.
2. The City Corporation organises and sponsors both public and private events at Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat party conferences. The City Corporation has hosted events at the SNP conference in recent years and has also attended the Green party conference in an observer capacity.
3. The purpose of the City Corporation's activities at party conferences is to deliver a programme of strategic engagement on issues of importance to the organisation with relevant politicians, policymakers and business figures. City Corporation party conference activity is a key part of our political engagement across the year and provides an excellent opportunity to meet many political contacts in one place.
4. City Corporation activities are considered on a yearly basis to adapt to its own priorities and the current political and socio-economic environment. However, traditionally the City Corporation organises:
 - a. An invitation-only roundtable in partnership with a think tank at the Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and SNP party conferences. This roundtable is chaired by the Policy Chairman and an additional Member of the Communications and Corporate Affairs Sub Committee may be invited to attend at the discretion of the Policy Chairman.
 - b. An invitation-only dinner hosting between 40-100 people at the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat conferences. The dinners bring together key local, regional and national political representatives, businesses, think tanks and academics. The Policy Chairman gives a keynote speech as well as an external political guest.
 - c. An additional open fringe event in partnership with a think tank at the conference of the party in government.

Current Position

5. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, party conferences were wholly virtual in 2020, and hybrid in 2021. This autumn all the major party conferences are expected to take place in person as normal. Whilst at this stage the Corporate Affairs Team does not expect the situation to deteriorate significantly, contingency plans will be in place to move any conference events online should public health regulations require it.
6. As agreed by the then PRED Sub Committee in 2017, all members of the Communications and Corporate Affairs Sub Committee are invited to attend party conferences as City Corporation representatives and are therefore eligible for a two-day commercial guest party conference pass, with the cost being met from the party conference budget.
7. Members of the Communications and Corporate Affairs Sub Committee were contacted by the Corporate Affairs Team by email on 13th May 2022 to invite

them to attend this year's conferences and to ask them to indicate their preferences for attendance. This early notification is to allow the Corporate Affairs Team to book the conference passes at the cheaper "early bird" rates available.

Proposals

8. Members may wish to know the proposed format of events for the party conferences this autumn.
9. Liberal Democrat Party Conference, 17-20 September 2022, Brighton
 - Plan: To host a private roundtable with a political representative in partnership with a think tank, covering a policy area of relevance to the City Corporation. On this occasion, the event subject will be how to fund the transition to net zero. To host a sit-down dinner of approximately 40 attendees with a select and focused guest list from the business, political and policy related sectors.
10. Labour Party Conference, 25-28 September 2022, Liverpool
 - Plan: To host a private roundtable with a political representative in partnership with a think tank, covering a policy area of relevance to the City Corporation. On this occasion, the event subject will be the future of the cultural sector post-pandemic. To host a sit-down dinner of approximately 80-100 attendees with a select and focused guest list from the business, political and policy related sectors.
11. Green Party Conference, 30 September-2 October, Harrogate and online
 - Plan: To attend the conference and not organise any events.
12. Conservative Party Conference, 2-5 October 2022, Birmingham
 - Plan: To host a private roundtable with a political representative in partnership with a think tank, covering a policy area of relevance to the City Corporation. The subject of this roundtable will be London and levelling up. To host an open fringe event in partnership with a think tank, covering a policy area of relevance to the City Corporation. The subject of this event will be trade and global Britain. To host a sit-down dinner of 80-100 attendees with a select and focused guest list from the business, political and policy related sectors.
13. Scottish National Party Conference, dates and location TBC
 - Plan: To host a private roundtable with a political representative in partnership with a think tank and/or sectoral organisation, covering a policy area of relevance to the City Corporation. To explore partnership with TCUK, as has been the case in recent years.
14. Dinner venues and hotel rooms have been secured and the Corporate Affairs Team continues to work with external partners to finalise the arrangements for our events. More details will be provided to Members nearer the time.

Key Data

None

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

15. Engaging with political stakeholders, organising events associated with the party political conferences and working with think tanks 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 City 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

16. 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.

Resource implications

None

Legal implications

None

Risk implications

None

Equalities implications

None

Climate implications

None

Security implications

None

Conclusion

17. Members are asked to note the plans for the City Corporation's involvement at the 2022 party conferences.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

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