

Committee(s): Policy & Resources	Dated: 17 November 2022
Subject: UN Sustainable Development Goals Communication of Progress Report	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	All
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: Chief Strategy Officer	For Decision
Report author: Barbara Hook Town Clerks Department	

Summary

In accordance with being a signatory to the [UN Global Compact](#), the City of London Corporation is required to provide an annual Communication of Progress Report on its commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

New signatories to the UN Global Compact are required to provide their first Communication of Progress report within two years of joining. The City of London Corporation's first report is due on 1st January 2023.

The requirement is for a retrospective summary demonstrating our ongoing policy commitment in four areas, human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption, since becoming a signatory in December 2020.

Members previously agreed three themes of action for the City Corporation in relation to its commitment to the UN SDGs, to

- Embed relevant SDGs into strategy development, implementation and reporting processes
- Demonstrate the actions the City Corporation is taking to achieve the SDGs, by reporting actions on SDG partnership platforms – both UK and Global
- Take part in business initiatives focused on the SDGs and use our influence to encourage other businesses to take part.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve the first annual UN Sustainable Development Goals Communication of Progress Report **at Appendix 1.**

- Authorise the Chief Strategy Officer to submit the report for publication on the UN Global Compact internet page, in accordance with the commitment made to do so by 1st January 2023.
- Note the annual £550 membership fee to the UN Global Compact, and that Officers will review our membership and the requirement for future annual reports, prioritising the value added to the City of London Corporation in doing our business.
- Note that commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals is sustained through our policies and ongoing activities in the three themes previously agreed by members of the Policy and Resources Committee.

Main Report

Background

1. In September 2020 members of the Policy & Resources Committee agreed that the City of London Corporation should be a signatory to the [UN Global Compact](#). This commitment, agreed by a previous administration of the Court, is a legacy of the Responsible Business Strategy which commenced in 2018 and integrated into business as usual in 2021.
2. 17,000 of the 20,000 organisations who are signatories¹ to the UN Global Compact are businesses. 68 cities worldwide have signed up. In the UK, Derby City Council is also a signatory, and some other UK local authorities reference the SDGs in their corporate strategies and reports but are not signatories to the UN Global Compact.
3. The City of London Corporation works collaboratively with a wide range of partners to inspire, develop and act on responsible business. We are committed to creating positive impact across our activities and decisions to ensure a sustainable future where individuals and communities can flourish, and the planet is healthier. Our progress in these areas is communicated through key policies, such as the Modern Slavery Statement, commitment to the London Living Wage, and initiatives such as the Lord Mayor's Dragon Awards, which recognise and celebrate businesses that are achieving excellence in social impact and inspire others by sharing best practice.
4. The 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (at Appendix 2) are very wide ranging. The City of London Corporation Corporate Plan 2018-23 outcomes align with all the UN SDGs. There is a relationship between specific SDGs and City Corporation strategies, for example the Responsible Business Strategy, Towards a Sustainable Future prioritised ten of the SDGs:
 - a. No poverty

¹ Cities and Corporations around the globe have adopted various approaches to show their support and commit to action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Signatories to the UN Global Compact pay a membership fee and make a public pledge of their commitment to shape a sustainable future through principled business.

- b. Good health & wellbeing
- c. Gender equality
- d. Decent work and economic growth
- e. Reduced inequalities
- f. Sustainable cities and communities
- g. Responsible consumption and production
- h. Climate action
- i. Life on land
- j. Partnership for the goals.

Current Position

5. The UN requirement is that reports are uploaded using their [digital template](#) and are a retrospective summary of progress. The City of London Corporation is required to provide
 - a. a statement from the Chief Executive expressing continued support for the UN Global Compact and commitment to the SDGs, and
 - b. a description of practical actions and outcomes evidencing our commitment to the UN Global Compact in 2020
6. The draft report focusses on themes most relevant to us. It demonstrates our commitment to embedding relevant SDGs referencing previously published material, our strategies, partnerships and initiatives with business. Moving forward we will work with officers to determine how our annual return can be best managed and provide added value.

Options

7. Recommended: Members agree that the UN Communication of Progress Report 2022 is approved as drafted (or authorise the Chief Strategy Officer to make any minor changes that are required prior to submission), for publication on the UN Global Compact website by 1st January 2023.
8. Not Recommended: Members decide the report should be redrafted and returned to them later for approval. A revised report would need to be submitted by 1st April 2023. This would require making a formal request to the UN for a Grace period of 3 months in which to submit the report. Grace letters are published on the UN Global Compact website.
9. Not Recommended: Members decide City of London Corporation should not provide any Communication of Progress report. This would, after a period of 12 months, result in the City of London Corporation being delisted as a signatory to the UN Global Compact, which would be publicly recorded by the UN. Of 883 UK participants to the UN Global Compact, seven are recorded as delisted and 84 as non-communicating.

Proposals

10. That members of Policy & Resources Committee approve the first annual UN Sustainable Development Goals Communication of Progress Report and authorise the Chief Strategy Officer to submit the report for publication on the UN Global Compact website, in accordance with the commitment made to do so by 1st January 2023.
11. Note the annual £550 membership fee to the UN Global Compact, and that Officers will review our membership and the requirement for future annual reports.
12. Note that commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals is delivered through our policies and ongoing activities in the three themes previously agreed to
 - Embed relevant SDGs into strategy development, implementation and reporting processes
 - Demonstrate the actions the City Corporation is taking to achieve the SDGs, by reporting actions on SDG partnership platforms – both UK and Global
 - Take part in business initiatives focused on the SDGs and use our influence to encourage other businesses to take part.

Corporate & Strategic Implications – Alignment between the UN SDGs and the Corporate Plan 2018-23 outcomes and other corporate strategies is clear. Embedding relevant SDGs into new strategy development and subsequent reporting continues to be important.

Financial implications – there is an ongoing annual cost of £550 to the City of London Corporation's continued membership as a UN global Compact signatory. Funding of £10,000 for three years from the Policy Initiative Fund was approved by members of the Policy and Resources Committee in 2020.

Resource implications – The Responsible Business Strategy 2018-2023 has been embedded into City of London Corporation Business as Usual activity, however there is considerable staff resource time invested in compiling the annual Communication of Progress Report.

Legal implications - None

Risk implications – There is a risk to the City of London Corporation reputation if our first return to the UN Global Compact is not provided or is delayed.

Equalities implications – None

Climate implications - None

Security implications - None

Conclusion

13. Commitment to the UN SDGs is a public demonstration of our ongoing, positive and effective efforts in the four action areas in our operations, our supply chain and our partnerships with responsible businesses in the City. Our participation

encourages and influences businesses located in the City and beyond to demonstrate their own commitment to the principles of the UN Global Compact.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – City of London Corporation Communication of Progress Report 2022
- Appendix 2 – The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact
- Appendix 3 – the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Appendix 4 – Responsible Business Strategy, Towards a Sustainable Future

Background Papers

Previous report to Committee on this subject:

[Commitment to UN Sustainable Development Goals \(24 September 2020\)](#)

Link to listing on UN Global Compact internet:

[City of London Corporation | UN Global Compact](#)

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