

Committee(s): Communications and Corporate Affairs Sub Committee	Dated: 19/04/2023
Subject: Party Conferences 2023	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: Philip Saunders, Interim Executive Director of Communications and External Affairs	For Discussion
Report author: Miki Arenson, 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 from Corporate Affairs and Remembrancers 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.

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 Liberal Democrat, Labour, Conservative, Scottish National Party (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 in the past.
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 the Policy Chairman's political engagement and City Corporation advocacy and provides an excellent opportunity for Members and officers to meet many political contacts in one place.
4. City Corporation activities are reviewed 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.
5. Officers from Corporate Affairs organise and deliver the variety of Corporation-hosted events, and manage the programme for the Chairman of Policy and other senior Members. Officers from both Corporate Affairs and Remembrancer's teams ensure City Corporation messaging is emphasised across the range of conference activities, and provide detailed political intelligence reports during the course of each conference and afterwards via the Parliamentary Brief.

Current Position

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. The intention of Member attendance is to represent the Corporation, using their experience, connections and knowledge, across the range of conference events, not only at the City Corporation's hosted events. Members play a key role as representatives, speakers and hosts at the Corporation's party conference activities.
8. In light of inflation, think tank partnership costs, hotel costs and conferences pass costs have all increased. For example, compared with last year, daily Labour Conference passes have increased by 17.9%. The Corporate Affairs Team communicated during the City's Budget process that it expected overall costs to rise 10 – 20 per cent due to inflation.
9. 2023 is an important year in the election cycle in terms of manifesto writing ahead of a general election. In light of this, and feedback from the Communications and Corporate Affairs Sub Committee, the Corporate Affairs Team has taken the decision to add an additional open fringe event to the programme at Labour party conference.

Proposals

10. The proposed format of events for the party conferences this autumn.
11. Liberal Democrat Party Conference, 23-26 September 2023, Bournemouth
 - 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 that was planned for Liberal Democrat 2022 Party Conference will be carried over. The topic that had been planned for 2022 was 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.
12. Conservative Party Conference, 1-4 October 2023, Manchester
 - Plan: To host a private roundtable with a political representative in partnership with a think tank, covering a policy area relating to the *Finance for Growth* programme. To host an open fringe event in partnership with a think tank, covering a policy area of relevance to the City Corporation. 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.
 - To explore partnership with an external organisation for one of the fringe events, as has been the case in past years.
13. Labour Party Conference, 8-11 September 2023, Liverpool
 - Plan: To host a private roundtable with a political representative in partnership with a think tank, covering a policy area relating to the Finance for Growth programme. To host an open fringe event in partnership with a think tank, covering a policy area of relevance to the City Corporation. 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.

- To explore partnership with an external organisation for one of the fringe events, as has been the case in past years.

14. Green Party Conference, TBC

- Plan: To observe the conference and not organise any events.

15. Scottish National Party Conference, dates and location TBC

16. 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 TheCityUK, as has been the case in recent years.

17. Dinner venues and hotel rooms have been secured at the 3 main party conference venues. 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 and feedback from previous years will be taken into account for planning purposes

Key Data

None

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

18. 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

19. The Corporate Affairs Team has an established budget for 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

20. Members are asked to note the plans for the City Corporation's involvement at the 2023 party conferences.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

Miki Arenson

Senior Corporate Affairs Officer

T: 07864 954797

E: Miki.Arenson@cityoflondon.gov.uk