

Our vision and purpose

The City of London Corporate Communications and External Affairs division sits at the heart of the organisation but delivers for the whole City Corporation.

Our purpose is to use the power of first-class strategic communications and external engagement to help deliver the ambitious goals of the City of London Corporation for all the diverse communities we serve on a local, London, national and global scale. We believe innovative and audience-focussed communications are part of what could make the City Corporation the best place to work in the world and the engine room of UK prosperity.

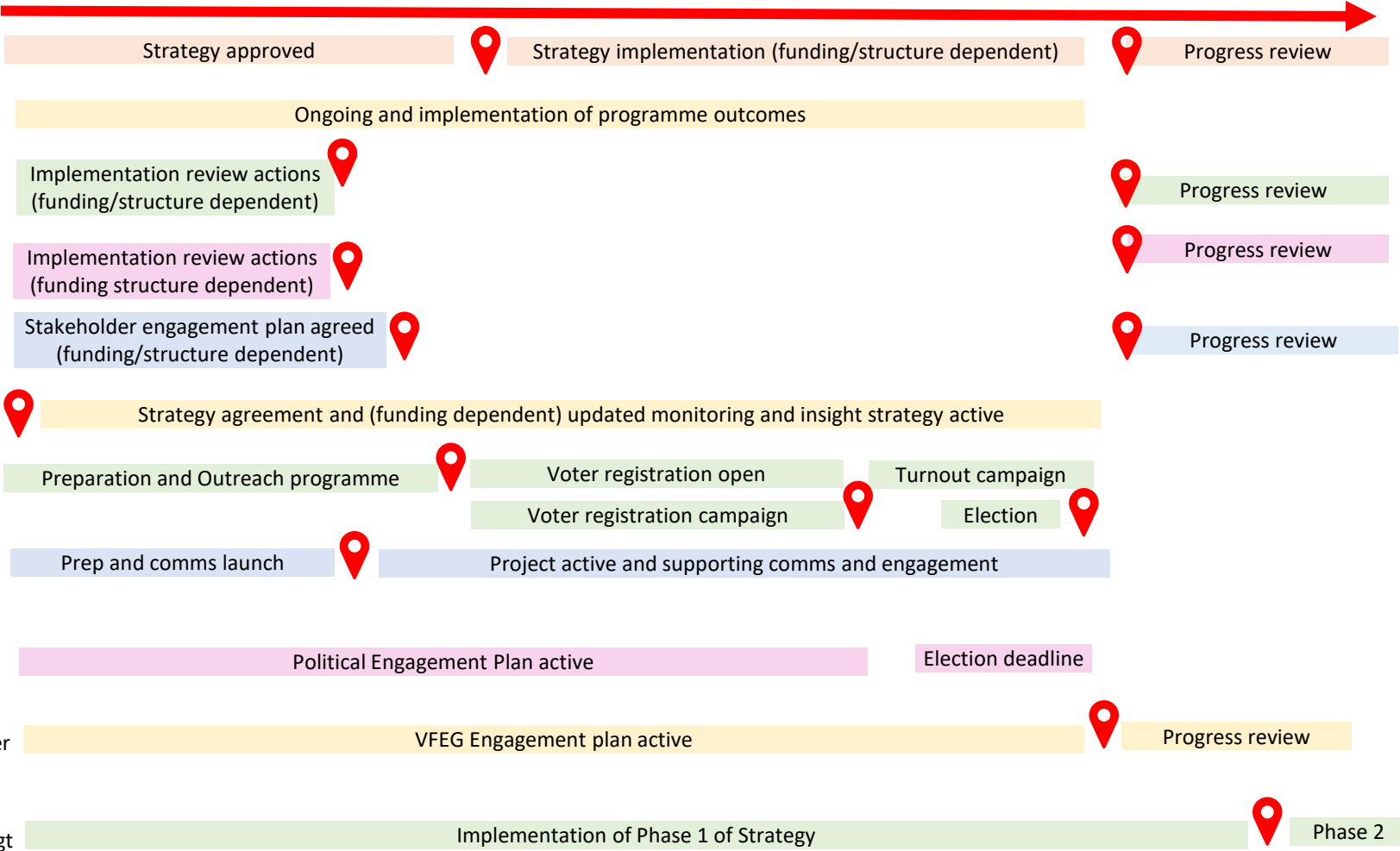
What has changed since 23/24

- **Transformation** – New Chief Officer appointed (Executive Director of Corporate Communications and External Affairs). Linked to this, new cross-divisional corporate communications and external affairs transformation and engagement work underway.
- **Planning and Analysis** – Budget reviewed. Recommendations shared to allow for critical elements of the Business Plan to be delivered. Funding secured to enable transformation work to begin. Support given and evidence provided to cross CoLC Communications and External Affairs deep dive finance review. Existing insight and evaluation tools reviewed; media monitoring contracts renegotiated. Focus on developing strategic planning capability with appointment of new strategic communications planning post.
- **Impact** – Larger scale, ambitious, party conference programme delivered aligned to economic growth and reputation objectives. Comprehensive V4EG political stakeholder briefing exercise underway.
- **Impact** – City Belonging project launched, with 1,000 plus businesses signed up in first few months. Community engagement strategy (resident and worker) being developed where staffing/funding in place. New strategic approach delivering cross-corporation benefits, e.g. support for City of London Police community engagement.
- **Engagement** – Campaigns and Community Engagement team now lead on City Question Time. Three events have been held under the auspices of the Communications Team, with generally higher attendance than previously. Innovations such as recording rather than livestreaming the event and delivering invitations via a door-to-door service have substantially reduced their cost, and the more informal nature of the event has reduced the organisational burden on officers.
- **Impact** – New digital channels launched, including Instagram and LinkedIn continues to grow and deliver significant levels of engagement and continued increase in followers.
- **Engagement** – Successful launch of regular Town Halls and all staff briefings with the Town Clerk and Chief Officers. Consistently attracting more than 1,000 attendees.
- **Engagement and Strategy** – The function and how communications/external affairs and engagement is delivered across the City Corporation reviewed by the Chief Officer to make proposals for a future operating model to underpin a new strategy and implementation plan. Existing barriers to effective strategic planning identified. Development of Head of Profession governance and establishing the first City Corporation Communications Board now prioritised. More than 80 insight gathering meetings and workshops held. bi-laterals with members of the Sub-Committee underway.
- **Culture Change** – Review delivered reinforcing internal communications must be put on an equal footing with other disciplines to meet continued increasing demand for staff engagement strategies to support delivery of the Corporate Plan 2024 -29 and People Strategy.

Our 2024/25 timeline planner priority workstreams and key milestones

Q1 2024/25 Q2 2024/25 Q3 2024/25 Q4 2024/25 Beyond 2024/25

Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar 2025/26 2026/27



Our major workstreams this year will be

Workstream Name	Funding allocation %	People resource %	Prioritisation category	Dependencies	Outcomes/ Impacts	KPI	Update Schedule	24/25 Target	22/23 Baseline
Delivery of the corporate communications and external affairs strategy	20%	25%	Political priority/key strategic outcome The City Corporation does not have a data/audience/outcome driven communications and external affairs strategy and clear objectives (and has not had one for nearly a decade). In addition, the previous plan made no reference to internal comms despite the organisation being complex and c.4,000 staff. There is currently more communications resource/funding <i>outside</i> the central team than in it, presenting a significant reputational as well as effective delivery/vfm risk. This is a corporate and political priority.	Funding, resource and crucially support, engagement and endorsement from other Chief Officers and members to agree, implement and deliver the strategy and support a non-siloed model to provide benefits to the organisation as a whole and enable the delivery of all elements of the new Corporate Plan.	A clear strategic approach to communications and external affairs across the Corporation and its institutions, governed by the central Corporate team – focused on outcomes and impact for the City Corporation as a whole. Achieving this support for this approach, aligned with the positive outcomes from the TOM (e.g. Head of Profession), from SLT, ELB and members.	Agreement of the strategy (which will have KPIs within it informed by insight projects being funded from the transformation fund) by the C&CASC. This committee will continue to have responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of its delivery. Delivery of the supporting implementation plan with associated KPIs.	Update provided at each C&CASC		N/A
Transformation Programme to upskill and appropriately resource the corporate communications and external affairs team	0%	20%	Political priority/key strategic outcome Communications and Corporate Affairs is a professional function, as well as being a critical key, strategic enabling function for the delivery of policy and organisational goals and wider City Corporation ambitions, as well as protecting and enhancing the reputation of the City Corporation and our strategic reach. It is currently not resourced or structured to provide a comprehensive, integrated service to the whole organisation It has been made clear at C&CASC that developing and enabling this function is a political priority. The current budget for Corporate Communications and External Affairs is insufficient to cover core basic BAU obligations and roles (with even some statutory obligations and currently unfunded).	Support and endorsement from other Chief Officers and members to agree the new structure, approach and ongoing, business as usual investment required. Also, see further detail above.	This will ensure the function can deliver strategic, integrated communications programmes; deliver policy goals in line with expectations of public/governmental organisation; support and advise all parts of the City Corporation - reducing the necessity to appoint external consultancies to provide the service and advice at greater cost than developing the team in-house. Significant reputational benefits and greater impact for the CoLC could be realised – and C&CASC would have greater/ full oversight of cross organisational activity.	Establishment of a strategic communications function. HoP governance and procedures designed, engaged on and moved into implementation phase. Where benefits/vfm/impact greater for the CoLC, or a less-siloed approach is planned, communications, marketing and external affairs to be centrally-led and coordinated by central team for the benefit of the whole (or as a minimum C&CASC to have oversight/there is a dotted line into the HoP/teams to take a full and active part in Head of Profession governance and communications boards).	Update provided at each C&CASC		N/A
CoL Election 2025 engagement	TBC (subject to approval of bid for funding)	10%	Duty and Statutory This is a duty and statutory priority as the City Corporation is required to engage ahead of the election to secure voter sign up.	Support from the Remembrancers and members to agree the approach to engagement.	Continued increase in voter registrations through wider, ongoing engagement with workers and residents.	Up to 20% increase in voter registration	Update provided to P and R		N/A
General Election Political Engagement	10%	20%	Political priority/key strategic outcome This is a corporate and political priority	Support from OPC, Remembrancers and members to agree the approach to engagement.	Strengthening of relationships with national political parties, influencing policy and lobbying on behalf of the	Strategic stakeholder plans developed and evaluated for priority areas.	Update provided at each C&CASC		N/A

Our major workstreams this year will be

Workstream Name	Funding allocation %	People resource %	Prioritisation category	Dependencies	Outcomes/ Impacts	KPI	Update Schedule	24/25 Target	22/23 Baseline
Comprehensive review of core strategic functions – digital, brand and identity and stakeholder management to inform the transformation work and strategy development	0% (There is currently no core budget to deliver this work and it is being funded from a transformation fund bid).	25%	Political priority/key strategic outcome The digital capability of the corporate team is severely under resourced and currently not fit for its purpose. There is no brand strategy, and the brand is weak and has been diluted many times and there is no central ownership of stakeholder engagement and management. In order to provide a high-quality modern communications function, the review will make recommendations to enable the creation of appropriate resource, channels and outputs. This is a corporate and political priority.	This is a cross-organisational project and will require support and endorsement from other Chief Officers, institutions and members to agree the investment. Key dependency is the City Corporation's IT team.	This will ensure the function can deliver strategic, integrated full-service communications and corporate affairs programmes, support and give advice to all parts of the City Corporation and will reduce the necessity to appoint external consultancies to provide the service and advice, decreasing reputational risk and improving vfm.	Delivery of separate reviews that feed into the transformation programme and strategy development (see timeline).	On completion of the reviews		N/A
Insight and Evaluation improvement	3% (The budget for an improved service as requested by C&CASC would need to be provided)	15%	Political priority/key strategic outcome The insight currently prepared by the team is not informed due to budgetary and staff development constraints by the latest best practice techniques. It is not being used to properly strategically inform plans or gather audience insight to ensure better targeting and channel usage. This is a political priority.	Support from sub-committee members to agree a new approach to insight and evaluation, which demonstrates impact and informs decision making.	This will be supported with the consolidation of current media and social media monitoring systems into a tool that provides real time insight, audience analysis and targeting. This will inform the planning of activity and usage of the more appropriate channels.	Successful consolidation of multiple media and social media monitoring platforms. Delivery of integrated, comprehensive insight and evaluation.	Update provided at each C&CASC		N/A
Culture change communications – vision and values project	TBC (Current no resource, staffing, budget for this organisational strategic priority).	10%	Political priority/key strategic outcome This will be a corporate and political priority and is a key deliverable in the upcoming People Strategy and to support the delivery of the change needed for the Fantastic Five Years.	As a cross – organisational project we will be working closely with the Chief Officers and in particular the Chief People Officer and team.	Continued increase in staff engagement and the co-creation of the organisation's new vision and values.	Subject to funding and resource, campaign launched to embed, build pride in our vision and values.	Updates agreed following launch of the programme		N/A
Sport Strategy	1% (additional dedicated funding agreed at P&R)	5%	Power and Discretionary There is an organisational commitment to delivering the Sport Strategy. Certain areas of the Sport Strategy are a priority for the organisation to progress – including plans for the future of Golden Lane Leisure Centre.	As a cross – organisational policy area we will be working closely with teams such as DCCS and Environment to deliver the strategy.	Phase 1 (2023-26) - will identify five major objectives, each linked to the priorities, that should be delivered in the first three years of the strategy's implementation.	KPIs to be agreed following objective setting in Phase 1	Update provided at each C&CASC		N/A

Medium Term Plans under consideration(2025/26 and 2026/27)

Priority list (e.g. new legislation, services, projects, automation)	2025/26	2026/27	Funded or Unfunded
Website redevelopment; maintenance support for existing digital platforms; content creation; digital campaigns	x		Unfunded
Engagement; team establishment	x		Unfunded
Delivery of the outcomes of the transformation programme and strategic comms/marketing/new insight or evaluation in any future communications strategy	x		Unfunded

Our Strategy and Cross-cutting and Cross-Systems Strategic Commitments and Ambitions

The central team is currently comprised of Corporate Affairs, Filming Unit, Media, and Publishing. It sits at the heart of the organisation and oversees the communications and corporate affairs priorities of organisation and its principals, building the reputation and impact of the City Corporation as a whole and helping it to deliver its goals. The full benefits for the City Corporation of the Head of Profession role following the TOM are yet to be realised and, with a new Chief Officer in post, plans to begin this process are set out in this Business Plan. A deep dive into posts and funding across the organisation is also underway to establish the totality of roles/spend as in the current structure more resource (people/budget) sit outside the central team than it in, but only the communications and corporate affairs outcomes of the central team are visible to CCASC.

As a highly professional and critical enabling function, the Corporate Communications and External Affairs division supports the City Corporation’s strategic commitments, including delivery of the Policy Chairman’s priorities of UK competitiveness, reinvigorating the square mile and delivery of major capital programmes, such as Markets consolidation. The team also supports the Lord Mayor and his theme – Connect to Prosper and key City Corporation priorities of Destination City and the Climate Strategy. There is established strategic media and corporate affairs engagement to support delivery and, subject to securing support for a proposed new function/structure, the division will be one of the key levers the City Corporation has for delivering the ambitions in the new Corporate Plan, working across the organisation and across our systems to achieve the new collective goals.

To ensure (in a digital age) the service meets the needs of the City Corporation and its institutions – and critically the diverse audiences it serves both at home and globally - a Corporate Communications and External Affairs strategy is in development. Following over 80 plus engagement sessions, there has been almost universal support for this change of approach, which will benefit the City Corporation and those it serves, improve standards and increase impact, and also ensure the teams have access to greater learning and development opportunities, and improved career pathways.

The strategy will be developed through continued engagement and collaboration with the corporate team, members, the organisation and its stakeholders and partners.

It will encompass all components of a strategic, modern communications operation and be supported with an implementation plan.

In addition, there are a number of projects and workstreams to support the transformation programme for Corporate Communications and External Affairs, which are currently in development and will need to have a cross-systems approach to ensure maximum impact.

Our People

- Staff engagement has become a priority since the arrival of the Chief Officer in June 2023. This includes fortnightly team ‘huddles’; and a series of whole-team transformation workshops supported by six workshops focused on media, corporate affairs, publishing and internal communication. More divisional engagement is in development. These first ever whole-team workshops were positively received.
- The division’s Vision and Purpose has now been co-created with all team members and the co-creation of the corporate communications and external affairs strategy is in development.
- Training and Professional Development has been identified as a priority outcome from the whole-team workshops; planning is progressing with a focus on talent management/career progression .
- Appointment of four Apprentices in progress across the team (to address absence of apprentices).
- Working across the team to agree our health and wellbeing priorities (ongoing).

Equality Diversity & Inclusion

We are committed to creating a working environment that is inclusive and where everyone is treated equitably and with dignity and respect. Across the organisation, we continue to champion accessibility and inclusive communications, engagement, images and language. Our priorities are:

- Recognising the vital importance of understanding our diverse audiences and communities, transformation funding has been secured to carry out the first Stakeholder survey for the City Corporation to improve audience insight and help ensure internal and external communications follow the principles of inclusive communications and better embed diversity in practice into our work. It will also give us insight to make positive data driven interventions and encourage teams across the City Corporation to build in diversity at the planning stage.
- Develop a new DE&I plan for our division. Ensure the team is truly inclusive, everyone is supported and has access to health and wellbeing support – and everyone can thrive.

	Minor	Serious	Major	Extreme
Likely	0	0	0	0
Possible	0	0	3	0
Unlikely	0	1	0	0
Rare	0	0	0	0

Key Risks

Risk Title	Score
Reputational damage linked to the current structure with majority of budget and significant posts outside the central corporate team. This has created silos and expensive external commissioning of communications services. The dispersal of the resource outside of the central team means there is not a strategic, integrated function leading the communications planning and activity for the City Corporation and C&CASC has no oversight of the majority of communications activity.	9
Inadequate resource to support the People Strategy and Corporate Plan leading to a lack of awareness, buy-in and inhibiting the City Corporation’s ambition to improve staff engagement overall.	4
Duplication of activity, questions over vfm, and confusion as communications projects and activity not all overseen and led by the corporate team. More comms resource sits outside the central team than within it.	9
Role of the Head of the Profession as set out as part of the TOM is not recognised across the City Corporation and no responsibility placed on Chief Officers and Institutions to align or work with them. This work is only beginning with the arrival of the new Chief Officer, so the division is behind other professions.	9

Our Highlights

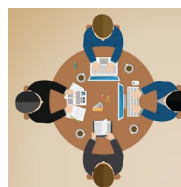
- Secured senior political support for the launch of Vision for Economic Growth, including politician attendance at launch and cross-party quotes of support.
- Led policy development, wrote and published the first City Corporation Sport Strategy.
- Delivered new media approach for party conferences, resulting in the City Corporation being mentioned in renowned UK political coverage, highlighting our pivotal role in financial services to a political audience.
- Delivered increased in social media engagement and followers across all platforms and particularly LinkedIn with an increase of 38.6% in followers. Launched the City Corporation's first official Instagram account.
- Delivered a communications campaign with Destination City to reach target visitor audience groups, achieving 124 pieces of coverage as part of a wider marcomms plan, including advertising, marketing, and social media campaigns.
- Delivered significant national and London coverage for the Climate Action Strategy. Included interviews with BBC Radio 4's Costing the Earth, and the New Statesman, two Evening Standard exclusives and coverage on City A.M.'s front page.
- Delivered a proactive communications plan to publicise a dinner to mark the contribution of the civic institutions of the City of London during the Coronation of Their Majesties The King and Queen. Generated over 450 articles mentioning the Lord Mayor and/or the City of London Corporation. This was accompanied by a social media campaign which included the City Corporation's most popular posts ever.
- Led the communications launch of the Vision for Economic Growth in collaboration with 300 stakeholders. Secured over 40 pieces of proactive coverage and two national exclusives with the Sunday Times and Sky News in the run up to the launch. 31,599 impressions across social media channels.

Our Impacts



Social media followers increased by 17.4% in the last year

Our posts reached 12 million people



More than 40 engagements with politicians

Nine events during party conference season highlighting pivotal role in financial services



Relationships with 75% of companies with more than 1,000 staff



Delivered 150 speeches, forewords, columns and op-eds for CPR



Generated 13,320 items of media coverage

Issued 271 news releases

Communications and media support and advice to 108 committees, sub-committees and working groups



70% of staff reading the Town Clerk's update and 55% reading 'Know. Act. Inspire. 827 colleagues attended the Corporate Plan and People Strategy next steps session



Filming team facilitated 671 days of location filming during the last year. Business plan for this function now in development

Operational Property Utilisation Assessment

Asset name	Assessment Complete?	Assessment Completion Date
Guildhall	Y	October 2023
Walbrook Wharf	N/A	N/A

Guildhall complex (core central team only). Work ongoing to establish cross-Corporation numbers/cost under Head of Profession role.

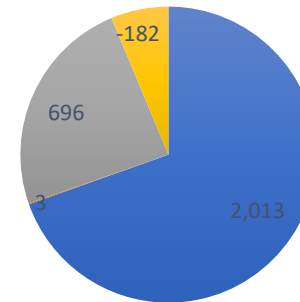
34 FTE

Our Stakeholders (or Customers) Needs

- Clear and consistent communications, engagement and external affairs across the City Corporation and its institutions.
- Enhancing and protecting the reputation of the City of London Corporation.
- Inclusive and accessible channels and information.

Where our money comes from and what we spend it on

Local & Central Risk Communications 22/23 Outturn (£000's)



■ Employees ■ Transport ■ Supplies & Services ■ Income

Partners we work with

