

Committee(s): Communications and Corporate Affairs (Policy & Resources) Committee – For information	Dated: 01/07/2024
Subject: Parliamentary Team Update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Diverse Engaged Communities, Dynamic Economic Growth Leading Sustainable Environment Vibrant Thriving Destination Providing Excellent Services Flourishing Public Spaces
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
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: Paul Wright, City Remembrancer	For Discussion
Report author: William Stark, Senior Parliamentary Engagement Officer	

Summary

This summary updates Members on the main elements of the Parliamentary Team’s previous and planned activity in support of the City of London Corporation’s political and parliamentary engagement since the last formal update to the sub-committee on 24 April 2024. Activity relating directly to the General Election, undertaken jointly with the Corporate Affairs team is the subject of a separate joint report to the sub-committee.

Recommendation(s)

Members are recommended to note the report.

Main Report

Legislative Programme Update

1. The surprise announcement of a general election for the 4th July brought the legislative agenda to a shuddering halt, with only two days of “wash up” time before Parliament was prorogued ahead of its dissolution. The limited wash up period saw an effort to take Bills near to completion across the line, however this process necessitated the prioritising of some Bills over others. For example, the **Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act** made it over the line as did the **Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act**, whereas the **Data Protection and Digital Information Bill** did not. Public Bills are not permitted to be “carried over” following a dissolution of Parliament, so any Bills lost will have to be re-introduced, with any previous proceedings disregarded. Notably, a number of Private Members’ Bills made it through in the last sitting days of

the parliament. These measures, such as the **Building Societies Act 1986 (Amendment) Act**, were generally uncontroversial, facilitating a quick passage through their final stages.

2. The King's Speech following the general election is scheduled to take place on 17th July 2024, where the incoming government's legislative agenda will be set out. As usual, the Office will, in consultation with relevant departments, analyse the legislative agenda and provide an update to this subcommittee.

Acts passed before dissolution

3. **Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act** – Of particular importance for the tech sector, the Act grants new and expanded powers to the Competition and Markets Authority in respect of digital markets, competition and consumer protection, including creating a new regime for regulating large businesses with a significant market presence in digital activities, expanding the CMA's existing investigation and enforcement powers in respect of competition issues and equips the CMA with powers to enforce breaches of consumer protection laws directly, including through the imposition of fines of up to 10% of global annual turnover for non-compliance.
4. **Paternity Leave (Bereavement) Act** – Expands eligibility for leave to fathers or partners who experience the death of a child's mother, adoptive or surrogate parent. (Private Members' Bill)
5. **Building Societies Act 1986 (Amendment) Act** – Enables societies across the UK to raise more funds from sources other than member savings and bring some administrative rules in line with those which apply to banks. (Private Members' Bill)
6. **British Nationality (Irish Citizens) Act** – Allows Irish citizens who have been resident in the UK for five years to acquire British citizenship through registration. (Private Members' Bill)
7. **Victims and Prisoners Act 2024** – The Act places the key principles of the Victims' Code in statute and sets out the minimum level of service victims can expect from criminal justice agencies. It also introduces an Independent Public Advocate to support victims and the bereaved when a major incident occurs to provide support and guidance. During Commons proceedings, the Bill was amended to create a compensation scheme for the victims of the infected blood scandal. This was a Labour amendment initially opposed by the Government, but was conceded by Ministers in the wash up before dissolution. A report on the Act will be prepared for the Police Authority Board.
8. **Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024** – Provisions of the Act include those that aim to make it easier and cheaper for leaseholders to buy their freehold, it increases standard lease extension terms to 990 years for houses and flats, and aims to provide greater transparency over service charges. It also removes barriers for leaseholders to challenge landlords' unreasonable charges at Tribunal. It bans the sale of new leasehold houses (but not flats)

other than in exceptional circumstances, ends excessive buildings insurance commissions for freeholders and managing agents, and removes the requirement for a new leaseholder to have owned their house or flat for two years before they can buy or extend their lease. Provisions also allow freehold homeowners on private and mixed tenure estates the same rights of redress as leaseholders, and equivalent rights to transparency over their estate charges, and aims to make it easier for leaseholders to take over the management of their property if they want to.

9. Other Acts passed include **Post Office (Horizon System) Offences Act** (which quashes convictions of innocent postmasters who have been incorrectly prosecuted), the **Media Act** (which updates the existing legislative framework on broadcasting governance), the **Pet Abduction Act** (which creates two new criminal offences of dog abduction and cat abduction) and the **Zoological Society of London (Leases) Act** (which increases the maximum term of the organisation's lease on its Regent's Park site from 60 years to up to 150 years)
10. Separately, the **Pedicabs (London) Act** received Royal Assent before the announcement of a general election.
11. Bills of interest which fell at dissolution
 - **Arbitration Bill**
 - **Criminal Justice Bill**
 - **Data Protection and Digital Information Bill**
 - **Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill**
 - **Renters Reform Bill**
 - **Tobacco and Vapes Bill**
 - Private Members' Bills including **Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation Bill** and **Space Industry (Indemnities) Bill**.

City Corporation Private Legislation

12. The **City of London (Markets) Bill** fell when Parliament was dissolved. The Bill received its Second Reading in its first House, the House of Commons, on 6 February 2023 but it had not otherwise made progress since being deposited in November 2022.

Forward Look and Engagement Update

13. The dissolution period is being used to ramp up ongoing preparations for engaging with a new parliament. Further detail on this work will be provided in a separate paper to this subcommittee, however outline steps include identifying engagement priorities for the Policy Chairman, drafting template letters of welcome to incoming MPs, analysing if Corporation assets have changed constituencies given boundary changes, assessing opportunities for political events after the election and preparations to analyse the legislative agenda of an incoming government.

14. The annual Parliamentary Terrace Reception has been postponed, as it was due to take place within the pre-election period. It has provisionally been rescheduled for late October.
15. Planned meetings of the APPG for Financial Markets and Services on the UK-EU relationship in financial services and the future of UK capital markets have been postponed due to the election. During the dissolution period, APPGs cease to exist and the group will need to be re-constituted following the election.
16. The election has also delayed a planned meeting of the Industry and Parliament Trust on economic diplomacy, which will now take place in October.

Engagement prior to the general election

17. Prior to the announcement of a general election, the Policy Chairman was invited to give evidence to the House of Lords Financial Services Regulation Committee, alongside Director of Policy and Innovation and Kerstin Mathias. The session explored the FCA and PRA's implementation of their new secondary competitiveness objectives. The Office, working closely with IG colleagues, led on preparations for the session. Follow up evidence will be submitted when the Committee is reconstituted after the general election.
18. The Office submitted several Parliamentary debate briefings, including a briefing for a House of Commons debate on biodiversity loss which highlighted the City Corporation's Biodiversity Loss Action plan. The team shared a briefing ahead of a Westminster Hall debate on the UK Space Industry, led by Mark Garnier (Con), which led to a mention for the Lord Mayor's Space Debris Removal Insurance Bonds (SPADRIBS) initiative and a positive follow up email from Garnier. Another set out the City Corporation's skills programmes and policy asks ahead of a House of Lords debate on skills for the future economy. During the debate, the City Corporation received a positive mention, with Baroness Garden of Frognal (Lib Dem) citing the City and the livery companies as 'major players' in the delivery of skills. The team also received a positive follow up email from Lord Hampton (Crossbench) and the debate leader, Lord Aberdare (Crossbench), with their thanks for sharing a helpful briefing.
19. The Office is in discussion with the British-American Parliamentary Group regarding future opportunities for collaboration. Members of the group attended a Guildhall reception to mark the opening of the Corporation's US office, and it is hoped that scope for further engagement may be found during the new parliament.
20. Officers attended a meeting of the APPG for Fair Business Banking for a panel discussion with Government Anti-Fraud Champion Simon Fell MP, Shadow Attorney General Emily Thornberry MP to coincide with the launch of fraud prevention service CIFAS's 2024 Fraud Pledge. The Office is liaising closely with the Police Authority Board team, IG and Comms colleagues regarding strong political interest in tackling fraud.

London Engagement

21. The 2024 London Mayoral election took place on 2 May, with Sadiq Khan returned for an unprecedented third term. Elections to the London Assembly saw the 25 seats split between Labour (11, no change on 2021), the Conservatives (8, down 1 on 2021), Greens (3, no change), Liberal Democrats (2, no change) and Reform (1, plus 1). While the Conservatives suffered a net loss of just one seat, several constituency seats they previously held were won by Labour and the Liberal Democrats. While the Assembly has now entered a pre-election period ahead of July's General Election, the Team will engage with new and returning members of the Assembly on matters of interest to the Corporation.

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