

Committee(s): Communications and Corporate Affairs (Policy & Resources) Committee – For information	Dated: 28/11/2024
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 Information
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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 1 July 2024.

Recommendation(s)

Members are recommended to note the report.

Main Report

Legislative Programme Update

1. The first King’s Speech of Sir Keir Starmer’s Labour government took place on 17 July. It set out a programme of 39 Bills for the coming year. At the time of writing, 22 Government Bills are currently active before either House of Parliament, with two having made the statute book already (namely, the **Budget Responsibility Act** and the standard Act to authorise government spending).
2. Headline measures brought forward so far include a Bill to reform employment rights (**Employment Rights Bill**), to change the law regarding rented homes (**Renters’ Rights Bill**) and renationalise the railways (**Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Bill**). Another considerable measure is the **Data (Use and Access) Bill** which will reform data protection rules as well as provide a framework for the introduction of digital verification services. These are supplemented by smaller measures, a number of which suggested by the Law Commission, which are of particular interest to financial and professional services firms such as the **Bank Resolution (Recapitalisation) Bill**, **Arbitration Bill** and **Property (Digital Assets) Bill**.

3. A number of Bills announced in the Speech reflect measures found in Bills that fell at the end of the last Parliament – these include the **Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill**, the **Renters’ Rights Bill**, the **Tobacco and Vapes Bill**, the **Leasehold and Commonhold Reform Bill**, the **Football Governance Bill**, and the **Holocaust Memorial Bill**.
4. While the legislative programme set out at the King’s Speech was much fuller than that introduced by the last King’s Speech of the previous government, some expected items were absent – the Speech did not include a Bill on AI regulation nor one to introduce votes for 16-year-olds.
5. Bills of particular interest to the Corporation that have been introduced so far include:
6. **Arbitration Bill** – A Law Commission Bill, the Bill would amend the Arbitration Act 1996, the principal legislation governing arbitrations in England and Wales and in Northern Ireland. The changes provided for in the Bill would implement recommendations from the Law Commission following consultation with the sector. A very similar Bill of the same name was introduced in the previous session but fell at dissolution. The uncontroversial measure has passed through the House of Lords and awaits consideration in the Commons.
7. **Bank Resolution (Recapitalisation) Bill** – This Bill seeks to enhance the UK’s regime for managing bank failures, by allowing the Bank of England to recover the costs associated with recapitalising failing small banks through a levy on the banking sector. Currently in the House of Lords (its first House), the Government suffered a defeat on the Bill from an opposition amendment which sought to set out on the face of the Bill that the regime cannot be used for larger banks. The Office is liaising with Innovation and Growth, as well as sector stakeholders including UK Finance regarding the Bill.
8. **Budget Responsibility Act** – The Act implements Labour’s commitment to introduce a law ensuring that ‘fiscally significant’ announcements are subject to an independent assessment by the Office for Budget Responsibility.
9. **Data (Use and Access) Bill** – This Bill implements a range of changes to data rules, with provisions including:
 - paving the way for the ‘smart data’ model to be used in more sectors
 - establishing a trust framework for digital verification services
 - placing the national underground asset register on a statutory footing
 - enabling births and deaths to be registered electronically
 - applying information standards to IT services within health and social care to make patients’ data more easily transferrable across the NHS
 - removing the requirement for police to log a justification each time they access someone’s personal data

The Office is liaising with relevant colleagues regarding any direct implications for the Corporation, however from a wider policy perspective its provisions relating to smart data and digital verification services are of particular interest. The adoption of digital verification was a recommendation of the *Vision for Economic Growth* report. The Bill is subject to a meeting of the International Regulatory Strategy

Group Data Committee meeting in November, which a member of the Office will join to inform engagement on the Bill. It awaits Second Reading in the Lords, its first House.

10. **Employment Rights Bill** – The Bill covers a wide range of areas including reforms to rules regarding zero hours contracts, flexible working, statutory sick pay, family leave, protection from harassment, unfair dismissal, “fire and rehire” practices and trade unions. The Office is liaising with relevant colleagues in service departments regarding direct implications of the Bill on the Corporation. It awaits Committee stage in the Commons, its first House.
11. **Property (Digital Assets etc) Bill** – A Law Commission Bill, the measure aims to clarify that assets such as crypto-tokens, crypto-currency and non-fungible tokens could be capable of attracting property rights. Containing only one substantive clause, the legislation hopes to provide more clarity in cases involving digital assets, including settlements, divorces, or disputed ownership. It awaits Committee stage in the Lords, its first House.
12. **Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill** - Known as ‘Martyr’s Law’ in recognition of the campaign led by the mother of one of the victims of the Manchester Arena bombings, it would require those responsible for publicly accessible venues to take steps to reduce the threat to the public from terrorist attack. The measure had previously been introduced in the last parliament but fell at the general election. The Bill introduced in this session has a number of differences to its predecessor. The greatest change is the increase in the capacity threshold for venues within scope of the Bill from 100 to 200. Corporation-managed venues remain in scope of the Bill. The Security Industry Authority will also be made responsible for enforcing venues’ legal requirements under the Bill.
13. Other measures brought forward, which will all be assessed for direct and indirect implications for the Corporation, include **Armed Forces Commissioner Bill, Renters’ Rights Bill, Great British Energy Bill, Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (Transfer of Functions) Bill, Product Regulation and Metrology Bill, Tobacco and Vapes Bill, and Water (Special Measures) Bill**, among others.
14. Excerpts from the Public Policy Bulletin issued alongside the King’s Speech regarding measures not yet brought forward are attached as an appendix.

City Corporation Private Legislation

15. An oral update on Private Legislation will be given in private or confidential session.

Forward Look and Engagement Update

16. The Corporation-administered APPG for Financial Markets and Services has been reconstituted following the general election, and will hold its first event shortly. The APPG is an informal, cross-party interest and educational group. First established in March 2003, for over 20 years it has provided MPs and peers with a unique forum for briefings and constructive debate on issues relating to the wholesale financial sector.

17. David Pinto-Duschinsky MP (Lab, Hendon) was elected as group chair, with Lauren Edwards MP (Lab, Rochester and Strood), Lord Sharpe of Epsom (Con) and Viscount Trenchard (Con) elected to serve as officers. The Secretariat is provided by the APPG's Industry Advisory Group, made up of traders and wholesale market associations, and has been administered by the City Corporation (through the Remembrancer's office) since January 2024.
18. A Public Policy Bulletin was issued to members and officers following the Autumn Budget 2024. The Office supported colleagues from Corporate Affairs, Communications and Innovation and Growth in reviewing measures in the Budget and communications issued in response. A 'lunch and learn' for officers across the Corporation was also held in the week following the Budget.
19. Members of the Parliamentary Team attending the Liberal Democrat, Labour and Conservative Party conferences, providing coverage of conference fringe events, as well as supporting colleagues in Corporate Affairs with the delivery of engagements at Conservative Party conference.
20. The City Corporation collaboration with the parliamentary charity, Industry and Parliament Trust, offers an opportunity to raise issues of City interest in a parliamentary setting. Recent events have included a meeting on the value of legal services to the UK economy, attended by a former Lord Chief Justice, chair of the House of Lords committee on secondary legislation, president of the Law Society, and 7 further Members. Catherine McGuinness spoke at the meeting. The Lord Mayor's first parliamentary opportunity of his term took place on 19 November, when he spoke about the importance of financial services. Guests included shadow Trade Secretary, shadow City Minister and a further 9 Members.
21. In liaison with colleagues in Corporate Affairs and the Police Authority team, an engagement plan promoting the role of the City of London Police as national lead force for fraud is being developed. This is supported with ongoing engagements in this space, including facilitating meetings between the Police Authority Board Chair and Luke Charters MP, as well as City of London Police representatives appearing on a panel (chaired by Rachel Blake MP) with the APPG for Anti-Corruption and Responsible Tax.
22. The Office delivered the delayed Parliamentary Terrace Reception. The event was due to take place in the summer however was postponed due to the general election. The event featured speeches from the Policy Chairman and City's MP Rachel Blake. The booking of the Parliamentary Terrace was kindly sponsored by former Lord Mayor, Lord Mountevans. The event provided an opportunity for informal networking with parliamentarians and business representatives.
23. Peers were briefed ahead of a debate on the climate agenda's impact on jobs, growth and prosperity. The briefing focused on the Corporation's green finance work, in particular the recently published Transition Finance Market Review report.
24. **The London Port Health Authority Order 2024** - This Order, which was drafted by the Remembrancer's team, has finally become law and came into force on 7th November 2024, having been made on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. The Order defines the regulatory boundary for the Corporation as Port Health Authority and updates the legislation that is applicable to the Corporation as the London Port Health Authority, the last Order having been made in 1965 (with some amendments made to it in the 1980s and 1990s).

25. In February this year, the Policy and Resources Committee considered a report proposing an uplift to spending limits for candidates at City elections, recognising the increases made for elections elsewhere in the country and the significant changes in the value of money since the last uplift for City elections in 2005. Following the Committee's approval, the Office has led work with HM Government to progress this and a Statutory Instrument was laid on 13th November 2024, the **Representation of the People (Variation of Limits of Candidates' Election Expenses) (City of London) Order 2024**. It is expected that, subject to Parliamentary process, it will come into force on Wednesday 4 December, in time for the City-wide Common Council elections in March. In summary, the change will see an uprate from £266 to £460 as the basic limit for expenses, and an increase from 5.2p per elector up to 9p per elector (i.e., an increase of 74.4%).

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