

Committee(s): Communications and Corporate Affairs (Policy & Resources) Sub Committee – For information	Dated: 05/02/2025
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
Report author: Rifah Isa, Office of the City Remembrancer	

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 28 November 2024.

Recommendation(s)

Members are recommended to note the report.

Main Report

Legislative Programme Update

1. Since the King’s Speech on 17 July 2024, Sir Keir Starmer’s government has advanced a robust legislative agenda comprising 39 Bills for the current parliamentary session. As of now, 22 Government Bills are active in Parliament, with six having reached Royal Assent, including the Budget Responsibility Act and the Employment Rights Act.
2. Key measures introduced include the Great British Energy Bill, which paves the way for a publicly owned energy company, and the Renters’ Rights Bill, which implements enhanced tenant protections. The Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Bill continues to make its way through the legislative process and remains a focus of the government’s efforts to renationalise the railways.

3. Recent activity has also seen movement on measures of interest to financial and professional services firms, including the Property (Digital Assets etc) Bill and the Arbitration Bill, both progressing through their respective Houses.
4. The **City of London (Markets) Bill** seeks to repeal existing legislation relating to Billingsgate Market and the London Central Markets, thus removing the City's legal involvement in those markets. The Bill is scheduled for its First Reading in the House of Commons on 22 January 2025.
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. The uncontroversial measure has passed through the House of Lords and awaits a second reading 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. The Bill has successfully passed through the House of Lords and is now awaiting its Second Reading in the House of Commons. The Office is liaising with Innovation and Growth, as well as sector stakeholders including UK Finance regarding the Bill.
8. **Data (Use and Access) Bill** – The Bill continues to advance through the Lords, and awaits Report Stage. 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.

9. **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 Report stage in the Commons, its first House.

10. **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. The Bill, arising from Law Commission recommendations, contains 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.
11. **Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill** - Known as ‘Martyn’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 Bill 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, while there are also implications for the Corporation as a licensing authority. The Security Industry Authority will also be made responsible for enforcing venues’ legal requirements under the Bill. The Bill has successfully passed through the House of Commons and is now awaiting its Committee stage in the House of Lords.
12. Several Bills of interest are progressing, including the **Product Regulation and Metrology Bill, Armed Forces Commissioner Bill, Tobacco and Vapes Bill** and **Water (Special Measures) Bill**. Engagement with relevant committees and trade associations continues to ensure the Corporation remains informed of legislative developments.

Forward Look and Engagement Update

13. The APPG for Financial Markets and Services held its first event on 16th January on the topic of ‘Unlocking long-term growth in the financial and professional services sectors.’ The group is chaired by David Pinto-Duschinsky MP (Lab, Hendon), with Lauren Edwards MP (Lab, Rochester and Strood), Lord Sharpe of Epsom (Con) and Viscount Trenchard (Con) as officers. The Secretariat is provided by the APPG’s Industry Advisory Group, made up of traders and wholesale market associations, and is administered by the City Corporation (through the Remembrancer’s office). The next session is due to take place on 6th February on the theme of “Tackling fraud and economic crime.”
14. 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 parliamentarians. 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 the shadow Trade Secretary, the shadow City Minister and a further 9 parliamentarians.

15. 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 officers appearing on a panel (chaired by Rachel Blake MP) with the APPG for Anti-Corruption and Responsible Tax.
16. Peers were briefed ahead of a debate on the role of nature conservation in tackling climate change. The briefing focused on the Corporation's green finance work, in particular a City Corporation/Green Finance Institute/PwC report on London's role as a centre for nature finance.

Rif'ah Isa

E: rifah.isa@cityoflondon.gov.uk

- Appendix 1 - Excerpts from the Public Policy Bulletin issued alongside the King's Speech 2024 relating to Bills not yet brought forward.

New Bills

New Homes (Solar Generation) Bill [HC – PMB]

A Private Members' Ballot Bill, this measure seeks to mandate the installation of solar photovoltaic systems on all new homes. The Bill establishes minimum standards for compliance with this requirement, aiming to promote renewable energy adoption and reduce carbon emissions in the housing sector. It aligns with broader government and parliamentary efforts to advance sustainability and tackle climate change through innovation in building regulations. The Bill is currently progressing in the House of Commons.

Employment Rights Bill [HC – Government Bill]

This Government Bill introduces significant reforms to employment law, covering a wide range of areas. It amends redundancy procedures and addresses the treatment of workers involved in public contract service delivery. The Bill establishes two new bodies: the School Support Staff Negotiating Body and the Adult Social Care Negotiating Body, to improve pay and conditions in these sectors. Additional provisions focus on promoting equality duties for employers, updating rules around trade unions and industrial action, and enhancing the powers of the Certification Officer. The Bill also strengthens enforcement of labour market legislation. Currently progressing in the House of Commons, it reflects the government's focus on improving workplace rights and protections.

Firearms (3D Printing) Bill [HC – PMB]

A Private Members' Bill, this measure seeks to address the emerging risks associated with 3D-printed firearms. It proposes creating new offences, including the possession of blueprints for the 3D printing of firearms and the possession of firearm parts produced through 3D printing. The Bill aims to enhance public safety by tackling gaps in current firearms legislation and addressing technological developments that facilitate the unregulated production of weapons. Introduced in the Commons, the Bill reflects increasing concern over the intersection of technology and firearms regulation. It awaits its Second Reading.

Rivers, Streams and Lakes (Protected Status) Bill

A Private Members' Bill, the measure seeks to establish a framework for designating rivers, streams, and lakes as protected sites. It sets out criteria that must be met for such designation, including standards for water quality, safety, and environmental management. The Bill also requires enhanced provision of information about these sites. By introducing minimum standards, the Bill aims to improve environmental stewardship and ensure the sustainable management of the UK's freshwater resources. Currently at its presentation stage in the Commons, the measure reflects growing parliamentary interest in tackling water pollution and promoting biodiversity.

National Wealth Fund Bill [HM Treasury]

The Bill will put the much-trailed National Wealth Fund, which will make investments nationwide with the aim of delivering growth and a greener economy, on a statutory

footing. The UK Infrastructure Bank and the British Business Bank will be aligned under the National Wealth Fund in order to simplify the support landscape for business and investors.

Pension Schemes Bill [Department for Work and Pensions]

The Bill aims to help those saving in private-sector pension schemes to get better outcomes from their pension assets and support the Government's mission to deliver growth. Its measures will facilitate the consolidation of Defined Contribution individual deferred small pension pots, establish a Value for Money framework for pension schemes, place duties on trustees of occupational pension schemes to offer a retirement income solution or range of solutions, including default investment options, to their members, consolidate the Defined Benefit market through commercial Superfunds, reaffirm the Pensions Ombudsman as a competent court so that pension schemes no longer need to apply to the courts to enforce its decisions in relation to the recovery of overpayments, and amend the Special Rules for End of Life (Pension Protection Fund and Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS)) extending the definition of 'terminal illness', allowing eligible members within the Pension Protection Fund and the Financial Assistance Scheme to receive a lump sum payment at an earlier stage.

Planning and Infrastructure Bill [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government]

The Bill will reform the planning system to enable the delivery of more housing and infrastructure, by making changes to the planning system at a local level, modernising planning committees and increasing local planning authorities' capacity to deliver an improved service. Measures will include the simplification of the consenting process for major infrastructure projects, reforming compulsory purchase compensation rules, and using development to fund nature recovery.

English Devolution Bill [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government]

The Bill is designed to establish a standardised framework for devolution in England, including powers over strategic planning, transport, skills and employment support. Local leaders will be empowered to produce Local Growth Plans and enabled to formally request additional powers, with the Government required to consider the request. A simpler process for creating new Combined and Combined County Authorities will be established, while local communities will be empowered with a 'right to buy' community assets, such as empty shops, pubs and community spaces.

Crime and Policing Bill [Home Office]

The Bill focuses on community policing and delivering higher policing standards by expanding the powers of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services to intervene in failing police forces and introducing higher mandatory national vetting standards. The Bill will 'crackdown on anti-social behaviour' through new Respect Orders, fast-tracked Public Spaces Protection Orders and new powers to tackle anti-social use of off-road bikes. It will create a new specific offence of assaulting a shopworker and tackle low level shoplifting. It will strengthen the law to tackle exploitation of children for criminal purposes and provide specialist responses to violence against women and girls.

Victims, Courts and Public Protection Bill [Ministry of Justice]

This Bill aims to deliver on the Government's promise "to put the needs of victims first." Its measures will seek to ensure that victims of crime and antisocial behaviour get the support they need, strengthen the powers of the Victims' Commissioner, require offenders to attend their sentencing hearings, reduce delays in the courts system by allowing Associate Prosecutors to work on appropriate cases, and give the public increased protections from sex offenders.

Children's Wellbeing Bill [Department for Education]

The Children's Wellbeing Bill aims to 'remove barriers to opportunity for children and families' by strengthening multi-agency child protection and safeguarding arrangements, requiring free breakfast clubs in every primary school and limiting the costs of school uniforms and kits. The Bill will bring in a number of new duties including on local authorities to have and maintain a Children Not in School register and a requirement for all schools to cooperate with the local authority on school admissions, SEND inclusion and place planning. Following a review of curriculum and assessment, all schools – including academies - will be required to teach the national curriculum and multi-academy trusts will be brought into the inspection system, as had also been proposed by the last government.

Hillsborough Law [Cabinet Office]

The Bill will place a legal duty of candour on public servants and authorities and address the 'unacceptable defensive culture' in the public sector, by improving transparency and accountability, improve assistance for bereaved persons and core participants at inquests and public inquiries and provide legal aid for victims of disasters or state-related deaths.

Cyber Security and Resilience Bill [Department for Science, Innovation and Technology]

The Bill will update the existing UK regulations regarding cyber security, which reflect laws inherited from the EU. The Bill will update the regulatory framework to better protect digital services by expanding the remit of the regulations, put regulators on a stronger footing to ensure cyber safety measures are being implemented, and mandating increased incident reporting to give government better data on cyber attacks.

Draft Bills

Draft Audit Reform and Corporate Governance Bill [Department for Business and Trade]

The draft Audit Reform Bill will seek to strengthen audit and corporate governance by requiring greater transparency from large companies, enforced by a revamped regulator. The Bill aims to support long-term investment in UK companies, reduce the harm that financial reporting errors can do and help ensure quality audit for all businesses that need it. The Bill will replace the Financial Reporting Council with the Audit, Reporting and Governance Authority, with a wider remit, relaxed rules for smaller Public Interest Entities, powers to investigate and sanction company directors in relation to financial reporting and audit responsibilities, and a regime to oversee the audit market.

Draft Leasehold and Commonhold Reform Bill [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government]

The draft Bill aims to enact the Law Commission recommendations to bolster leaseholders' fundamental rights to extend their lease and buy their freehold (enfranchisement) and take over the freeholders building management functions (Right to Manage). It will seek to modernise the legal framework for commonhold and restrict the sale of new leasehold flats. It will also seek to tackling ground rents for existing leaseholders, so they no longer face unregulated and unaffordable costs.

Draft Equality (Race and Disability) Bill [Government Equalities Office]

The draft Bill aims to deliver on the Government's manifesto commitment to enshrine in law the full right to equal pay for ethnic minority and disabled people, and to introduce mandatory ethnicity and disability pay reporting.