

COMMUNICATIONS AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS 2025/26 BUSINESS PLAN

About us: Our purpose, aims and impacts

Summarise the purpose of the department, why it does what it does, who for and what it achieves. Reference stakeholders, customers, partners as applicable. Describe impacts, outcomes and achievements in the past year.

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.

It is important to understand the context within which this Business Plan has been developed. Corporate Communications and External Affairs have interim reporting arrangements into the Chief Strategy Officer and the Remembrancer respectively and the recruitment of a new Executive Director is currently underway.

During the last year, the division has delivered the following:

- Created and delivering first cross-City Corporation comprehensive Transformation Communications and Engagement Plan to support culture change, Corporate Plan, and People Strategy implementation.
- Devised and delivered larger scale, ambitious, party conference programme, working with colleagues across the organisation particularly in REM and I&G, aligned to economic growth and reputation objectives.
- Negotiated and delivered key strategic partnerships such as with Fabian's Society, Onward, CityAM, amongst others, increasing City of London Corporation brand and reputation.
- Grew the City Belonging Project to over 3,500 signups – including launching eight City Belonging Networks serving the needs of specific communities and running a range of new events.
- Achieved the highest voter registration for City elections in a decade, the highest ever under the current legal framework.
- Introduced unified email and print newsletters for City residents, delivered four City Question Time-style events and created a residents' website hub.
- Appointed four apprentices – the first time these roles have existed in the division – creating new opportunities for people to begin their communications and external affairs careers.
- Commenced comprehensive strategic branding review



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- Media Monitoring contracts reviewed, and a new integrated planning, insight and evaluation system implemented.
- Comprehensive stakeholder review concluded across the City Corporation, its institutions and partners.
- Expanded the Filming team, which is responsible for managing all TV, film and commercial filming across the City of London Corporation's locations. This will increase income for the City Corporation and allow for active promotion and marketing of the work of the film team.
- Launched a corporate Instagram account and continued to increase followers and engagement across all social media platforms.
- Integrated, strategic communications planning hub launched, cross City Corporation horizon-scanning, insight capability and new long-term planning products in development.

Our key objectives and priority workstreams and major projects

Provide an overview of key objectives for FY2025/26. Include cross-cutting themes e.g. EEDI, transformation, brilliant basics, collaboration, statutory duties, risk, key strategies, and major projects.

The key objective for 25-26 is to continue to collaborate and provide communications and external affairs support and services across the City of London Corporation, as well as transition successfully to a new Executive Director. Departments include, but are not limited to DCCS, City Surveyor's and Environment, Destination City, Culture and Innovation and Growth

2025-26 represents a period of significant change for this function – broadening the scope of our offer to the organisation and creating new enabling functions to deliver brilliant basics in communications and external affairs to the organisation that drive efficiencies and outcomes.

Enhancing the reputation of the organisation through strategic partnerships and political engagement

- Ongoing political engagement and delivery of political party conference activity, working with key teams across City Corporation.
- Negotiating and scoping strategic opportunities to maximise efforts to press forward **adoption and implementation of policies** that align with the City Corporation's goals, as well as opportunities to communicate key messages.

Supporting changing needs and contexts

- Working to support key projects with fast-changing needs, allowing the organisation to operate confidently and at pace, including Markets, Salisbury Square and more.
- Supporting Members and colleagues through the communications challenges of a changing geopolitical, economic and legal environment.

Transforming our digital communications estate

- Undertaking the first ever review of our external digital estate (websites/social media); putting together a plan to deliver an offering that reflects varied needs, reduces risk and duplication and enhances reputation.
- Working with DITS to ensure the Data Lighthouse Corporate CRM project meets communications, engagement and insight needs across departments.

Delivering for our communities



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- Continuing to grow our community engagement footprint, as a key function allowing departments, institutions, officers and members to better reach City workers and residents to fulfil Corporate Plan and Transformation objectives and statutory duties.
- Deploying relationships and networks built through the City Belonging Project and expertise in resident engagement to support key projects: e.g. in Housing, Public Health, the City Police, etc.

Enhancing marketing, campaigns and brand

- In order to support key Corporate Plan, Transformation and Policy Priority objectives – including Destination City, Sponsorship and Commercialisation and the CBIU – creating central marketing and campaigns resource, aligning our corporate brands through the Strategic Branding Review and bringing together a marketing community of practice across the organisation.

Further developing Internal and Transformation Communications

- Continuing to work with HR to further develop internal and transformation communications to support work including Ambition 25 and the Transformation Programme.

Developing our colleagues

- Supporting members of the team in learning new skills in the communications and external engagement space, including digital production, reducing internal silos and supporting career development.



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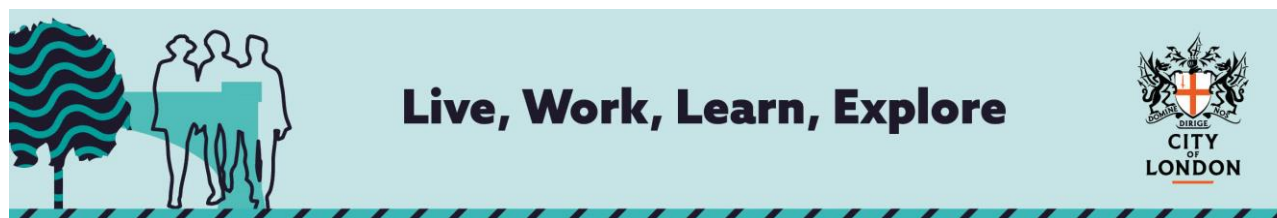
Priority workstream	Funding allocation %	People resource %	Corporate Plan 2024-2029 Outcomes	Outcome focused Performance measures	Outcomes / Impacts
<i>Add the workstream name and list the key 2025/26 deliverables. Note activities and milestones and give the date these will be achieved. Note if these have a different duration to the FY (shorter or longer).</i>	<i>Estimate the % (of the total 100%) budget that will be allocated¹</i>	<i>Estimate the % (of the total workforce) that will work on this²</i>	<i>List all the CP outcomes this workstream contributes to</i>	<i>CP 2024-2029 Performance Measures should be shown in bold</i>	<i>State what will be different</i>
Political engagement	20%	20%	All	Stakeholder Engagement: Track the number and quality of engagements with key stakeholders, including government officials and politicians. Policy Adoption and Implementation: Measure the number of policies adopted and implemented as a result of advocacy efforts. [with Media colleagues] Monitor the amount and sentiment of media coverage related to	Successful political engagement can lead to the adoption and implementation of policies that align with the City Corporation's goals. This includes influencing key legislative initiatives and strategic interests. Enhanced engagement with key stakeholders, including government officials, policymakers, and community leaders, leading to stronger

¹ Does not total 100% because some departmental budget is allocated to 'BAU' activities and/or is unprogrammed for emerging or unexpected activities that arise in-year.

² Unlikely to total 100% or more because some people resource is allocated to 'BAU' activities and it could indicate a reliance on additional working time to deliver activities.

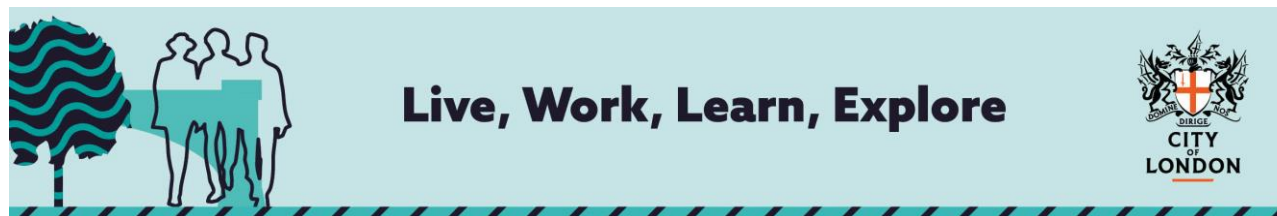
				<p>political engagement activities.</p> <p>Event Participation: Track attendance and participation rates at political engagement events and activities.</p>	<p>relationships and more effective advocacy.</p> <p>Formation of strategic partnerships and collaborations that facilitate senior-level political engagement and amplify the organisation's influence</p>
Strategic branding review implementation	10%	10%	All	<p>Development of a brand strategy, architecture and guidelines that cover the strategic branding review recommendations and place based/visitor brands.</p> <p>Alignment of recommendations from the review of the Destination/Visitor branding review.</p> <p>In collaboration with the Culture/DC</p>	<p>For the first time, the City Corporation will have a clear brand strategy and guidelines that promotes, protects and enhances the organisation's reputation and enables effective communications and marketing across our target audiences.</p>

				teams, delivery and implementation of a new place-based B to C brand.	
Sports strategy delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing support for future investment and oversight of sport and leisure facilities in the Square Mile - Identify opportunities to make public spaces more active in the City - Lead on events and engagement that celebrate the positive impact of sport locally, nationally and globally - Bring new and exciting sport participation and spectator events to the Square Mile that showcase the City as a destination for sport - Deliver community focused sport events and activations aimed at local residents, workers and disadvantaged groups 	5%	5%	Diverse engaged communities Vibrant Thriving destination	Increased usage of sport facilities owned or managed by the City Corporation Increased awareness of the City Corporation's support for sport and the wide benefits it provides Increased participation in sport events and activations in the Square Mile	Healthier communities, increased footfall in the Square Mile, enhanced exposure for value of the City Corporation's role in sport
Worker and resident engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growth and development of City Belonging Project (from 3,000+ signups) as flagship worker engagement programme, including sustainability of City Belonging Networks beyond Alastair King mayoralty. 	10%	10%	Diverse engaged communities Vibrant Thriving destination Providing Excellent Services	Increase engagement with workers and resident communities (Email list growth) Voters registered on the 2026/27 Ward List	Deeper engagement with residents, workers and businesses, unlocking partnership and supporting initiatives across departments.



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential Reset delivery, including City Question Time and broader events programme, residents offer development and consultations hub. - Engagement relating to upcoming Aldermanic elections and the 2025 canvass. - Supporting all departments and institutions with community engagement and partnerships. 				City Belonging Networks with active steering groups.	
Internal transformation communications and engagement	10%	10%	All	<p>Continued delivery and leadership of the communications and engagement activity to support the Ambition 25 programme.</p> <p>Lead communications activity across the Corporation to support the implementation of Programme Sapphire.</p> <p>Develop and lead communications and engagement plan to</p>	Continued focus on growing staff engagement and involvement supports the organisation to deliver on its outcomes in the corporate plan and the priorities in the People Strategy.



				<p>support the successful delivery of the Values and Behaviors programme.</p> <p>Deliver communications support and resources to colleagues on Future Ambition 18.</p> <p>Maximise the use of a range of channels to ensure all colleagues have the opportunity to engage and understand key activities underway across the CoLC.</p>	
<p>Stabilising the Communications function, supporting staff, managing the interim arrangements and preparing for the new Executive Director</p>	10%	10%	All	<p>Continue to provide ongoing development for team.</p> <p>Collaboration and cross organisational working on key programmes, including:</p>	<p>Reliable, effective and impactful communications and external affairs activity to support deliverable of major external and internal City Corporation programmes.</p>

				Destination City Barbican Renewal Markets CBIU Culture Strategy Ambition 25 Prog Sapphire Values and Behaviours Lord Mayor's Show	Continuous development of the team as a priority. Function can continue to evolve and improve before and after the arrival of a new Executive Director.
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To note: The remaining 40% of the Corporate Communications and External Affairs budget is focused on BAU activities and resourcing.

Our timeline planner of priority workstream activities and milestones

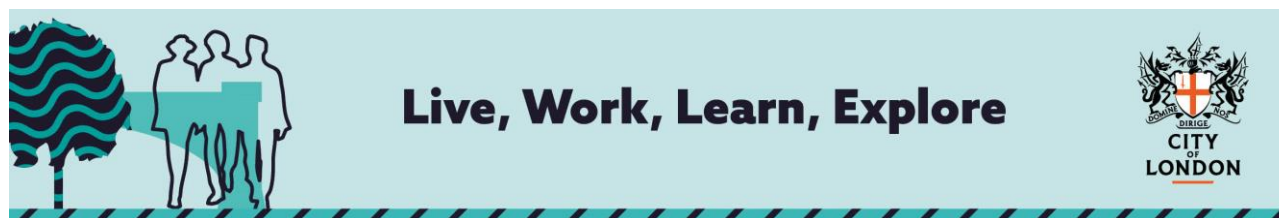
													Key	
													<div></div>	Duration of activity
														Milestone
Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4			Beyond 2025/26		
Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	2026/ 2027	2027/ 2028	
Political engagement	<div>Ongoing political engagement (all year)</div> <div>Advocacy on various policy report launches</div> <div>FPS Dinner</div> <div>Party Conferences</div> <div>HMG Budget Submission</div>													



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Strategic branding review implementation	<div> <div>Updated branding proposals to P and R</div> <div>Branding proposals to CoCo</div> <div>Implementation and roll out (all year)</div> </div>													
Sports strategy delivery	<div> <div>Summer of Sport</div> <div>Women's Euros</div> <div>MH Sport Event</div> </div>													
Worker and resident engagement	<div> <div>15 City Belonging Networks by end King mayoralty</div> <div>2026/27 Ward List published</div> <div>Corporate CRM to enable resident/ worker engagement</div> </div>													
Internal transformation communications and engagement	<div> <div>A25 QA and supporting activity</div> <div>Values and Behaviors launch</div> <div>Prog Sapphire system launch</div> </div>													
Stabilising the Communications function, supporting staff, managing the interim arrangements and preparing for the new ED.	<div> <div>Advert out for new ED</div> <div>TBC ED Appointed</div> <div>Team Away Day</div> <div>Ongoing L&D and upskilling (all year)</div> <div>Team Away Day</div> </div>													

*Milestones are being identified



Enablers

People

See the [HR Dashboard Draft - Power BI](#) for data for your department. State your workforce numbers and demographics State your staff survey score and key actions in your departmental actions plan.

Headcount – 41
Male - 58.8%
Female – 41.2%
White – 65.63%
Black – 10.16%
Asian – 7.03%
Prefer not to say – 3.13%
Did not respond – 11.72%
Mixed – 2.34%

Staff Survey

100% response rate

Highest score – My line manager treats me fairly and with respect 91% agree

Lowest score – I would support a potential move to 4 days a week 88% disagree

Staff Survey action plan

- Improving communication and reinforcing the ‘one team’ approach.
- Improving our Learning & Development offer and career opportunities
- Improve relationships with key Members

Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

List your top 3 priorities in your EEDI action plan / Let's Talk About Racism actions / Tackling Racism taskforce recommendations (as applicable). Specific examples of how you contribute to delivering the COLC Equality Objectives – internally and externally?

Transforming external EEDI engagement through City Belonging Project – fulfilling Corporate Plan “Diverse Engaged Communities” objectives and positioning the City Corporation as a leader in this space, able to better represent and serve our citizens. Now at 3,700 people and growing 20% per quarter – plan to markedly scale growth.

Providing opportunities for City Corporation staff networks and individuals to engage with the wider Square Mile through City Belonging Networks (8 at point of writing and growing). Supporting team members who are actively involved in staff network leadership (e.g. Yassar Abbas, Faith Network Co-Chair).

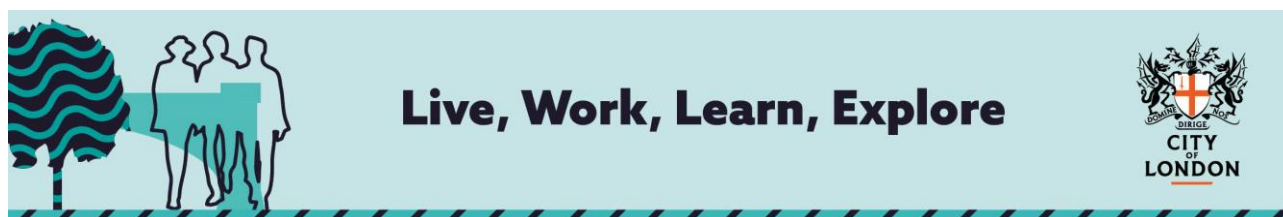
Ensuring that diverse voices and stories are showcased across our communications and engagement work, showing the City and City Corporation as open and inclusive and challenging perceptions. Creating new opportunities for such work through an overhaul of our digital communications, brand and marketing functions.

Providing strategic communications and media support across the organisation, amid a changing political and legislative landscape that impacts diverse communities and the delivery of EEDI objectives.

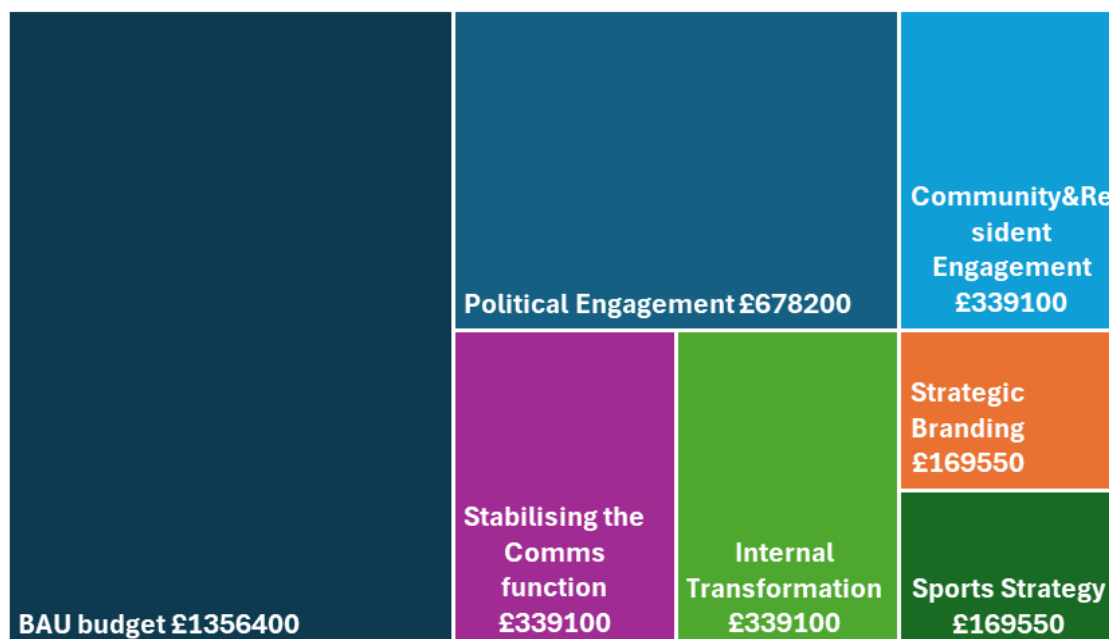
Finance

Communication and Corporate Affairs budget allocation is £3,391M, funded from local and central budget

Estimated forecast spend in respect of the priority workstreams



Communications and Corporate Affairs Estimated Budget Allocation to workstreams



Priorities and plans being considered in the medium term

What Medium Term action is required? (e.g. New legislation, services, projects, automation)	When? 2026/27	When? 2027/28	Is this Funded or Unfunded?
Digital Comms Transformation [ie Website redevelopment; maintenance support for existing digital platforms; content creation; digital campaigns]	✓		Unfunded
City Belonging Project Stage 2 growth, including personnel to support community engagement, unlocking partnership opportunities across the Square Mile, supported by new Corporate CRM	✓		Unfunded

Risks

Communications and Corporate Affairs team are not the owners of any Corporate risks. Some risks owned by other divisions are reviewed on regular basis, stated below.

Risk Title	Score

Health & Safety

List up to three priorities for 2025-26

Communications and Corporate Affairs contribute to the delivery of the Health and Safety Priorities noted in the Town Clerk Departmental Health and Safety Plan.

- Reduce Risks of staff stress
- DSE Assessments up to date
- Model Safety Behaviour



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CR10 – Adverse Political Developments	Current: 8 – target 4	
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Operational Property

All operational properties have been assessed as utilised, part utilised, or not utilised, and confirmation has been provided to the City Surveyor's Department.

Yes (included in the Town Clerk's Department return)

