

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Communications and Corporate Affairs Sub-Committee – For Decision Policy and Resources Committee –For Decision	Dated: 08/10/2025 16/10/2025
Subject: Ward Communications	Public report: For Decision
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes 	Diverse Engaged Communities
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
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:	Dionne Corradine, Chief Strategy Officer
Report author:	Mark Gettleson, Interim Director of Campaigns and Engagement

Summary

This report provides an update Ward communications to workers and residents following recent resolutions of the Bishopsgate and Dowgate wardmotes, and the conclusion of the two-year suspension period of the previous Ward Newsletters.

It highlights the success of the City Belonging Project, which the ward newsletter suspension has part-funded. The report sets out a cost-effective proposal for future ward communications that strengthens engagement with both residents and workers, avoids duplication, and ensures value for money.

Recommendations

Members of the Communications and Corporate Affairs Sub-Committee are asked to:

- Note the report and the work undertaken since February 2023 to enhance our communications with City residents and workers, including the City Living Newsletter and City Belonging Project – and the ongoing development of the central corporate Dynamics 365 CRM.
- Endorse the reintroduction of the Ward Newsletters as a Ward Annual Report, outside of election years, enclosed with the wardmote letter.

Members of the Policy and Resources Committee are asked to approve the reintroduction of the Ward Newsletters as a Ward Annual Report as above.

Main Report

Background

1. Prior to February 2023, two Ward Newsletters – with 50% of the content localised by ward – were produced and posted by the Communications division each year and posted to those on the Ward List, with content submitted by ward members. While the budget this activity was £23,000, the cost in 2022 was £40,000.
2. In February 2023, Communications and Corporate Affairs Sub Committee and Policy & Resources Committee and the agreed to suspend Ward Newsletters for a two-year period, redirecting funds to part-finance the City Belonging Project.
3. In July 2024, responding to resident and member feedback, the City Living Newsletter was introduced, going four times a year to all residential addresses in the Square Mile, irrespective of registration status – with most distributed without a stamp via the Royal Mail door-to-door service.
4. The two-year suspension period for Ward Newsletters has now concluded. Wardmote resolutions in Bishopsgate and Dowgate, and some Member feedback, have indicated a wish to reconsider the provision of ward communications.
5. Over these two years, the City Belonging Project has grown to over 5,000 signups across approximately 500 workplaces, contacted multiple times a month – and serves as a flagship community engagement initiative for the organisation.

Current Position

6. Communicating regularly with those we represent continues to present a challenge for our organisation. While our comparatively small resident community can be accessed in similar ways to those in other local authorities, contacting City workers at scale has proven a more significant long-term challenge, including the 97% of workers who are not on the Ward List.
7. Over the past two and a half years, the City Belonging Project has been working in collaboration with workplaces to better communicate with and involve their staff in the life of the Square Mile. More than 5,000 individuals have signed up via email across approximately 500 workplaces, with messages often cascaded more widely by recipients. The development of City Belonging Networks, supporting by the Lord Mayor and serving the needs of particular communities and interests, has increased this reach further.
8. DITS are working with the Campaigns and Community Engagement team, and others across the organisation, to develop a central organisational CRM – run off Dynamics 365 – that will enable us to grow these communications in a more scalable and targeted way, including the ability to communicate on a ward basis. A prototype is due to be launched in the coming months.
9. As outlined above, four City Living physical newsletters, with some localised content and updates from members, are being sent to be sent to all residents in the City each year. These are distributed via the Royal Mail door-to-door service.
10. The team has been requoted £23,900 for the previous Ward Newsletter model (£1.14 per edition), excluding design cost, the significant majority of which is postage cost. The Electoral Services team sends an annual Wardmote Letter to the entire Ward List: the cost of including a fully localised A3 ward annual report in this communication has been quoted as £1,617.85 (7.7p per edition) excluding

design. An A4 insert was trialled in 2024 with most wards choosing to submit content, and while election rules precluded repeating it in 2025, there is no such barrier for the next three years.

Proposals

11. Communications with City workers and residents should be regular and digital – and the organisation has developed growing products, such as through the City Belonging Project and our residential emails, to which members of our community can subscribe.
12. The work being undertaken by DITS to develop a central corporate CRM will be crucial to growing this reach in an effective and targeted manner, with the ability to communicate on a ward basis. Email addresses from across teams will be held centrally with users consenting to the communications they receive, including ward-based communications.
13. Physical communications can supplement this work, in particular for residents, where communications can be sent through letterboxes affordably via the Royal Mail door-to-door service and various teams have statutory responsibilities to communicate regularly. This report proposes to continue the City Living resident newsletter with members in residential wards continuing to provide content for local editions.
14. Working in collaboration with the Electoral Services team, we are able to affordably include an A3 Annual Report for each ward in the wardmote letter in March. This can be fully localised with content provided by ward deputies in collaboration with their colleagues and edited by the Communications team. It is proposed to make additional copies available to members for use throughout the year and avoids high-cost standalone postage.
15. The above may be subject to further revision as part of the forthcoming Communications Strategy and review of our external digital estate.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – This proposal enhances the organisation’s community engagement offer in a cost-effective way, effectively contributing to outcomes under Diverse Engaged Communities.

Financial implications – None

Resource implications – This report recommends a recalibration of existing budgets and contains no new budgetary asks. Members of the Campaigns and Engagement team within Communications will support the development of the proposed Ward Annual Report as part of business as usual activity.

Legal implications – None

Risk implications – None

Equalities implications – The report proposes enhanced communications with those on the Ward List, who represent a minority of those we represent and may in particular under-represent City workers who are ineligible for registration, including contractors, those working for organisations without a lease and non-Commonwealth citizens. However, the long-term vision of communicating with all City residents and workers irrespective of their

registration status, across digital and physical channels, will have a positive equalities impact.

Climate implications – The proposals in this paper are likely to lead to a small increase in the number of paper communications sent out by our organisation to our community

Security implications – None

Conclusion

16. The proposals in this report draw on the experience of our growing community engagement activities since February 2023, balancing the wish to communicate with those on the Ward List with the whole community we represent, while cost-effectively providing a mix of digital and offline channels and ward communications.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

[Worker Engagement: The City Belonging Project – Committee Report \(Communications and Corporate Affairs Sub-Committee 14/02/23 and Policy and Resources Committee 23/02/23\)](#)

Mark Gettleson

Interim Director of Campaigns and Engagement

E: mark.gettleson@cityoflondon.gov.uk