

Court of Common Council

Guildhall

Thursday 9th January 2025

The Rt Hon The Lord Mayor of London

Alderman Alastair King DL

Good afternoon, everyone.

Allow me to begin by wishing all Members a happy and healthy new year. I hope everyone had a fantastic Christmas break.

The festive season, of course, is a time of giving and hope.

And in that spirit, on 6th December - the day after we last met - the Salon at Mansion House was transformed into a ceilidh dance floor with a night of reeling, piping, and fundraising for our St Andrew's Day Ball - all in aid of the Lord Mayor's Appeal.

On 11th December, at an event hosted by Fidelity International, the second of our fifteen City Belonging Networks was launched, this one for the Muslim community, followed swiftly on 16th December by the launch of our third, for the Jewish community, at our Channukah reception here at Guildhall.

London is home to more diaspora groups than any other city in the world, and the aim of these City Belonging Networks is to celebrate the remarkable contribution each of those communities make to the Square Mile... building connections, expanding the pools of talent we rely upon, and helping to ensure our offering here at the City Corporation is as inclusive as possible.

Slightly further afield, last month saw the first regional visit of this mayoralty - to Northern Ireland, where I visited Derry-Londonderry and Belfast to meet with businesses, civic leaders, academics, and policymakers, with a particular focus on Northern Ireland's booming RegTech and sustainable finance sectors.

Of course, part of my role as Lord Mayor is to serve as a global ambassador for the United Kingdom's *entire* financial, professional, legal, and maritime services sectors, acting as cheerleader-in-chief regardless of where on these isles those services are rendered.

I look forward to making good on that promise during further regional visits to Scotland and Wales later this month.

In eleven days' time, the Policy Chairman and I will also be travelling to Davos for the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, where the theme this year is "Collaboration for the Intelligent Age."

Whether it be through the work of the City of London Police, the open spaces we manage or the family of schools we oversee, collaboration sits at the heart of everything we do here at the City Corporation.

That is a message I will be reiterating at tonight's annual London Government Dinner where we will be welcoming the Mayor of London, Sir Sadiq Khan, and the Chair of London Councils, Cllr Claire Holland, to Mansion House.

The dinner will celebrate two significant milestones: the 60th anniversary of the 32 London boroughs, and the 25th anniversary of the Greater London Authority.

Through your continued support, I know we can make 2025 an equally momentous year for the City Corporation and the residents and businesses each of us serve.

Thank you.