

TheCityUK

Activity update

February – May 2026



Work has continued at pace across our strategic priorities, with key activities and outcomes delivered, including successfully advocating for the inclusion of a Financial Services Bill in the King's Speech, deepening industry ties in key global markets such as the US, India, Switzerland and Singapore and strengthening engagement across parliament. We have also delivered a strong programme of events, bringing together members with senior policymakers and stakeholders, including at our successful International Conference.

Long term competitiveness

We delivered a successful advocacy campaign to ensure that a new Financial Services Bill was included in the King's Speech. As well as writing to HM Treasury (HMT), we engaged directly with Number 10 and the Office of the Leader of the House and also placed an opinion editorial in City AM. This Bill, alongside digital identity legislation, are key to implementing many of the recommendations from our 'No time to lose' report with PwC, and we will continue to engage through the legislative process to ensure both Bills align with our policy priorities and broader objectives.

There are several recommendations from the report that don't require primary legislation and these have been promoted to HMT for inclusion in the Chancellor's Mansion House speech. Following the appointment of Chris Woolard CBE of EY as the Digital Markets Champion, we are working with him, the City of London Corporation and other trade associations on a roadmap to be published alongside the Mansion House speech.

Regulatory and supervisory reform remains an area of focus and our recent senior member roundtable with the Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) Deputy CEO to discuss members' experiences of supervision was well-received. We continue to engage on practical actions the FCA can take to enhance firms' supervisory experience, including addressing concerns about a lack of proportionate and risk-based responses to potential breaches and introducing a consistent approach to expectation management and the provision of feedback on data requests.

Employment law continues to be an area of interest and concern across the industry. Most recently, we responded to a Department for Business and Trade (DBT) working paper on possible reform to the use of non-compete clauses in employment law, making clear the significant implications for UK competitiveness. We have also brought members together with senior DBT officials to discuss their views in detail and will continue to engage on this issue, stressing concerns about the lack of coherence across the policy and regulatory landscape that determines the UK's international attractiveness for investment, talent and growth. It is something we will continue to discuss with DBT, HMT and the FCA over the coming months.

We secured a commitment from HMT to launch a public consultation on the technical rules underpinning ISA reform. We have also been influencing the FCA as it develops its thinking on expanding consumer access to investments and contributed to the Investment Association's retail investment campaign, including work on risk warning standards. Alongside this, we have engaged extensively with opposition parties and peers to socialise our concerns about the proposed reserve power in the Pensions Scheme Bill. As a result of this, we played a part in seeing the power significantly diluted. These activities directly support the recommendation to 'build a nation of investors' in our 'No time to lose' report.

Trust and reputation

In March, our Managing Director, Policy, Public Affairs and Research, gave oral evidence to the House of Commons Local Government Select Committee as part of their pre-legislative scrutiny on ground rents. As a real issue for several firms, he highlighted concerns about abolishing ground rents and the impact on institutional investment, as well as stressing how a cap increases legal uncertainty and policy risk. Our activity on this issue has also helped to raise awareness among MPs of the consequences of this legislation.

Our CEO also gave evidence to the House of Commons Business and Trade Committee's inquiry into China and the UK economy. He highlighted the importance of the Chinese market and how the industry is well placed to support China and other emerging economies as they move along the development curve.

As part of ongoing engagement across Parliament, we recently hosted our annual reception for parliamentary researchers in collaboration with Aviva. The event, which attracted more than 100 researchers, helps us build our network and support wider work with parliamentarians over time.

The outcome of the recent local elections has changed the local landscape for our industry. Previously, almost all major financial hubs in England and Wales were in areas with a Labour mayor, council or government; now, several are run by populist alternatives who are less familiar with our industry. We are adapting our approach to ensure we are effectively engaging across the various parties, making clear the contribution and value our industry brings to local communities across the country.

International

Our International Conference 2026, sponsored by Freshfields, was a great opportunity to discuss the UK's role in a shifting geopolitical environment. Over 260 senior delegates from across the industry, policymaking, government and regulation gathered to hear from leading keynotes such as the Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP, Secretary of State for Business and Trade and H.E. Warren A. Stephens, US Ambassador to the UK, as well as some lively panel sessions. We also launched a new report in collaboration with Freshfields, 'Bridging the infrastructure funding gap', which considers how the government can mobilise more private capital into major UK infrastructure projects and export its expertise in this area.

Following the delivery of our initial recommendations for the US-UK Transatlantic Taskforce for Markets of the Future (TTMF) to HMT, our CEO visited Washington in February and March to discuss progress with US stakeholders, including at US Treasury roundtables. We will be taking a delegation of members to New York and Washington DC in June to maintain momentum on the TTMF, deepen industry relations, and strengthen the case for a long-term economic partnership.

Our recent UK-Swiss delegation and workshops promoted uptake of the Berne Financial Services Agreement (BFSa) and addressed digital issues in the UK-Swiss Free Trade Agreement negotiations. Our leadership on the BFSa was recognised, with Joe Cassidy of KPMG and Chair of our Swiss Market Advisory Group, receiving a British Swiss Chamber of Commerce British Swiss Legends Award.

We saw our ask for for FCA representation in India adopted. In April, we visited Mumbai, New Delhi and GIFT City, meeting with central banks, regulators, the Ministry of Finance and industry members to progress recommendations of the India-UK Financial Partnership (IUKFP) ahead of the next UK-India Economic and Financial Dialogue and formalised a partnership with the UK-India Business Council.

We delivered a joint UK–Singapore Tokenisation workshop with the Monetary Authority of Singapore to advance bilateral collaboration on tokenised settlement and agentic tokenisation, with findings feeding into the upcoming UK–Singapore Financial Dialogue.

Following our submission to a Cabinet Office consultation on the National Security and Investment Act, the government announced simplifications to the UK’s investment screening regime, removing some lower-risk transactions from scope. Looking at further possible reforms, we hosted a member discussion on the US approach to investment screening policy with Chris Pilkerton, Assistant Secretary for Investment Security at the U.S. Treasury Department.

We finalised the deliverables for TheCityUK International projects and confirmed the next phases of our Ukraine, Nigeria and Vietnam projects. We are currently exploring further projects to support financial centres in, Turkey, Nigeria and Azerbaijan. We are currently undergoing the annual audit of projects funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office’s Centre of Expertise.

Green and sustainable finance

Our Green and Sustainable Finance Group recently met with the National Wealth Fund, Great British Energy and the British Business Bank to explore, investment vehicles, risk appetite and coordination across UK public finance institutions and industry. The discussion focused on how public capital can be used more strategically to crowd-in private capital and opportunities to support place-based investment.

We have continued to engage closely with the FCA on proposals to align listed issuers’ sustainability disclosures with international standards. Through our response to the consultation, we expressed strong support for the introduction of ISSB aligned UK Sustainability Reporting Standards, highlighting the importance of a coherent, proportionate and internationally interoperable approach that supports high quality, decision useful disclosures. Our engagement also emphasised the need to consider the interaction between listed and non-listed issuer requirements and to ensure a level playing field.

We shaped the regulatory approach to ESG ratings through the IRSG’s response to the FCA consultation. We supported the FCA’s measured, principles-based approach to regulation, building on the voluntary Code of Conduct, to improve transparency, governance and quality in ESG ratings. Our response emphasised the importance of proportionality, international alignment and preserving competition and innovation, while providing greater trust and confidence for users of ESG ratings.

We continued to develop the ‘Team UK for international sustainable finance’ initiative, reflecting strong industry support for a more coordinated approach to how the UK delivers and showcases its international sustainable finance offer. Through the International Climate Finance Working Group, we convened firms across the industry to help shape an emerging ‘Team UK’ approach that brings together the public and private sectors to demonstrate UK leadership, delivery capability and international influence. A core focus has been on progressing the ‘Team UK’ playbook, designed to improve alignment across the UK’s sustainable finance ecosystem and strengthen the visibility of UK

expertise internationally. This is being developed around three thematic priorities - transition finance, carbon markets, and insurance, adaptation and risk management - and will set out existing UK initiatives and illustrative case studies to support more coherent international engagement.

We responded jointly with the Investment Association and UK Finance to the UNFCCC’s request for submissions to inform the climate finance work programme over the next two years. The submission highlighted the importance of a structured, delivery-focused work programme that builds confidence, clarifies roles and responsibilities, and supports early, formal and technically informed engagement with financial and related professional services to help translate climate ambition into investible opportunities at scale.

Defence and resilience

We continue to make good progress on our defence and resilience work, including addressing regulatory frictions and helping to develop a banking product for SMEs in the defence and resilience sector.

More broadly, our Defence and Resilience Group is engaging with wider stakeholders to ensure that the industry can contribute to the implementation of the government’s national security and resilience objectives. This has included constructive initial engagement with the MoD’s Defence Investor Advisory Group (DIAG) and engagement with Pool Re to explore how they can work with industry to support wider economic resilience, beyond their usual anti-terrorism remit. We have also been engaging with stakeholders such as UK Export Finance, National Wealth Fund, British Business Bank and the Regulatory Innovation Office on defence and resilience topics.

Regions and nations

We continue to focus on promoting the enabling role of our industry in delivering growth across the country, including bringing members together with a range of senior policymakers, such as the FCA’s Joint Executive Director to look at partnerships and tackling financial crime, and Julia Lopez MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, to consider the challenges of new technologies.

We have been building on our work to be a practical delivery partner for devolved nations and regions. On behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive, we have convened an expert industry group to help them review their financial services strategy, and in Scotland, we have worked closely with DBT to deliver a pensions focused teach-in, bringing local authority leaders together to help mobilise and attract long-term pension capital to support local investment and growth. The latter is a workstream of the Scotland Investment Acceleration Programme, of which we are a key founding member, and builds on our participation in Scottish Cities Week.

Ahead of the May elections, we supported Scottish Financial Enterprise’s Holyrood manifesto and published our own industry manifesto for the Welsh government, reinforcing shared priorities around competitiveness, skills and long-term investment. We will continue to engage with members, policymakers and key stakeholders to deliver the recommendations outlined in the manifestos.

We have begun a new collaboration with DBT on economic resilience, convening a pilot discussion in Manchester to support the development of the government’s Economic Security Advisory Service.

TheCityUK publications

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Discussion at our UK-Singapore Tokenisation Roundtable with the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS)



The Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP, Secretary of State for Business and Trade, in conversation with our Leadership Council Chair, Anne Richards DBE, at our International Conference 2026, sponsored by Freshfields

TheCityUK

TheCityUK, Fitzwilliam House, 10 St Mary Axe, London, EC3A 8BF.

www.thecityuk.com

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