

<b>Committee:</b> Policy & Resources Committee	<b>Date:</b> 6 September 2018
<b>Subject:</b> Corporate Volunteering Strategy, 2018-23	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Town Clerk	<b>For decision</b>
<b>Report authors:</b> Kate Smith, Head of Corporate Strategy and Performance Amelia Ehren, Corporate Strategy Officer	

### Summary

This paper seeks approval for the City of London Corporation's (City Corporation) Corporate Volunteering Strategy, 2018-23. The strategy's vision is for the organisation to have *'a positive volunteering culture, with clear and consistent practices, which support volunteers and their beneficiaries to flourish in the Square Mile, London and beyond'*. This vision will be fulfilled by the achievement of the following three outcomes:

1. Volunteers benefit from meaningful volunteering opportunities.
2. Volunteers are valued.
3. Organisations and their stakeholders benefit from more and better volunteering.

The paper also outlines the process by which the strategy was developed, including a summary of the feedback received during the Member consultation on the strategy, its corporate implications and the next steps for its implementation, which will be led on by a Corporate Volunteering Manager.

### Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- i. Approve the Corporate Volunteering Strategy 2018-23, at **Appendix 1**- subject to any changes discussed in today's meeting being incorporated.
- ii. Note the proposed next steps for its delivery.

### Main report

#### Background

1. The City Corporation delivers a wide range of volunteering activities and opportunities for different groups, highlighted in bold text below, and purposes. It currently:
  - Supports staff to undertake volunteering in London through the Employee Volunteering Programme.
  - Provides volunteering opportunities for its residents, students in its academies and schools, individuals, community groups and businesses in the Square Mile, London and beyond as part of its service delivery and through its commissioned services.

2. The Corporate Volunteering Strategy, shown in full at Appendix 1, outlines a strategic approach to volunteering, which will support the City Corporation to deliver its wider corporate vision, as set out in the Corporate Plan. It will ensure that good volunteering practices are shared across the organisation, in order to enable greater consistency across departments and within divisions and reduce duplication of effort in relation to all stages of working with volunteers. The strategy builds upon and brings together the learning from existing volunteering activities and practices in place across the organisation – including the findings and recommendations in the Community Volunteering Review, published in January 2016, which was delivered by an external agency and called for the development of an organisation-wide approach to volunteering.
3. A Volunteering Working Group (VWG) was set up in 2016 to scope a corporate volunteering strategy and drive forwards its development. The VWG is made up of representatives from the following teams: City Bridge Trust (CBT), Corporate Strategy & Performance, DCCS, Economic Development Office (EDO), Human Resources (HR) and Open Spaces.
4. The strategy was developed through a collaborative and participatory approach with internal and external stakeholders. In addition to the recommendations from the Community Volunteering Review, the VWG scoped the City Corporation's current practices by carrying out an appreciative enquiry with group members and other staff, whose work also related to volunteering. Further consultation with staff, Members, volunteers, residents, staff from our commissioned services and representatives from the charitable and community sector also took place in the form of an event and an online survey to explore the needs and impacts of volunteering.
5. This process helped to set the priority focus for the strategy, which shifts the focus from a traditionally departmental/divisional led approach to a more coordinated, holistic and corporate approach to volunteering.
6. In May 2018, Member consultation on the strategy began and a draft version of the strategy was presented to the following committees: Establishment, Public Relations and Economic Development Sub, Community and Children Services, City Bridge Trust, and Open Spaces and City Gardens. The feedback received from Members was very positive, recognising that the strategy builds upon and brings together the vast amount of good volunteering practices and opportunities in place across the organisation. No substantive changes were made as a result of the feedback received, but there was clear encouragement for ensuring the strategy now becomes a reality through its successful implementation and resourcing.

#### **Current position**

7. The strategy sets out the City Corporation's vision for volunteering, in which the organisation has a positive volunteering culture, with clear and consistent practices, which support volunteers and their beneficiaries to flourish in the Square Mile, London and beyond. The strategy identifies three outcomes it will seek to achieve and sets out how it will drive activity and measure success in these areas.

8. The strategy will achieve its vision by building upon the successes and learning from the volunteering activities and practices currently in place across the organisation, seeking out best practice and innovation taking place elsewhere, and by trying new things and exploring new opportunities. A one-page summary of the strategy can be found on page three of Appendix 1.

### **Implementation**

10. The strategy identifies key milestones and measures of success for the strategy, which will guide and inform the implementation over the next five years. Equally, it acknowledges that further action plans will need to be developed.
11. In January 2018, Policy and Resources Committee approved the 2018/19 revenue budget for CBT, which included funding for the creation of a new Corporate Volunteering Manager role reporting in to the City Corporation's Head of Philanthropy Strategy. The Corporate Volunteering Manager, with the support of the VWG, will be responsible for driving the successful implementation and monitoring of the strategy over the five-year term. The job advert for this role is due to be published in September 2018 and therefore it is likely that the successful candidate will be in post by January 2019, if not earlier.
12. To ensure that work begins on the implementation of the strategy between September and the recruitment of the Corporate Volunteering Manager, the VWG will be re-convened and will begin work on developing detailed and SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-limited) action plans. The VWG will be chaired by the Head of Philanthropy Strategy, with support from the Corporate Strategy & Performance Team until the Corporate Volunteering Manager is in post.
13. There are also a number of other departmental workstreams and networks across the organisation that will support the implementation of the strategy in the first six months, including but not limited to: DCCS reviewing its current volunteering brokerage service, CBT scoping its Funder Plus approach and Open Spaces continuing to facilitate its departmental Volunteering Steering Group.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

14. The strategy positions volunteering as an asset that is both supportive of and supported by the outcomes in the Corporate Plan 2018-23. Achieving the vision set out in the strategy will help support the aims set out in the Corporate Plan by contributing to a flourishing society and supporting a thriving economy.
15. Whilst the outcomes in the strategy directly support specific outcomes in the Corporate Plan (as outlined below), volunteers could also be involved in activities that support any of the 12 corporate outcomes.
  - Outcome 3 – People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.
  - Outcome 4 – Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.

- Outcome 5 – Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible.
16. The strategy is also supportive of and supported by a variety of existing and emerging City Corporation Strategies and activities including its Philanthropy, Responsible Business, Bridging Divides and Social Mobility strategies and its #iwill pledge, Employee Volunteering Programme and work in education.
  17. A number of departments also reference volunteering activities in their own departmental business plans/strategies and in divisional team plans. Volunteering is also recognised as a learning and development opportunity, which is encouraged by HR, line managers and teams. This strategy provides a framework for departments and divisions to align their work and supports a corporate approach to impact measurement.

### **Conclusion**

18. Members are asked to approve the Corporate Volunteering Strategy, which sets out a vision for volunteering where the City Corporation has a positive volunteering culture, with clear and consistent practices, which supports volunteers and their beneficiaries to flourish. The strategy shifts the focus away from a traditionally departmental/divisional led approach and towards a holistic, coordinated and organisation-wide approach to volunteering. This will create greater consistency in how the organisation engages with volunteers and will provide departments with a framework to align their work to. If the strategy is approved, work will begin on its implementation which will be led by the VWG in the immediate term, and by the Corporate Volunteering Manager once in post.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Corporate Volunteering Strategy, 2018-23.

### **Amelia Ehren**

Corporate Strategy Officer

Town Clerk's Department

T: 020 7332 3431

E: [amelia.ehren@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:amelia.ehren@cityoflondon.gov.uk)