

Committee(s)	Dated:
Public Relations & Economic Development Sub-Committee	14 November 2018
Subject: Review of the Lord Mayor's Dragon Awards	Public
Report of: Director of Economic Development Chief Grants Officer, City Bridge Trust	For information
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Summary

Established in 1987, The Lord Mayor's Dragon Awards aim to celebrate positive business impact in society and to inspire others to grow that impact. Following their 30th anniversary last year, an independent strategic review was undertaken to inform how we ensure the Awards maintain their relevance in future and act as a delivery vehicle for relevant aspects of the Corporate Plan 2018-2023 and the related Responsible Business and Philanthropy strategies.

In view of a separate but related review being undertaken in the Economic Development Office of the City Corporation's business-facing work on innovation, inclusion and growth, it is proposed that any changes to the Awards be implemented in time for the 2020 awards cycle rather than within the short time we have before the 2019 Awards launch in January 2019.

In the interim the Awards website will be updated to drive applications and improve the user 'journey'. Costs for this will be met by the EDO local risk budget 2018/19.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note:

- the approach of building on the recent consultation exercise to consider how best to refresh the Lord Mayor's Dragon Awards in 2020; and
- a planned refresh of the Awards website for 2019 to improve its functionality.

Main Report

Background

1. The Lord Mayor's Dragon Awards were one of the City Corporation's first high profile ventures into the responsible business sphere. They were one of a kind and leading edge when they were originally launched in 1987. They continue to be a flagship initiative within the Corporation's responsible business and philanthropy portfolio.
2. The Awards aim to:

- Celebrate businesses having a social impact;
 - Inspire organisations to increase their positive role in society.
3. Historically, the Awards have received some 60 applications per year. A rebrand in 2011 prompted an increase to 80 applications, but this decreased year on year to a low of 41 in 2015. Numbers have been increasing again since then and this year a total of 69 applications were received. This included 30 applications for the Lord Mayor's Trust category.
 4. Following the Awards' 30th anniversary last year, an independent strategic review was undertaken. The review, which involved businesses of differing levels of engagement with the Awards and senior level industry experts, set out to test the ongoing relevance of the Awards and, if they were to continue, to determine how they could be most impactful in the future.
 5. The review also undertook a benchmarking exercise to establish a clear niche for the Awards in a crowded and competitive landscape.

Current position

6. Participants in the review were unanimously in favour of continuing the Lord Mayor's Dragon Awards. The Awards are seen as a very special moment in the year for the City and London to celebrate the positive impact of business.
7. However, there was a consensus that the Awards need to shift its current focus on corporate philanthropy and community engagement to encompass the broader responsible business agenda e.g. governance, recruitment, procurement, environmental impact etc., as well as philanthropy and giving.
8. Clear themes emerged from the consultation around the currency of the awards in a crowded marketplace, the need to ensure the categories evolved to reflect broader responsible business preoccupations and the value of working with category experts to amplify the awards to a broad audience.
9. Much of the feedback received suggested that the Awards could be more effectively integrated with other City Corporation programmes, for example by deploying the shortlisted and winning entries as contributors to the thought leadership programmes delivered by the Economic Development Office (EDO), City Bridge Trust, Heart of the City and the Lord Mayor's Appeal.
10. The feedback from the review is crucial to informing how the Awards look in future. However, it coincides with thinking underway within EDO on how best to position business-facing work on 'innovation, inclusion and growth' in as relevant and useful way possible for the rapidly changing context we inhabit.

Proposal

11. The review of business-facing work in EDO is likely to take place over some months. As implementing any changes to the 2019 Awards cycle would need to be complete by January 2019, it is proposed that changes building on both

the recent independent strategic review and EDO's evolving approach to business-facing activities be reflected in the Awards' 2020, which would be subject to Member approval at a later date.

12. This would involve running the 2019 Awards using the existing format, with the main change being the introduction of a Lord Mayor's Award to reflect the incoming Lord Mayor's theme, following the model of this year's Trust award.
13. To help drive applications and to improve the user journey, the Awards website will also be updated.
14. It is anticipated that proposals to reshape the 2020 awards would draw on both EDO's review of its business-facing work on innovation, inclusion and growth and elements of the feedback received from the recent strategic review. Such feedback included proposals for the City Corporation to recapture its position as a leader in the responsible business field through strategic partnerships and thought-leadership programmes closely aligned with the Awards and led by relevant City Corporation teams and associated charities.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

15. A future refresh of the Awards as outlined above would accord well with the City Corporation's key policy priority of engaging with London key issues of concern to our communities, as set out in the Corporate Plan 2018-23.

Financial implications

16. EDO will be able to implement any refresh / upgrade of the website to improve the 'application journey', maximise the number of applicants and promote the value of the Awards from within the existing Dragons team.

Conclusion

17. Postponing any major changes to the Lord Mayor's Dragon Awards until its 2020 cycle and running the scheme in its existing format in 2019 provide the opportunity to ensure that any refresh to the Awards should – subject to future Member approval – help to increase their relevance and the broader impact of the City Corporation in championing responsible business practices.

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