

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Policy and Resources Committee – For Decision	15 November 2018
<b>Subject:</b> The Digital Declaration	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> The Chamberlain	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Sean Green – IT Director	

## **Summary**

This report details a national Government initiative that it is recommended the City of London Corporation (CoLC) endorses and formally signs up to. This is the UK Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Local Government Digital Declaration.

The declaration publicly commits the organisation to embrace and develop digital ways of working, digital citizen and business engagement and skills development. There is also an expectation that organisations signing the declaration agree they will collaborate on digital projects sharing skills and knowledge.

In addition, MHCLG have set up a £7.5m fund for local authorities to bid for to develop digital ways of working, citizen engagement and skills development.

The IT (Finance) Sub-Committee has considered and endorsed this proposal and the Policy and Resources Committee is now asked to approve the City Corporation sign up to the Declaration.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Members are asked to agree that the City of London Corporation should sign up to the UK Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Digital Declaration.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. A fund of £7.5m has been set aside by the UK Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for local authorities to bid for to develop digital ways of working, citizen engagement and skills development. In addition to encouraging collaboration and buy-in to common standards they are asking Local Government organizations across the UK to sign up to the Digital Declaration which many of the London councils have already now completed.

### **What it means to sign the declaration**

2. Signing up to the declaration would affirm CoLC's collective ambition for local public services in the internet age, and our commitments to realising it. It would commit us to working on a new scale to:
  - design services that best meet the needs of citizens;

- challenge the technology market to offer the flexible tools and services we need;
  - protect citizens' privacy and security;
  - deliver better value for money.
3. CoLC would be agreeing to the following 5 principles:
- We will go even further to redesign our services around the needs of the people using them. This means continuing to prioritise citizen and user needs above professional, organisational and technological silos;
  - We will 'fix our plumbing' to break our dependence on inflexible and expensive technology that doesn't join up effectively. This means insisting on modular building blocks for the IT we rely on, and open standards to give a common structure to the data we create;
  - We will design safe, secure and useful ways of sharing information to build trust among our partners and citizens, to better support the most vulnerable members of our communities, and to target our resources more effectively;
  - We will demonstrate digital leadership, creating the conditions for genuine organisational transformation to happen, and challenging all those we work with to embrace this local Digital Declaration.
  - We will embed an open culture that values, incentivises and expects digital ways of working from every member of our workforce. This means working in the open wherever we can, sharing our plans and experience, working collaboratively with other organisations, and reusing good practice.
4. The commitment from CoLC's leaders, service managers and politicians will be to:
- Make sure that digital expertise is central to our decision-making and that all technology decisions are approved by the appropriate person or committee. This will ensure that we are using our collective purchasing power to stimulate a speedy move towards change;
  - Have visible, accessible leaders throughout the organisation (publishing blogs, tweeting and actively participating in communities of practice), and support those who champion this Declaration to try new things and work in the open;
  - Support our workforce to share ideas and engage in communities of practice by providing the space and time for this to happen;
  - Publish our plans and lessons learnt (for example on blogs, Localgov Digital slack; at sector meetups), and talk publicly about things that have could have gone better (like the GOV.UK incident reports blog);
  - Try new things, from new digital tools to experiments in collaboration with other organisations;
  - Champion the continuous improvement of cyber security practice to support the security, resilience and integrity of our digital services and systems.

5. CoLC's transformation, information technology and digital teams will:
- Research how to reuse existing user research, service design, common components and data and technology standards before starting to design or procure something new;
  - Build capacity in service-design, so that each service we transform is informally tested by our peers against our national service standards where appropriate;
  - Where appropriate every new IT solution procured must operate according to the technology code of practice, putting us in control of our service data, using open standards where they exist and contributing to their creation where they don't;
  - Share knowledge about digital projects where there is an opportunity for potential reuse or collaboration with others;
  - Work together to establish the trust frameworks we need to safely analyse and share personal data. This will allow CoL to better serve our shared customers and reduce the need to ask customers for the same information multiple times;
  - Work together to create common solutions that allow us to check people's eligibility for services with central government and others in real time with their consent;
  - Take inspiration and ideas from a wide range of sources and participate individually in communities of practice and interest outside the organisation.

### **Conclusion**

6. The digital revolution brings about an unprecedented access to information for better decision making and the capabilities to engage and collaborate with stakeholders across traditional internal and external boundaries.
7. Most local government organisations will sign up to the Digital Declaration as a charter for modernising their organisation.
8. The transparency of this commitment sends a strong message to staff, members, partners and customers.
9. The aim will be to embed digitally enabled working and practices into business as usual.

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