

Committee(s): Policy and Resources	Date: 11 April 2019
Subject: Sponsorship of the 2019 Battle of Ideas Festival	Public
Report of: Director of Communications	For Decision
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Summary

The Battle of Ideas festival is organised by the Academy of Ideas [AOI], a non-partisan organisation that is committed to open and robust public debates.

The Battle of Ideas aims to host informed public debates on contentious issues and features speakers from various sections of public life such as academia, politics, government, and the media.

This year's Battle of Ideas festival will take place on the weekend of the 2nd & 3rd November at the Barbican Centre.

The proposal is for the City Corporation to sponsor the 2019 Battle of Ideas festival as a "*Battle Champion*" and "*Debate Partner*", which will entitle the City Corporation to a range of benefits, for £20,000.

Sponsorship will enable the City Corporation to help decide the event's agenda, suggesting relevant topics for debate and providing speakers. The City Corporation will also be able to nominate some speakers to participate in debates.

Recommendation(s)

The Committee is asked to agree to provide £20,000 from your Committee's 2019/20 Policy Initiatives Fund, categorised under 'Events', and charged to *City's Cash* to sponsor the 2019 Battle of Ideas festival.

Main Report

Background

1. The City Corporation sponsored the Battle of Ideas festival in 2016, 2017 and 2018.
2. The Barbican Centre has hosted the Battle of Ideas festival annually since 2012.
3. The 2019 Battle of Ideas festival will be the fourteenth iteration. The festival assembles a range of national and international speakers for its debates and attracts several thousand people of diverse backgrounds as audience members into the City.

Proposals

4. The proposal is to sponsor the 2019 Battle of Ideas festival, organised by the AOI, which will take place on the weekend of the 2nd & 3rd November at the Barbican Centre.
5. The cost of sponsorship is £20,000.
6. Over 400 speakers took part in the 2018 Battle of Ideas. They included Stephen Kinnock MP; Melanie Phillips, Columnist, The Times; Munira Mirza, former Deputy Mayor of London; Dr Linda Yueh, author and economist.
7. This year's programme is yet to be finalised, but proposed themes include arts and culture, economics, education, politics, and international relations and development.
8. Debates shaped and informed by the City Corporation will cover topics encompassing the full spectrum of work undertaken by the organisation.
9. As *Battle Champion* the City Corporation would help decide on the subject of a maximum of ten debates, with nominated City Corporation speakers on key areas of interest and relevance to the City.
10. The City Corporation would be credited in all publicity materials as *Battle Champion*. Sponsorship would include complimentary VIP tickets for relevant speakers and 20 regular complimentary tickets to City Corporation representatives for the weekend, including admittance to the festival drinks reception. The City Corporation would also be invited to address delegates at the Saturday morning 'Welcome Address' or evening reception.
11. Sponsorship of the 2019 Battle of Ideas festival will include an offer of free day tickets to students up to the age of 18 from schools and academies affiliated to the City Corporation. Moreover, students from the City Corporation's family of schools are eligible to attend the conference for a reduced charge of £10.
12. The Festival attracts an audience the City Corporation does not regularly engage with, such as students, post-graduates as well as researchers, professionals, teachers and academics. Sponsorship will therefore prove to be an excellent opportunity to raise the City Corporation's profile.

Implications

13. It is proposed that the required funding of £20,000 is drawn from your Committee's 2019/20 Policy Initiatives Fund, categorised under 'Events' and charged to *City's Cash*. The current uncommitted balance in the 2018/19 Fund is £583,883 prior to any allowance being made for any other proposals on today's agenda.

Conclusion

14. Sponsorship of the 2019 Battle of Ideas accords well with the role the City Corporation plays in promoting debates on issues that affect the City and linking its work to its schools and academies.

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