

<b>Committee:</b> Health and Wellbeing Board – For Information Community & Children’s Services Committee – For Information Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee – For Information	<b>Date:</b> 26 April 2019 8 May 2019  13 May 2019
<b>Subject:</b> Dragon Café in the City – future funding	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Andrew Carter, Department of Community & Children’s Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Xenia Koumi, Department of Community & Children’s Services	

### Summary

Dragon Café in the City (DCC) provides a free, safe and quiet sanctuary in the Square Mile for both City residents and workers to support their mental and physical wellbeing and release the pressure of day to day life. It is hosted in Shoe Lane Library, on Wednesdays, between 12 and 7:30pm.

DCC is funded by the City of London Corporation and delivered by Barbican & Community Libraries and Public Health, in partnership with charity Mental Fight Club. Dragon Café in the City was initially trialled as a successful six-month pilot between February and June 2018 and has secured funding for the next two years, until April 2021. This report confirms the sources of funding for Dragon Café in the City in the short-term.

### Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.
- Support efforts to promote Dragon Café in the City to those living and/ or working in the Square Mile.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. Dragon Café in the City provides a free, safe and quiet space within the City of London for both local residents and workers to engage with and look after their mental and physical wellbeing and release the pressure of day to day life. It is hosted in Shoe Lane Library on Wednesdays, between 12 and 7:30pm. A diverse

and wide range of free creative activities are delivered within the DCC sessions, such as 15-minute massage, yoga, mindfulness, calligraphy, nutrition and chess strategy workshops.

2. Dragon Café in the City initially launched as a six-month pilot in 2018, funded by the Wellcome Trust and Carnegie UK's "Engaging Libraries" fund<sup>1</sup> and the City of London Corporation's Department of Community & Children's Services. It was delivered through a collaboration between the City Corporation's Public Health team and Business Healthy, Barbican & Community Libraries and the charity Mental Fight Club, with support from Output Arts.
3. The pilot was evaluated and demonstrated that Dragon Café in the City was a valuable service that was successfully helping to support the health and wellbeing needs of both City workers and residents. It also demonstrated helping visitors to feel both more able and more inclined to engage with their mental health.
4. A case was put forward to secure further funding to continue to offer Dragon Café in the City beyond the pilot phase.

### **Current Position**

5. Dragon Café in the City was trialled as a pilot and ran between February and June 2018, with additional sessions delivered monthly between September and December.
6. An evaluation was completed in late 2018, which demonstrated that Dragon Café in the City was addressing need among the City's worker and resident populations, with regard to supporting mental health. The workforce of the City's community of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) were also benefiting from the service. As a result, it was agreed that opportunities to secure future funding would be explored and in the interim, Dragon Café in the City could continue to be delivered, funded by the Public Health Grant. This would mean that awareness of Dragon Café in the City among the local community could maintain momentum.
7. Applications for funding were made to the Healthier City and Hackney Fund (HCHF) and the City Corporation's Priorities Investment Pot (PIP) in late 2018. Both were approved in March 2019, which secures funding for Dragon Café in the City until April 2021.
8. HCHF funding has been confirmed between April 2019 and April 2020 and enables the provision of a dedicated "Network Liaison" role, which will:
  - Engage micro-businesses and City workers experiencing in-work poverty
  - Develop new and existing relationships to promote DCC through a wide range of networks, including occupational health services within the City of London and GPs
  - Ensure DCC activities are advertised through the library network and promoted in public spaces in the City
  - Organise four networking events over the course of the year to engage HR and Corporate Social Responsibility leads within City businesses; to identify workplace champions within the micro-businesses; and explain the benefits of wellbeing sessions offered by DCC, so these can be promoted to their workers

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<sup>1</sup> [https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie\\_uk\\_trust/2019/03/26153308/Engaging-Libraries-Learning-from-Phase-1.pdf](https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie_uk_trust/2019/03/26153308/Engaging-Libraries-Learning-from-Phase-1.pdf)

9. PIP funding permits a full schedule of Dragon Café in the City sessions to be run between April 2019 and April 2021, delivering roughly 23 sessions per year on a fortnightly basis. This includes the provision of a free and healthy lunch, refreshments and snacks to DCC visitors.
10. Beyond April 2021, Dragon Café in the City will be reviewed to explore whether it is still meeting a need among the City's worker, resident and business communities. If it demonstrates effectiveness, efficacy and value for money, efforts will be made to secure longer-term funding. Options could include sponsorship from larger City businesses and organisations, or perhaps through dedicated funding opportunities offered by organisations such as the Wellcome Trust and Big Lottery Fund.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

11. Securing of longer-term funding to continue to deliver Dragon Café in the City between 2019 and 2021 supports a range of corporate and strategic objectives, including:
  - Corporate Plan 2018-23: Contribute to a flourishing society (objectives 2,3 and 4)
  - The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-20: Priorities 1, 2 and 5

### **Conclusion**

12. Dragon Café in the City is an intervention designed to support the mental and physical wellbeing of the City's residents and workers, by providing a free and open space with a range of creative activities in Shoe Lane Library. Following a successful six-month pilot in 2018, the programme has secured additional funding to ensure it can be delivered in full until April 2021.

### **Appendices**

- None

### **Background Papers**

- "Dragon Café in the City evaluation" – Health and Wellbeing Board Update Report, 21 September 2018

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