

<p><b>Committee:</b>  Health and Wellbeing Board – For Information  Community and Children’s Services Committee – For Information  Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee – For Information</p>	<p><b>Dated:</b>  26/04/2019  08/05/2019  13/05/2019</p>
<p><b>Subject:</b>  Dragon Café in the City – future funding</p>	<p><b>Public</b></p>
<p><b>Report of:</b>  Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children’s Services</p>	<p><b>For Information</b></p>
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### 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 the Shoe Lane Library, on Wednesdays, between 12pm 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. DCC 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 DCC in the short term.

### Recommendations

Members are asked to:

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

## Main Report

### Background

1. DCC 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 12pm 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. DCC 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 and 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 DCC was a valuable service that was successfully helping to support the health and wellbeing needs of City workers and residents. It also demonstrated helping visitors to feel more able and inclined to engage with their mental health.
4. A case was put forward to secure further funding to continue to offer DCC beyond the pilot phase.

### Current Position

5. DCC was trialled as a pilot and ran between February and June 2018, with additional sessions delivered monthly between September and December 2018.
6. An evaluation was completed in late 2018, which demonstrated that DCC was addressing the needs of 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) was also benefitting from the service. As a result, it was agreed that opportunities to secure future funding would be explored; in the interim, DCC could continue to be delivered, funded by the Public Health Grant. This would mean that awareness of DCC 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 DCC 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

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<sup>1</sup> *Engaging Libraries: Learning from Phase 1:*  
[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)

- ensure that 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 Human Resources and Corporate Social Responsibility leads within City businesses; identify workplace champions within the micro-businesses; and explain the benefits of wellbeing sessions offered by DCC, so that these can be promoted to their workers.
9. PIP funding permits a full schedule of DCC 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, DCC 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 longer-term funding to continue to deliver DCC 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. DCC 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 that 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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