

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Policy & Resources	23 January 2020
<b>Subject:</b> Sponsorship of New Local Government Network 'Community Mobilisation' Project	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Communications	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Colton Richards, Senior Corporate Affairs Officer	

### Summary

The Corporate Affairs team and City Bridge Trust have together contacted the local government think-tank, the New Local Government Network (NLGN), to draw up a research project proposal examining community mobilisation in the UK and the role of local authorities in this space.

The NLGN proposes to "explore the extent, effectiveness and potential of community mobilisation within the UK." The aim of the research is to seek to understand the practical steps local authorities are taking to develop the ability and capacity of communities to mobilise around particular goals.

Members are asked to approve funding of £12,500 to the NLGN to undertake this project. Members are also asked to note that City Bridge Trust is supporting this proposed project and has obtained an addition £12,500 through delegated authority, to bring the total funding for this report to £25,000.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Agree to sponsor the NLGN research project for £12,500, noting that another £12,500 is being provided by the City Bridge Trust. The total funding for this project will therefore be £25,000, half of which is to be met from your Committee's 2019/20 Policy Initiatives Fund and charged to City's Cash.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. The NLGN is an independent think-tank, founded in 1996, with a focus on local government reform. The City of London Corporation is a member of the NLGN and in recent years has hosted its annual conference at Guildhall.
2. In early 2018 the NLGN published a report setting out a vision for a new 'Community Paradigm' for public services, which looked at how power to be handed over to communities.
3. In taking this work to the next stage, NLGN proposes to "explore the extent, effectiveness and potential of community mobilisation within the UK." The aim of

the research is to seek to understand the practical steps local authorities are taking in this area.

4. The research would seek to answer the following questions:
  - How can a public sector body identify and build consensus around a collective goal?
  - How can a public sector body identify and mobilise key figures within a community to support a collective goal?
  - How can the community be guaranteed a genuine sense of ownership of any initiative?
  - How can existing assets in a community be identified and mobilised?
  - How can funding from different sources be identified and aligned?
  - What is the role of different partners, including that of elected members (in councils/local authorities across the country)?
5. To answer these questions the NLGN's research approach would/will involve the following steps:
  - An initial review of the literature would identify the range and nature of different models, from within the UK and beyond.
  - From this view, the NLGN would draw up a shortlist of three to five case studies.
  - Interviews with key actors across the local government sector.
  - A research workshop bringing together interviewees, NLGN researchers and City Corporation staff
  - The NLGN will distil from the research a set of findings about what works well and will bring it together in a final report.
6. The NLGN estimates that research will take four to six months to complete.
7. Throughout the research project, the NLGN will produce blogs, articles and other outputs such as short videos to promote and develop the project's emerging findings and ideas.
8. The final report will be launched online on an agreed date, with a target audience of local government and national policy decision-makers. The online launch of the digital publication will be supported by a press and social media strategy. The Corporate Affairs team will liaise with the NLGN about a public launch. The annual conference in 2020, hosted by the City of London Corporation, has been identified as a tentative option.

## **Implications**

9. It is proposed that the required funding of £12,500 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 2019/20 Fund is £509,748 prior to any allocation being made for any other proposals on today's agenda.

## **Conclusion**

10. Sponsoring this research project will provide an opportunity for the City Corporation to engage with key audiences on important local government issues and to demonstrate the City Corporation's involvement in relevant debates. Sponsorship would also accord well with outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 10 in the 2018-23 Corporate Plan.

**Colton Richards | Senior Corporate Affairs Officer**  
T: 0207 332 1357 | [colton.richards@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:colton.richards@cityoflondon.gov.uk)