

Committee(s): Policy & Resource Committee – For decision	Date(s): 20 February 2020
Subject: Central London Forward – Joint Venture Agreement	Public
Report of: Damian Nussbaum, Director of Innovation & Growth	For Decision
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Summary

Central London Forward (CLF) was created in 2007 as a new local authority led organisation which would act as a voice for central London. The partnership is governed by a Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) between participating boroughs.

This report seeks approval to extend the City Corporation's involvement in the Partnership (and the Joint Venture Agreement – JVA) for a further period to 31 March 2024.

Central London Forward has become recognised as a key part of London Government and is valued by partners as a strategic partnership providing a collective voice for central London to facilitate collaboration on key opportunities and challenges across boroughs and the City of London.

Our work is divided into two areas: policy development and lobbying, and programme management and delivery.

All of the 11 borough Leaders and the Chair of Policy & Resources have expressed a wish to continue to engage with the Partnership for a further 4 years subject to approval of the Joint Venture Agreement and payment of an annual subscription of £40,000 per annum.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Committee agree to the proposed CLF Joint Venture Agreement set out at Appendix 1 and to the contribution of £40,000 per annum for the four years, 2020 to 2024, which will be met from the Innovation and Growth budget.

Main Report

Background

1. Central London Forward (CLF) is the strategic sub-regional partnership for central London. The partnership works on behalf of its members and associate members to provide a collective voice for central London and to facilitate collaboration on key opportunities and challenges across boroughs and the City of London.

2. The City of London was a founding member of CLF and has acted as the host and accountable body for CLF since its creation.
3. The membership of CLF is currently the City of London and the local authorities of Camden, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster. Haringey and Lewisham are associate members, working with the partnership on matters relating to employment and skills only.
4. CLF is governed by a Board made up of the Leaders or Mayors of member boroughs and the Chair of Policy & Resources. The Board set the priorities for the partnership and determine the work programme for CLF.
5. The GLA, represented by the Assistant Director of Skills & Employment, Michelle Cuomo-Boorer and London First Director of Strategy and Policy, John Dickie are observers at CLF Board meetings and no subscription is paid.
6. The Central London Forward governance structure also includes:
 - A CLF Chief Executives group (the Town Clerk attends these meetings);
 - The CLF Employment & Skills Board (the Chair of Policy & Resources is a member of this sub-group);
 - A Senior Officers group to engage with operational and policy implementation officers in the members; and
 - A Skills Officers group working specifically on delivering the [CLF Skills Strategy](#).
7. The work of CLF has changed significantly over time. The initial focus between 2007 – 2014 was on agreeing and presenting lobbying positions to support Central London and preparing for the delivery of the 2012 Olympics. From 2015 onwards, through a mix of Board decisions and reacting to opportunities created by the London Growth Deal and Devolution Deal, the work of CLF expanded to include the commissioning of employment support programmes for unemployed residents. Since 2019 the CLF Board have sought to rebalance the partnership to its original intent through an increased focus on policy development and lobbying.
8. Funding for CLF comes from four sources: the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), European Social Fund (ESF), pooled New Homes Bonus (NHB) funds and member subscriptions. DWP, ESF and NHB fund CLF's programme work, while the policy, lobbying and administrative work is funded by subscriptions. At present most of CLF's funding is programme specific and will terminate as each programme concludes in the years ahead.
9. CLF maintains close links with the other London sub-regions, and with the GLA and London Councils. Consideration is taken to collaborate and coordinate, not duplicate, respective work streams with these other regional and sub-regional partners.

Current Position

10. CLF is governed by a Joint Venture Agreement first agreed with the original membership in 2007. This JVA has been extended and amended every 2 – 3 years since that date. The most recent extension was agreed in 2015 and will expire on 31st March 2020.
11. Following advice from City of London Legal officers a new Joint Venture Agreement has been drafted for approval by CLF members. Legal officers advised that, given changes in the operation of the partnership since 2017 and to provide greater clarity for members, a new agreement should be developed rather than a further extension to the 2007 agreement.
12. An early draft of the proposed JVA was provided to legal officers in member boroughs and comments received have been incorporated into this final draft, attached at Appendix 1. CLF members are currently taking the JVA through internal governance arrangements and it is expected that all members will formally agree to the JVA at the CLF Board meeting on 19th March 2020.

Proposals

13. It is proposed that the Committee approve the proposed CLF JVA, as set out at Appendix 1, for a further four years from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2024 so that the City of London may continue to influence policy on behalf of central London on the priorities set out above. The proposed subscription of £40,000 per annum would continue to be met from the Innovation and Growth budget.
14. The Committee is recommended to authorise the Chair of Policy & Resources to complete the agreement and to continue to engage proactively with CLF.
15. The Committee is also recommended to approve the continued role of the City of London as accountable body for CLF.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

16. Continued membership of the Partnership and hosting of the team demonstrates the City Corporation's commitment to the Corporate Plan 2018-2023 themes, including a commitment to 'contribute to a flourishing society' and 'support a thriving community'.

Implications

17. As CLF is an informal partnership the City of London act on behalf of the partnership in all legal and financial agreements. Risk sharing agreements are in place across CLF's activities to ensure that any legal or financial liabilities are shared across the membership and do not fall solely on the City of London.
18. The financial commitment from the City would amount to £40,000 per annum, for four years, the same as the other full members.

Conclusion

19. Central London Forward has become recognised as a key part of London Government and is valued by partners as a strategic partnership acting as a voice for key issues and priorities for central London. The borough partners have as a result expressed a wish to continue to engage with the Partnership for a further four years subject to the signing of the Joint Venture Agreement and payment of the £40,000 per annum subscription.
20. The Committee are asked to support the recommendations of this report and enable the Chair of Policy and Resources to complete the agreement.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Joint Venture Agreement 2020-2024

Background Paper (available on request)

- Joint Venture Agreement 2008

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