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| Committee | Date: |
| Policy and Resources Committee (for decision) | 20 February 2020 |
| Subject 'future.now' Policy Initiatives Fund (PIF) Application for funding | |
| Report of Town Clerk | Public |
| Report Author Kate Smith – Head of Corporate Strategy and Performance Jessica Walsh – Digital Skills Strategy Officer | For Decision |

Summary

future.now was launched on 10 October 2019 as part of Alderman Peter Estlin's 2019/20 Lord Mayoralty. The City of London Corporation (City Corporation) is a founding partner of *future.now*, alongside Nominet Trust, Accenture, Lloyds Banking Group, Good Things Foundation and BT. *future.now* aims to '*motivate people and businesses to boost their digital skills*'. Becoming a founding partner has required an in-kind investment of £75,000 from the City Corporation, which is made up of Alderman Peter Estlin becoming the Chair of the *future.now* Board, funding for the Project Director role, administrative project support, and meeting and event spaces at both the Guildhall and Mansion House.

This paper requests £17,000 of your Committee's 2020/21 Policy Initiatives Fund (PIF) to cover the costs of four events including a **Senior Council Meeting and Stakeholder Breakfast on 23 April 2020 in the Basinghall Suite and the launch of the Lloyd's Banking Group Consumer Digital Index, in partnership with *future.now*, in the Old Library on 21 May 2020**. It is felt that this PIF application meets the criteria of: *Sponsorship/funding for bodies which have initiatives that support the City's overall objectives*.

Recommendations

The Policy and Resources Committee is asked to:

- i. Approve the allocation of £17,000 to cover the costs of four events from your Committee's 2020/21 Policy Initiatives Fund, categorised as 'events' and charged to City's Cash.

Main Report

Background

1. 'future.now' was launched on 10 October 2019 as part of Alderman Peter Estlin's 2018/19 mayoral programme – '*Shaping Tomorrow's City Today*', and the City Corporation is a founding partner alongside Nominet Trust, Accenture, Lloyds Banking Group, Good Things Foundation and BT. The decision to become a founding partner was delegated by Policy and Resources Committee in July 2019 to the Chair of Policy and Resources and the Town Clerk and Chief Executive. Founding partner status requires a commitment from the City Corporation of £75,000 of in-kind support. The in-kind support is made up of Alderman Peter Estlin becoming the Chair of the future.now Board, funding for the Project Director role, administrative project support, and meeting and event spaces at both the Guildhall and Mansion House.
2. future.now aims to '*motivate people and businesses to boost their digital skills*'. It is a game-changing and UK-wide initiative that takes an evidence and impact-based approach to working with the 4.3 million without any digital skills; 11.9 million lacking basic digital skills; and the 17.3 million in work without sufficient digital skills for the future. It maps and magnifies existing digital skills initiatives and expert practitioners in order to understand what works and why, as well as signposting and scaling their work, filling gaps and preventing duplication. Critically, future.now will develop behaviour change campaigns that are focussed on changing people's attitudes to digital skills – motivating them to acquire new skills. future.now will be launched as a public-facing entity on 10 October at Mansion House and will feature key speakers such as the Lord Mayor and other senior representatives from those involved in the coalition.

Current Position

3. The in-kind events and venue offer relating to Guildhall is as follows:
 - a) In kind venue support for four events, valued at c.£17,000 and comprising two uses of Basinghall Suite (£2,500 per event) and two uses of the Livery Hall (£6,000 per event). The funding for these events should be sought from the Policy Initiatives Fund or via a sponsoring department. Ad hoc use of Committee Rooms and North Wing Meeting rooms offered when available and will not be re-charged to departments.
4. To date future.now has made a request to use two rooms as follows:
 - a) **23 April 2020** – The Basinghall Suite, for a Senior Council Meeting and stakeholder breakfast (2-hour approx.event).
 - b) **21 May 2020** – The Old Library, for the launch of the Lloyd's Banking Group Consumer Digital Index, in partnership with future.now (full day event).
5. future.now have been informed that the request of the Old Library was not originally offered, and as such this means that the request of these two rooms

comes to £7,375 of the allocation and this will need to be borne in mind when making future requests. The Old Library is necessary for the size of the event.

Options

6. A sponsoring department has not been found for either of these events, and a Hospitality Working Party request has not been made at this time, due to the alignment of the request to the PIF criteria, namely:
 - Sponsorship/funding for bodies which have initiatives that support the City's overall objectives.

Proposal

7. £17,000 of PIF is requested – broken down as £2,500 for Basinghall Suite and £6,000 for the Livery Hall/ £6,325 for Old Library.
8. It is proposed that the required funding of £17,000 is to be drawn from your Committee's 2020/21 Policy Initiative Fund categorised as 'Events' and charged to City's Cash. The current uncommitted balance in the 2020/21 PIF is £779,365 prior to any allowances being made for any other proposals on today's agenda.

Corporate and Strategic Implications

9. future.now has a strong fit with the City Corporation's strategic aims. Outcome eight of the City Corporation's Corporate Plan states 'we have access to the skills and talent we need' and outcome nine states the organisation's commitment to being 'digitally and physically well-connected and responsive'. One of the ways of achieving both these outcomes is through the implementation of the City Corporation's Digital Skills Strategy for 2018-23 and the work of future.now.

Conclusion

10. Since its launch, future.now has been actively developing its internal infrastructure and processes, as well as continuing to deliver work that maps and magnifies digital skills initiatives to different stakeholders and populations across the UK. There continue to be benefits to the City Corporation remaining involved in future.now – a coalition committed to harnessing the collective expertise and resources of partners to address the UK's digital skills gaps – and by committing £17,000 of PIF, the City Corporation will demonstrate this.

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