

Committee(s)		Dated:
Policy & Resources Community & Children's Services Education Board	For decision For information For information	28 May 2015 12 June 2015 25 June 2015
Subject: Development of a process for assessment of new employability initiatives		Public
Report of: Director of Economic Development and Director of Community & Children's Services		For Decision

Summary

- The City Corporation supports a wide range of activities helping people in wider London into employment. Typically described as 'employability', this activity covers a wide range of interventions to support people into work.
- This report presents for your Committee's approval a process for assessing new ideas for City Corporation support for 'employability' initiatives benefiting wider London.
- The proposed process involves Officer Group approval prior to Member approval, which would sit with your Committee in most circumstances. It is designed to bring a common approach across the City Corporation to consideration of new ideas for employability, not to discourage new ideas.
- An assessment of the following would be included in the proposed process: the rationale for City Corporation involvement; what the need is; costs/benefits; and consideration of an exit strategy.
- The report also proposes guidelines to establish which kinds of new ideas would fall within the scope of the proposed assessment process.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to agree:

1. the proposed process for assessing proposals for new employability activity requiring additional funding/ significant resources before they are implemented as set out in paragraph 6 of the report.

And to note:

2. the proposed guidelines to establish which kinds of new ideas would fall within the scope of the proposed assessment process – Appendix One.

3. the proposed outline assessment questions to appraise new proposed employability initiatives – Appendix Two.
4. that the proposed process and outline assessment questions be implemented with immediate effect.

Main Report

Background

1. In support of the City Corporation's broad policy framework (as expressed in the Corporate Plan, Education Strategy and departmental business plans for the Economic Development Office and Community & Children's Services Department), the City Corporation's existing employability activity in London forms a key part of our efforts to support London's communities and contribute to reducing deprivation.
2. The term 'employability' covers a wide range of activity including educational and aspiration-raising activity; employability skills; work experience; apprenticeships; jobs and progression within work. Further details of these activities are provided at Appendix One.
3. Notwithstanding differences in the geographies between individual City Corporation programmes, a common broad theme is the focus on linking communities in neighbouring boroughs to jobs in the City and beyond and doing this, broadly, through helping them become employable and, ultimately, employed. This work sits in a wider context, supported by Central London Forward's work across Central London boroughs and complemented by grant-giving across Greater London through City Bridge Trust.

Current Position

4. Against a background of an increasing number of new ideas for the City Corporation to enhance and increase its existing employability work in wider London, the Directors of Economic Development and Community & Children's Services have, at the Town Clerk's request, led Officer discussions on how the City Corporation should approach the assessment of such ideas to prioritise and improve management, given limited resources.
5. The proposed process - outlined below - focuses explicitly on work to support employment and employability in wider London and excludes the following: any work undertaken by the City Corporation in its capacity as a local authority for the City (including work which to some extent covers employability but is wholly focused on City residents); HR aspects of our role as an employer (which is the subject of a separate workstream); our support for City Corporation academies specifically or education more broadly; and City Bridge Trust's grant making activity. It focuses on the consideration of new ideas for employability initiatives, not on reviewing existing activity.

Proposed approval channel and process for new employability ideas

6. In view of the lack of a single accepted channel for formal consideration and approval of new ideas for employment and employability initiatives, this report proposes a structured and systematic process comprising a 'filter process', two levels of Officer assessment and Member approval.

Stage	Who	Role
Filter questions	Project sponsor (City Corporation Officer lead)	<p>The 'filter process' would identify ideas that do not fit with the City Corporation's overall objectives and would help to ensure that Officer time is not spent developing or considering ideas that are not going to be progressed.</p> <p>Proposals must answer yes/yes/no to the questions below for the idea to proceed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it mainly benefit London Residents? • Does it link mainly to London businesses? • Is it duplicating something already happening?
Stage 1	Employability Group	<p>This stage would involve submission of sufficient information to allow Officers to present an initial draft of the assessment questions (outlined at para. 10 and in detail at Appendix Two) for consideration by the Employability Group. This is an Officer group chaired by the Assistant Director of Economic Development, comprising Officers drawn from across the City Corporation with expertise in employability. A fuller, assessed proposal would then be presented to the Supporting London Group (see below) and on to Members, in most circumstances to your Committee.</p> <p>The Employability Group's role would be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertake initial scrutiny and assessment of idea and consider an early draft of the assessment questions • provide subject-matter expertise • play a supportive, steering, advisory role, potentially seeing a number of iterations of a promising idea before passing it on to Supporting London Group. <p>NB The Group would not have a veto on which ideas progressed to the next stage.</p>

Stage 2	Supporting London Group	<p>The 'Supporting London Group' of senior Officers, is chaired by the Town Clerk and drawn from the Chief Officers Group. It considers all matters relating to the City Corporation's engagement and relations with London's government and communities and has specific responsibility for developing and coordinating the City Corporation's London-wide activities.</p> <p>To ensure sufficient Officer-level scrutiny of ideas and to limit the burden on your Committee, a key 'gateway' role is proposed for the Supporting London Group involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considering presentation of assessed idea • providing strategic guidance on how, if at all to present idea to Members and any fundamental changes to be made • acting as the 'gateway' for ideas – Supporting London Group to decide if ideas progress to Member approval or not. • approving non-contentious or minor proposals - at the discretion of the Town Clerk - without referring to Members for approval
Stage 3	Member approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy & Resources Committee receives recommendation to support idea and has authority to approve it (or Community & Children's Services Committee in the case of apprenticeships & traineeships). • Education Board and Community & Children's Services Committee (or other relevant Committee) input to proposal to inform decision made by Policy & Resources Committee (except in the case of apprenticeships or traineeships where decision will be made by Community and Children's Services Committee with input from Policy & Resources Committee). <p>NB This approach complements the existing lines of accountability and the Committee framework for employability activity as detailed at Appendix 3.</p>

What ideas are in scope?

7. To provide a common understanding of which kinds of new ideas for employability activity would be in scope, a set of general principles is given at Appendix One. The proposed process (and the accompanying assessment questions detailed below and at Appendix Two) have been designed to evaluate

new ideas for activity for the City Corporation to support i.e. not to review and interrogate existing activity, which would be a distinct exercise in its own right, rather to ensure that any new ideas are being assessed in a structured, systematic way before being presented to the Supporting London Group for initial consideration and then to Members.

8. The assessment questions would be used to appraise proposed activity to support wider London. They would not be a tool to evaluate ideas for activity specifically targeted at City residents only, nor that which does not have employability as its primary purpose e.g. English language classes, broader community development type activity etc. (NB 'City residents' refers to residents living within the City's boundary, not tenants or leaseholders living outside of the City's boundaries.)
9. The process focuses on assessing ideas for enhancing employability in London and it is not intended to replace or duplicate existing decision-making processes or capture areas where there is a defined strategy and process in place e.g. education activity. However, to ensure appropriate rigour is applied to decisions made about new work on employability, the assumption has been to include activity in this new process except where there is a good reason to exclude it. Equally, while the intention is to bring a common approach to the assessment of new ideas for employability activity, the aim of the process is not to discourage new ideas.

Questions to assess new proposals

10. In addition to the development of a clear process for the assessment of ideas, it is also important to ensure clarity and consistency in how any new proposals for employability activity are considered. This paper therefore proposes questions to help assess new proposals based on the following:
 - i. a clear rationale for City Corporation involvement;
 - ii. what the need is;
 - iii. costs/benefits; and
 - iv. consideration of the length of time that City Corporation support is required and, if necessary, how activity would be sustained without City Corporation support long-term.
11. The outline assessment questions – provided at Appendix Two - present a way of appraising new ideas. It is envisaged that a 'sponsoring' officer would be responsible for completion of the assessment questions and reporting to the Supporting London Group and/or your Committee.
12. To avoid the proposed assessment questions creating a disproportionate administrative burden for the Supporting London Group and your Committee, it would also be possible to agree general positions on types of activity. Where it would be helpful to establish a general position on types of activity to avoid repeat assessment of similar ideas, the Supporting London Group could be asked, as part of assessing a specific activity (e.g. an individual careers fair), to

develop a general position (for Member approval where necessary, in most circumstances by your Committee) for related requests.

Outcomes

13. The following headline outcomes have been identified for City Corporation activity, drawing on priorities from the recently approved 2015-19 Corporate Plan and existing departmental business plans where Member approval has already been secured. These outcomes are intended to clarify existing priorities and make them more functional and easier to assess new ideas against.

- An articulate, skilled workforce that is drawn from London's communities:
 - Facilitate routes into jobs in the City and beyond – particularly, but not exclusively, those in sectors with significant representation in the City itself - for residents of the City's neighbouring boroughs
 - Support residents in neighbouring boroughs to develop the specific skills and experience to enable them to compete for these jobs
 - Raise awareness of the types of jobs available - particularly in the City and in these sectors - and the routes into them.
- A City business community acknowledged for its responsible practices and its engagement with local communities:
 - Support businesses to 'give back' to communities in London
 - Provide a 'gateway' into a range of services and support
 - Support businesses to diversify their workforce

Corporate and Strategic Implications

15. The proposed process complements and fits in with existing lines of accountability and the Committee framework for employability work, which is detailed at Appendix 3.

Conclusion

16. The proposed decision-making process outlined above, and the suggested assessment criteria to appraise new ideas for employability initiatives, are designed to provide suitable rigour to the consideration of new areas for an important policy area for the City Corporation while striking a sensible balance between such rigour and an additional administrative burden.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Principles outlining types of employability ideas within scope of the proposed assessment process
- Appendix 2 – Questions for assessment of new proposals for employability initiatives
- Appendix 3 - Lines of accountability on City Corporation employability activity

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Appendix One

Principles outlining types of employability ideas within and outside the scope of the proposed assessment process

The proposed assessment questions have been designed to evaluate new ideas for activity for the City Corporation to support which has employability as its primary purpose i.e. not to review and interrogate existing activity, which would be a distinct exercise in its own right, rather to ensure that any new ideas are being assessed in a structured, systematic way before being presented to the Supporting London Group and/or Members for initial consideration.

The assessment questions will be used to appraise proposed activity in wider London. They will not be a tool to evaluate ideas for activity specifically targeted at City residents only or activity which does not have employability as its primary purpose e.g. English language classes, broader community development type activity, Barbican education programme etc.

What do we mean by 'employability'?

- a. **Education/ aspiration raising** – this includes promoting careers to school/ college/ university students, visits to City firms, school talks, promotion of visible role models. Educational attainment and performance of schools and provision of adult/community learning activity not related to employability is not included.
- b. **Employability Skills** – this includes support with interview skills, CV writing, supporting job searching and applications, mentoring of job seekers etc. and can be provided to students, young people, adults and specific priority groups.
- c. **Work experience** – this includes facilitating work experience for students and adults in either paid or unpaid placements either by working with individuals, organisations, institutions or employers.
- d. **Apprenticeships** – this includes recruitment and training of apprenticeships and traineeships including supporting employers with apprenticeships and traineeships and promotion of the agenda.
- e. **Jobs** – this includes supporting employers to diversify their recruitment practices and their workforce and promoting self- employment/ enterprise as a route into employment.
- f. **Progression** – this includes supporting individuals to progress their careers and access further training/ employability support and supporting employers to develop and progress their workforce.

The types of activity which would be in scope for being assessed using the assessment questions are:

- a) Bidding for external funding (NB this would *exclude* any 'routine' renegotiation of external funding for existing programmes - e.g. apprenticeships - where there is **no** material change e.g. to the geography of benefit of the activity, the target beneficiaries, types/ sector of business being targeted etc. but would *include* any

renegotiations of external funding if any such material changes are proposed).

- b) Activity which requires new allocation of City Corporation money (not contained within existing budgets, no proposed minimum level of cost)
- c) Re-commissioning of activity (where there is a material change, e.g. to the geography of benefit of the activity, the target beneficiaries, types/ sector of business being targeted etc.)
- d) Activity that cannot be absorbed within existing staffing requirements and requires new staff (even if posts have funding identified) or reconfiguration of priorities
- e) New activity involving use of City Corporation premises and/or convening/ partnering powers and which requires an allocation of cash, staff or other in-kind resources/ support
- f) Activity that could impact adversely on the City Corporation's reputation

Questions for assessment of new proposals for employability initiatives

A Basic information

1. Name of proposal:
2. Description (what will proposal do, 50 words max):
3. Total cost (all years, specifying the total proposed cost to the City Corporation and the total cost to other funders i.e. matchfunding):
4. Which of the headline outcomes (see para. 13 in report) does this proposal address?:
5. Timescale of proposal (when will it start and finish?):
6. Project sponsor (lead City Corporation officer):
7. Background (why and how the proposal has come about):

B Why and how would the proposal fit with us – the City Corporation - specifically?

1. **Does it utilise the City Corporation's strengths and unique nature?**
Exploring why/how City Corporation is well placed to be involved; which other organisations are or are not involved; what value the City Corporation can add.
2. **City of London angle**
How does this link to the City Corporation's interests and key audiences (businesses, London stakeholders, Government etc.)?
3. **How does it fit with the City Corporation's policy framework?**
Link to outcomes (see para 13 in report). Measurement and evidence.
4. **What is the geographical coverage of the activity?**

C What is the need?

5. **What evidence is there that there is a need to act in this area?**
6. **What is the landscape of provision?**
Which other organisations deliver comparable activity? If few or none, why is that?
7. **Is the proposal innovative/ in line with the latest good practice/ expertise in this area?**
8. **How does the proposal enhance or add value to what is already underway?**

9. **Are the partners/ stakeholders/ local authorities involved and supportive?**

D Costs and outcomes

10. **What is the overall cost of delivery to the City Corporation (inc. staff time, cash, equipment, facilities and other resources)?**

11. **Who else is contributing – or could contribute - to the activity?**

12. **How will the activity be funded? (departmentally, corporately?)**

13. **What staff time will be required to develop/ manage/ deliver this activity?**

14. **What are the overall measurable outputs and benefits of the activity and how will they be measured?**

15. **What impact would it have?**

16. **What are the unit costs of the outputs?**

E Risks

17. **What are the risks to successful delivery?**

18. **Are there any reputational risks to the City Corporation?**

F Exit strategy

19. **What is the exit strategy for the City Corporation's involvement?**

20. **How will learning from the activity be shared internally and with partners and stakeholders?**

Lines of accountability on City Corporation employability activity

Context and key aims

As a central part of its ‘London offer’ the City Corporation supports a range of activities to improve employability among communities in wider London (as well as in the City itself), much of which is underpinned by business involvement.

This work principally supports the strategic aim of the Corporate Plan ‘*To provide valued services to London and the nation*’, sitting mainly within Key Policy Priority 4: ‘*Maximising the opportunities and benefits afforded by our role in supporting London’s communities*’.

Governance

Decision-making for the various programmes rests with the relevant Committees, with the Education Board also having an oversight of any which focus on making the link from education to employment. This is reflected in the Education Strategy.

What we do: priority activities

Flowing from the Corporate Plan and through departmental business plans, the City Corporation’s employability offer spans the following key activities:

	Lead department	Primary responsible Committee	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of an apprenticeships and traineeships (effectively pre-apprenticeships) programme¹ 	Community & Children’s Services	Community & Children’s Services	Education Board oversight
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the delivery of major pilot employability initiatives through the Central London Forward partnership in response to needs identified by the partnership 	Central London Forward	Policy & Resources (and Board of Central London Forward)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City Bridge Trust grants programmes support employability initiatives across Greater London 	City Bridge Trust	City Bridge Trust	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the CoLC’s own internal employment/recruitment procedures to clarify approach to e.g. hosting work placements, apprentices 	Corporate HR	Establishment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight and monitoring of the City of London’s sponsorship of its Academies 	Community & Children’s Services	Education Board	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of City businesses in recruiting from local communities 	Economic Development Office	Policy and Resources	

¹ I.e. engagement and briefing of employers; recruiting and screening candidates; managing and delivering training element.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of work placements in the City for residents of neighbouring boroughs 	Economic Development Office	Policy and Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with City businesses to raise the aspirations of young people in neighbouring boroughs and their awareness of career opportunities 	Economic Development Office	Policy and Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement of job brokerage and employment support in neighbouring boroughs relating to jobs in the City 	Economic Development Office	Policy and Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitation of employment and training of residents of neighbouring boroughs on City construction sites 	Economic Development Office	Policy and Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement of City business (and City Corporation) volunteers in a range of employability activities 	Economic Development Office	Policy and Resources	

Co-ordination of the above is achieved in two key ways: i) through an Employability Group² involving key officers leading each workstream and ii) the recently created post of Business Engagement Manager in EDO, focusing on co-ordinating the City Corporation's employability offer to businesses.

Where?

Employability activities are delivered across a number of different geographies:

- The City's seven immediately neighbouring boroughs (final six activities above, led by EDO);
- Greater London (City Bridge Trust grants; apprenticeships programme);
- Central London (the City's neighbouring boroughs excluding Hackney and Tower Hamlets but including Kensington & Chelsea and Wandsworth, led by Central London Forward);

For whom?

Target groups vary from initiative to initiative but all respond to identified needs and to tackling disadvantage within the areas in question and include (among others):

Unemployed people (some long-term)	Students at schools within neighbouring boroughs
Young people not in education, employment and training (NEETs) or at risk of becoming NEET	Ex-offenders
Care-leavers	

² An officer group with overview of all CoLC/ CBT employability/ aspiration raising projects. Membership: EDO; Community & Children's Services; Human Resources; City Bridge Trust; City Business Library; Culture Heritage & Libraries; Barbican/Guildhall School; Public Relations; Town Clerk's; Central London Forward.