

Committee	Dated:
Policy and Resources Committee	28 May 2015
Subject: Proposed Project on the Impact of Immigration on the UK	Public
Report of: Director of Economic Development and Director of Public Relations Office	For Decision

Summary

Over the past five years the City of London Corporation has contributed to the debate on the benefits to business and the wider economy of immigration, and the Visa process itself.

The City of London has been approached by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) to sponsor a project to improve public understanding of evidence on the economic impacts of immigration. The proposal is to produce a video animation aimed at encouraging a more informed debate. In addition to employers and young people, it will be targeted at a wider audience of migration sceptics. It will focus on the impacts of immigration particularly on the labour market, but will also include services. The messages and format of the video will be tested through focus groups. A short report on the main findings will also be prepared. The aim is to complete the project and present the findings in the autumn.

This project presents an opportunity to continue the City of London's support for an informed debate on immigration through working with a respected independent research organisation.

Recommendation

Members are invited to note:

- (i) To approve funding of £30,000 from your Committee's Policy Initiatives Fund 2015/16, categorised under Events and charged to *City's Cash*.

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London Corporation has over the past five years been closely engaged in the debate on immigration, both in terms of public profile, for example, sponsoring the Evening Standard debate on immigration, and also through leading an informal group comprising a wide range of stakeholders including the GLA and education institutions which address issues of visa policy and practice. The Corporation was also engaged with HM Government, for example, in a submission to the Balance of Competences exercise in 2014.
2. The National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) has established a reputation as a leading independent research organisation. It is experienced in carrying out qualitative research with employers, young people and the general public, including on immigration issues. It also has particular expertise in disseminating research findings and has established media networks.

Proposal

3. The City of London Corporation has been approached by NIESR to sponsor a further project they have developed addressing the impact of immigration on the UK. Public understanding of the economic impacts of immigration remains poor and is strongly influenced by the media, affecting policy development. Lack of understanding of the impacts of migration make it difficult for groups such as employers to explain the practices and concerns to policy makers and wider audiences.
4. NIESR's intention is to produce a video animation aimed at encouraging a more informed debate on immigration. In addition to employers and young people, it will be targeted at a wider audience of migration sceptics and those who lack accurate information about migration impacts. It will focus on the impacts of immigration particularly on the labour market, but also on services. There will also be an associated short report on the main findings for dissemination through more traditional channels.
5. The messages and format of the video will be tested through focus groups which will include employers, young people in schools and the general public. The wider research project will add to current understanding of how attitudes towards immigration are influenced by both facts and opinion. The City of London has already made an input to the proposed project and will

continue to do so, though the project itself will be an independent research project.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

6. The proposed project supports the strategic aim to support the City as the world leader in international finance and business services and the key policy priority of supporting and promoting the international and domestic finance and business sector.

Implications

7. If approved, it is recommended that your Committee funds this proposal through a contribution of £30,000 categorised under Events and charged to *City's Cash* through the Policy Initiatives Fund for 2015/16. The current uncommitted balance available within your Committee's Policy Initiatives Fund 2015/16 amounts to £259,000 prior to any allowance being made for any other proposals on today's agenda.
8. This funding will allow the following activities to occur and thus ensure the delivery of the project in Autumn 2015:
 - Immediate hire of a video animation company with a view to producing a pilot animation, which your officers will then approve;
 - Immediate production of content and script for the animation, which again will be approved by your officers;
 - Testing the pilot video with at least five focus groups, representing a broad view on immigration issues, in June 2015. These groups will be located both in London and elsewhere in the UK, thus providing a geographical balance to this research. These groups will consist of secondary school aged children, the wider-public and business advocates drawn from our own City Corporation migration working group (co-ordinated by the Economic Development Office);
 - Production of final animation, once your officers' approval has been gained. Additional production of a supporting short report representing the video and focus group findings. These activities are expected in July 2015.
 - Launch and dissemination via press, broadcast and social media in September 2015.
9. It is expected the costs will breakdown as follows (*figures are approximate*):
 - hire of a video animation company and production of pilot script and content: £11,000;

- focus groups and final video production: £11,000;
- short supporting report, launch, and dissemination to press: £8,000.

Conclusion

10. Support for this project conducted by a well respected, independent research organisation will maintain the City of London's interest and profile in the public and policy debate on immigration and, in particular, the economic benefits of immigration.

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