

Committee: Policy and Resources	Dated: 19 October 2015
Subject: Bright Blue & Localis 'Future of London' Research Proposal	Public
Report of: Director of Public Relations	For Decision

Summary

The think tanks Bright Blue and Localis are proposing to collaborate to compile a collection of short essays on the 'Future of London'. Each of the contributors would look at an agreed topic and offer some original and radical proposals which they believe could improve London and the lives of Londoners by 2050. They propose that the publication should be launched at a high-profile event before the 2016 Mayoral election as part of a strategy for press, TV and radio coverage.

Bright Blue and Localis have invited the City of London Corporation to be the sponsoring partner for the essay collection, for the cost of £20,000. This would enable the City Corporation to be part of the decision-making process throughout the project, to contribute one of the essays, to comment on the final draft before publication, to have its logo on the publication and on promotional materials and to have a speaking place at the launch event.

Sponsoring this project would accord well with the City Corporation's aims of supporting London's communities and promoting London as the world's leading international financial and business centre, as outlined in the *City Corporation Communications Strategy 2015 -18*. Sponsorship would also help ensure that the City Corporation is involved and is seen to be involved in policy debates around London's future.

Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to approve that the City of London Corporation sponsors the 'Future of London' essay collection by Bright Blue and Localis for the sum of £20,000. This cost is to be met from the Committee's Policy Initiatives Fund for 2015/16, categorised under the Research section of the Fund and charged to *City's Cash*.

Main Report

Background

1. Bright Blue is a pressure group and think tank for liberal conservatism considered influential in the 'modernising' wing of the Conservative Party. It carries out research under three broad themes: individual power and potential, security and prosperity in a globalised world, and the future of conservatism. Policies suggested by Bright Blue which have been introduced by government include: lifting the cap on university student numbers, relaxing staff-to-child ratios in childcare settings, enabling people to extend their home by one storey without planning permission, and strengthening the minimum wage. Bright Blue holds events throughout the year, including hosting keynote speeches.
2. Localis is an independent think tank which promotes localism and local public service reform. It carries out research in areas such as growth and infrastructure, health and social care, finance reform and the decentralization of power across government. Policies advocated by Localis, which have been pursued by government, include the break-up of the regional planning system, reform of social housing tenure, the abolition of the Comprehensive Area Assessment and the introduction of a social investment bank.
3. In 2014, the City Corporation sponsored a Bright Blue essay collection, 'The Moderniser's Manifesto'. This included chapters by numerous Conservative MPs and received coverage in national newspapers including the *Independent*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Telegraph*.

Proposal

4. Bright Blue and Localis are proposing to compile a collection of short essays on the topic of the 'Future of London'. These will examine the changes and developments that are likely to occur in London over the next thirty years and will put forward ideas for policies which could change London for the better. The collection would consist of approximately 10-15 contributions, each of around 1000 words. Each contributor would write about an agreed topic and give their thoughts on ideas which could change London and the lives of Londoners by 2050. It is intended that each essay would have at least one major original proposal.
5. It is proposed that the publication be launched at a high-profile launch event with a panel and a keynote speaker. Bright Blue and Localis would devise a

media strategy aimed at regional and national press, TV and radio. They would also aim to have the *London Evening Standard* publish a series of extracts.

6. Bright Blue and Localis have invited the City Corporation to be their sole sponsoring partner for the publication. This would enable the City Corporation to have a role in decision-making over contributors and the launch event and to provide comments on the final draft of the report before publication. The City Corporation would also be able to contribute an essay to the collection and a speaker to the launch event. The City Corporation's logo would appear on the report and marketing materials.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

7. Sponsoring this project would accord well with the City Corporation's aims of supporting London's communities by helping to demonstrate the City Corporation's interest in policies affecting the future of London as a whole, as outlined in the *City Corporation Communications Strategy 2015 -18*. Providing a platform for policy ideas to improve London will also help the aim of promoting London as the world's leading international financial and business centre. The chance to provide a chapter in the report is a particularly valuable opportunity for the City Corporation to contribute publicly to the policy debates over London's future and to receive positive coverage.
8. It is proposed that the required funding of £20,000 is drawn from your Policy Initiatives Fund 2015/16, categorised under the Research section of the Fund and charged to *City's Cash*. The current uncommitted balance available within your Committee's Policy Initiatives Fund 2015/16 amounts to £187,300 prior to any allowance being made for any other proposals on today's agenda.

The breakdown of the total cost of sponsorship is as follows:

• Designing and printing publication:	£9,000
• Organising and hosting launch event:	£4,000
• Editing essays:	£3,000
• Devising and implementing media strategy:	<u>£4,000</u>
	£20,000

Conclusion

9. Members are asked to agree to the City Corporation sponsoring the '*Future of London*' essay collection by Bright Blue and Localis, which are both well-established think tanks. Sponsorship would help ensure that the City of London continues publicly to contribute to the debates about the future of London and would help demonstrate the City Corporation's interest in the whole of London. The chance to contribute an essay to the publication would help ensure wide readership of the City Corporation's ideas among policy-makers. The launch event and media strategy would also provide the City Corporation with an excellent opportunity to engage with its key audiences and foster dialogue between politicians, senior officials and academics about the future of London.

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