

Committee: Policy and Resources – For Decision Education Board – For Information	Date: 21 January 2016
Subject: City Careers Open House programme – proposal for one year extension	
Report of: Director of Economic Development	For Decision
Report Author: Liz Skelcher, Assistant Director of Economic Development	

Summary

1. Raising aspirations of young people continues to be a central element of the City Corporation’s work to support communities in neighbouring boroughs. A key part of that work is the City Careers Open House programme, which commenced in 2006 and has, in recent years, brought over 2,250 young people into the City annually, facilitating taster visits to City businesses to demystify the world of work and raise awareness, in a practical context, of routes into employment.
2. In May 2013, the Policy and Resources and City Bridge Trust Committees agreed to grant funding for a proposed expansion and extension of the existing (Section 106 planning obligation-funded) City Careers Open House programme.
3. Recent evaluation has shown that City Careers Open House is effective in:-
 - reaching students who are most likely to be among the most deprived in London,
 - improving students’ understanding of ‘the City’ and of the type of jobs on offer in the City,
 - providing students both with the confidence to demonstrate the skills needed for the workplace and the confidence that they will obtain the job they want in the future.
4. It is proposed to extend the programme for one further year, subject to a competitive tendering process and review thereafter. This is intended to maintain the momentum of the programme pending further consideration of how best the City Corporation might focus, and strengthen, its employability activities for the future to make maximum impact both among City businesses and across London communities.

Recommendation

5. That the Policy and Resources Committee note the success of the existing programme and approve expenditure of up to £100,000 from the training, skills and job brokerage allocation of Section 106 monies to extend the City Careers Open House programme for the academic year 2016/17 to provide visits to City employers for some 2,250 young people.

Main Report

Background

1. Educational attainment in London is amongst best in country but this is not translating into job success for young people. For this reason, as well as to help break down the barriers between the opportunities in the City and neighbouring communities, raising aspirations of young people continues to be a central element of the City Corporation's work to support communities in neighbouring boroughs.

2. Since its inception in 2006, the City Careers Open House programme has provided aspiration-raising half-day taster visits to City businesses for groups of up to 30 school students within the City's neighbouring boroughs. It forms a key part of work to support communities across wider London.

3. The programme is a practical example of facilitating meaningful employer contacts for young people at a pivotal point in their education. It responds to the increasing body of evidence suggesting a positive relationship between the number of meaningful employer contacts that a young person experiences during their school career and their confidence (at 19-24) in progression towards ultimate career goals, the likelihood of whether (at 19-24) they are NEET¹ or non-NEET and future earnings².

4. In response to the City Corporation's wish to increase its support to London's communities beyond levels permitted by existing budgets, the Policy and Resources and City Bridge Trust Committees in May 2013 agreed to grant funding of £280,000 to scale up the existing (Section 106 planning obligation-funded) programme for the academic year 2013/14 and also to extend its duration to cover at least the 2014/15 academic year. This was funded by an uplift to the City Bridge Trust grants budget and met from the revenue surplus in Bridge House Estates (and was additional to the City Bridge Trust's annual grants budgets). This new funding was approved at a time of uncertainty around the future of Section 106 planning obligation funding for skills, training and job brokerage activity. It was tapered in alongside existing Section 106 monies in the first year and from the second year replaced S106 altogether.

5. The grant was agreed to be made to delivery body, The Brokerage Citylink (a registered charity) who bid for the grant funding after a successful track record of delivering the secondary schools programme.

¹ NEET = Not in Education, Employment or Training.

² It's who you meet: why employer contacts at school make a difference to the employment prospects of young adults, Education and Employers Taskforce, June 2012.

6. Over the academic years 2013/14 and 2014/15 the following activity has taken place:

	Secondary	Primary	Total
Number of students participating in tours	3,272	2,120	5,392
Number of tours to City businesses	96	88	184
Number of schools participating	66	71	137

7. The programme is set to meet the targets which were set for it within the allocated budget (i.e. in being offered to all secondary schools and 77 primary schools in neighbouring boroughs and target numbers, including the City-sponsored secondary Academies) albeit that, following expert advice, the delivery and funding has been reprofiled over three academic years rather than the initial two. This was considered more realistic in terms of lead-in times for schools' take-up of the programme (and bearing in mind that not all schools would participate) and the ability to secure business hosts and to match them with schools.

8. An impact review over the academic years 2013/14-2014/15 has demonstrated that:

- the programme succeeded in reaching students who were most likely to be amongst the most deprived in London.
- the 'distance travelled' by participants has improved as a result of attending the workshops, students were seen to have higher confidence in a number of key areas and were better educated on careers in the City. For example:-
 - 86% of girls and 87% of boys felt Very Confident or Confident that they **could explain the different jobs that you can do in the City** (44% increase and 33%)
 - 76% of girls and 79% of boys felt Very Confident or Confident of **getting the job they want in the future**: (23% increase and 19% increase respectively since the beginning of the workshop)
 - 82% of girls and 67% of boys felt Very Confident or Confident in **demonstrating skills needed in the workplace**: (32% increase and 20% increase respectively since the beginning of the workshop)
- the impact of the programme has gone beyond the individual cohorts that attend and is having a wider impact on schools as a whole.

Current Position

9. In response to the City Corporation's wish to enhance its efforts to support wider London, consideration is being given to how best the City Corporation (in the context of the activities of other City institutions in this field) might focus, and strengthen, its employability activities to make maximum impact among City businesses and across London communities.

10. Pending this exercise it is important to keep our key, most impactful, programmes running, including City Careers Open House, to maintain momentum, while retaining the flexibility needed to position our employability work most effectively for the future.

11. City Careers Open House is perceived to be a fundamental part of the City Corporation's support for its neighbouring communities, it having been noted by influential stakeholders (e.g. including a neighbouring borough leader) as an excellent example of the type of activity which demonstrably breaks down the barriers between communities of the neighbouring boroughs and increases aspirations to work in the City.

Proposals

12. We therefore propose an extension of the City Careers Open House programme for a further academic year (2016/17) at a cost of up to £100,000 to provide taster visits to City businesses for some 2,250 young people (from all secondary schools and some 77 primary schools in neighbouring boroughs, including the City's Academies).

13. City Bridge Trust has advised that the City Careers Open House programme does not meet the Trust's current programme priorities, and that any request for continuation funding would need to be made by open application, a course which is unlikely to be successful. Fortunately, previous fears around the continued availability of Section 106 income to apply to further skills, employment and job brokerage activity, have proved unfounded. As a result, sufficient Section 106 funds are to hand to enable the continuation of this programme for a further 12 months.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. This proposal supports the Corporate Plan objective of providing "valued services... to London and the nation", and key policy priority of "maximising the opportunities and benefits afforded by our role in supporting London's communities". It also fulfils a priority within the business plan of the Economic Development Office.

Implications

15. Expenditure of up to £100,000 is recommended from the training, skills and job brokerage allocation of Section 106 monies to meet the costs of the City Careers Open House programme for a further academic year (2016/17). The delivery body would be selected following a competitive tendering process run in conjunction with the City Procurement service.

16. The future of City Careers Open House beyond 2016/17 would be considered in due course as part of the wider consideration of the City Corporation's employability activities referred to above.

Conclusion

17. The City Careers Open House programme has been demonstrated to be a powerful way of raising the aspirations of substantial numbers of young people in

London. An extension for a further academic year (2016/17) pending further consideration of the City Corporation's wider employability work will maintain momentum and may help, in time, to open up the City to diverse new talent.

Liz Skelcher, Economic Development Office

T: 020 7332 3606

E : Liz.skelcher@cityoflondon.gov.uk