

Committee(s): Policy and Resources	Dated: 16032017
Subject: Sponsorship of the 2017 Battle of Ideas Festival	Public
Report of: Director of Communications	For Decision
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Summary

The Battle of Ideas Festival is organised by the Institute of Ideas (IoI), an organisation founded in 2000 to provide a forum committed to open and robust public debate. The IoI organises intelligent public debates on 'controversial' topics. It is not associated with any political party.

The proposal is to sponsor the 2017 Battle of Ideas festival, organised by the IoI, which will take place on 28-29 October at the Barbican Centre. The event has established itself as London's major intellectual festival. The IoI would seek £25,000 for the sponsorship statuses of *Economy Champion* and *Debate Partner*.

Sponsorship will provide the City Corporation with the opportunity to shape the event's agenda by suggesting relevant topics to be addressed and by providing speakers. The City Corporation will have the chance to engage in debates and demonstrate a public commitment to thought-leadership. This will also be an excellent opportunity to raise the City Corporation's profile among a wider audience.

Recommendation(s)

The Committee is asked to agree to provide £25,000 from the Policy Initiatives Fund 2017/18 categorised under 'Events' and charged to *City's Cash* to sponsor the Battle of Ideas Festival, taking place on 28-29 October 2017.

Main Report

Background

1. This is the second time the City Corporation would work with the IoI, having sponsored the successful 2016 Battle of Ideas festival. However, the Barbican Centre has hosted the event since 2012. The IoI provides a forum committed to open and robust public debate on 'controversial' topics.

Proposals

2. The proposal is to sponsor the 2017 Battle of Ideas weekend festival, organised by the IoI, which will take place on 28-29 October at the Barbican Centre. This is the event's twelfth year and it has established itself as London's major intellectual festival. It brings into the City a diverse range of international speakers and several thousand people from all walks of life.

3. Over 400 speakers took part in the 2016 Battle of Ideas. They included the founder of Editorial Intelligence Julia Hobsbawm, leading barrister, Martin Howe QC, director of the think-tank *British Future*, Sunder Katwala, former Deputy Mayor of London for Education and Culture, Munira Mirza, leading economist Vicky Pryce and several prominent Members of Parliament. The Chairman of Policy and Resources took part on a panel and spoke at the closing reception. The Managing Director of the Barbican, Sir Nicholas Kenyon, was also a speaker.
4. This year's programme is yet to be finalised but proposed topics, which the City Corporation would shape, include 'Solving the Productivity Puzzle', 'City after Brexit', 'Can technology save the economy?' and 'Globalisation – villain or scapegoat?'
5. As *Debate Partner* the City Corporation would input into programming three to four debates, with nominated City of London Corporation speakers, on key areas of interest to the City. This would demonstrate a commitment to thought-leadership in a public arena.
6. The City Corporation would be credited in all publicity materials as *Economy Champion*: online and in print. Sponsorship would include complimentary VIP tickets for relevant speakers and 10 representatives for the weekend, which would include admittance to the festival drinks reception. The City Corporation would also be invited to address delegates at the Saturday morning Welcome Address or evening reception.
7. For the 2016 Battle of Ideas, sponsorship gave the City Corporation the opportunity to invite 50 students from the City Corporation's schools and academies. This opportunity is available again this year.
8. The Festival attracts an audience the City Corporation does not regularly engage with: students, post-graduates and researchers, professionals, teachers and academics. Sponsorship will be an excellent opportunity to raise the City Corporation's profile with the latter.

Implications

9. It is proposed that the required funding of £25,000 is drawn from the Policy Initiatives Fund 2017/18 and categorised under Events and charged to *City's Cash*. The current uncommitted balance in the 2017/18 Fund is £469,300 prior to any allowance being made for any other proposals on today's agenda.

Conclusion

10. The proposed sponsorship of the 2017 Battle of Ideas accords well with the role the City Corporation plays in promoting debates on issues that affect the City and linking its work to its schools and academies.

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