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| Committee(s) | Dated: |
| Policy and Resources Committee – for decision | 06/07/2017 |
| Subject: One City Social Media Platform | Public |
| Report of: Director of the Built Environment / The City Surveyor / Director of Communications | For Decision |
| Report author: Simon McGinn, City Property Advisory Team | |

Summary

This report seeks to agree funding following a request from the City Property Association (CPA) to contribute to the ongoing development of a new social media led platform that has been piloted since October 2016. "One City", is a dedicated resource to promote the Square Mile to City workers to inform them of attractions and events in the Square Mile and to deliver greater attachment as a place to work. In just over 6 months the One City platform has delivered 3,800 followers on Instagram and over 7,000 unique visitors to a new dedicated One City website. It is considered that the continuation of the platform would be a valuable resource that will complement and reinforce communications from other cultural institutions in the City and the City Corporation itself. The proposed partnership with the CPA would ensure that the property industry works closely with the City Corporation Visitor and Cultural Hub teams to collectively promote the fast changing face of the City as being relevant to a new breed of City workers that want to enjoy a broader experience at their place of work.

The CPA has developed and costed a three year strategy and is seeking funding from the City Corporation to contribute to the ongoing delivery and development of the platform.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Joint fund the delivery of the One City social media platform for a three year period at a total cost of up to £180,000, depending on any irrecoverable VAT incurred by the CPA, to be met from your Committee's Policy Initiative Fund

(£60,000 in years 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20) categorised under 'Promoting the City' and charged to City's Cash.

- Agree that the final terms of the agreement with the CPA to deliver the platform be delegated to the City Surveyor / Director of the Built Environment / Director of Communications in consultation with the Comptroller and City Solicitor and with the Chamberlain for those terms of a financial nature.
- Note that any underspendings or over achievement of third party contributions will be reinvested back into the project subject to Member agreement.

Main Report

Background

1. In 2015 the CPA commissioned a piece of work with the City Property Advisory Team to provide a rationale for the development of a modern and exciting platform which would serve to inform and attract investment, occupiers, workers and visitors to the City. In the first instance it was felt that the primary focus should be City workers as they are deemed to be one of the biggest influences on business decision makers, they engage with client and business relations all over the world and are well placed to promote the City beyond its borders. It was recommended that a platform be delivered to engage with workers as some of the City's best and most effective ambassadors through:
 - Raising awareness of all that the City offers.
 - Linking events together to improve branding and their cumulative effect.
 - Inspiring workers to engage more / try something new.
 - Developing new initiatives targeted at workers.
2. The solution proposed was to develop a social media platform that would seek to engage with workers on multiple levels. Analysis of the market demonstrated that there were no other dedicated platforms that seek to engage directly with City workers. Established platforms such as Time Out and Londonist promote London wide events and activities but do not specifically promote activities in the Square Mile. The demographic of workers that are most prevalent is in the 24-39 year old age bracket (who make up 55% of the City's workforce) and it was felt that the initial focus would be on developing an Instagram platform as this is the media that is most commonly used by this demographic. Instagram is a dynamic platform that allows users to post images instantaneously which can be shared with other friends and colleagues and helps to generate a real interest in events and activities.

In addition, a new dedicated webpage has been created that provides the opportunity for workers to sign up to a monthly newsletter that highlights forthcoming events. This provides an opportunity for workers to find out what is happening in the City and will be supplemented by a new 'What's On' guide and calendar of events to be delivered in July 2017. The cost of running the initial pilot has been met jointly through funding from the CPA and from the CPAT local risk budget.

3. A key part of the success of the platform is considered to be its neutrality so the site remains completely unbranded and there are no references to the involvement of the City Corporation or the CPA. As part of the promotion of events and activities the team has worked closely with the City Corporation Visitor Team, Museum of London, and Barbican Centre to ensure all upcoming events are identified. The platform is seen as being distinct from anything else being promoted by the City Corporation but at the same time complementary
4. The platform can be accessed from the following links:
<http://www.onecity.london/>
<https://www.instagram.com/onecityldn/>

Current Position

5. Since the soft launch of the pilot in October 2016 there has been steady growth in the Instagram account with followers growing from 1,800 at the end of 2016 to circa 3,800 at the end of May, with a total of 250 posts relating to City events and images. This compares favourably with peer review of similar platforms such as Kings Cross (2,618 followers) and Canary Wharf (2,800 followers) that have been running for a much longer period of time. In addition, the webpage has had over 7,000 unique views. The funding will enable more consistent promotion of the platform including website and blog development / promotional events / Instagram and Twitter campaigns and staff costs,.
6. The platform has been well received by users and by members of the CPA who are now seeking to deliver on a more permanent footing for an initial three year period. Pipers Projects, (who are contracted by the City Corporation to run the City Centre) have been closely involved in the development and delivery of the platform so far, providing services at cost to help set up the service. The CPA has indicated it would like to contract with them to continue to deliver the service. provided the City Corporation were to part fund the continuation of the platform.

7. A three year strategy has been developed that will deliver:
 - A digital platform consisting of comprehensive website Instagram and Twitter pages.
 - A comprehensive 'what's on' calendar of events.
 - Unique content generated by the Content Officer for the project.
 - Regular focus groups over each phase with City workers and One City "tastemakers" who will act as one City ambassadors for the One City brand.
 - Events to encourage city workers to engage with the brand.
 - Quarterly strategic review meetings with marketing team representatives from the CPA developer sponsors, the City's key cultural institutions such as the Museum of London and Barbican Centre and representatives of the City Corporations Communications team to inform the development of ongoing campaigns and ensure alignment with key messages.

Options

8. The CPA has advised that they would not be able to raise sufficient financial resource to pay for the continuation of the social media campaign by their members without the City Corporation providing funding. Without City Corporation funding it is likely that it would not receive sufficient support from private sponsorship due to the need to demonstrate collective buy-in to the campaign and the initiative would be shut down.
9. If the City Corporation were to agree to funding for a three year period then the initiative could then be further developed to maximise the opportunity to engage with City workers. It is hoped that funding for 3 years would allow the platform to develop to a position where future funding would be secured wholly by private contributions.

Proposals

10. The CPA has requested that the City Corporation consider providing funding to cover a third of the anticipated cost towards the delivery of the project for a three year period, after which time it is intended that the initiative will be self-financing. The project will deliver and manage the content for three main platforms via Instagram, a dedicated website and Twitter. In addition to a digital presence, One City will engage with stakeholders across the City of London to provide PR worthy events and experiences including activities such as pop up yoga sessions, film screenings, wine tastings, dance classes, fitness workshops and live music sessions. The budget associated with delivering the project would be £180,000 per year with the City Corporation contribution being £60,000 a year for each of the three years (the break down in the budget year 1 is attached in Appendix 1 for illustrative purposes).

Initial inquiries with digital media companies indicated that the set up cost for such an enterprise would be in the region of £250k - £500k per annum. The CPA has utilised its membership to extract maximum value through engagement with established marketing teams to provide expertise to deliver the pilot.

11. The CPA will seek contributions from their members fund the remaining £120k a year (of the total estimated cost of £180,000pa) for delivering the project. Whilst it is not envisaged that there would be any shortfall in member contributions, the CPA would cover any such shortfall should it arise from their budgets. There have already been a number of commitments from property owners active in the Square Mile and from the Cheapside Business Alliance. The City Corporation's agreement to contribute would provide the necessary certainty to secure these and other contributions.
12. As part of the contract there will be a review of the project at the end of year one in terms of total sponsorship received and to ensure that it there has been progress in relation to the deliverables in accordance with the identified KPI's. The KPI's relate to measuring year on year growth of between 75%-100% in terms of number of followers and to outperform other peer accounts such as Canary Wharf and Kings Cross in Central London. Should the project not deliver the anticipated benefits and growth then there would be the opportunity to terminate the arrangement each year. Should there be any contributions received over and above the amount required to deliver the project, these will be invested in promotion of the platform and running associated events, subject to Member agreement.
13. The City Corporation will seek to complete an agreement with the CPA in relation to delivery of the platform and three year strategy in advance of the funding being made available which will incorporate appropriate provisions to ensure the platform both compliments the activities of the City Corporation and does not damage its reputation. It is recommended that the final terms of the agreement is delegated to the Director of Communications / City Surveyor / Director of the Built Environment in consultation with the Comptroller and City Solicitor.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. One City provides opportunities to directly engage with the City workforce about the City, for which there is currently no other dedicated platform. The attraction of the platform to the key demographic of 24-39 year olds has been established and will provide real opportunities to demonstrate the relevance of the Square Mile as a place to both work and relax.
15. One City will fully align with existing Corporation messages through weekly communications and meetings with the Communications and Cultural Hub teams and through quarterly strategic review meetings.

One City will work with the City Corporation's Communications team to ensure activities are properly co-ordinated and that there is consistent messaging regarding our cultural offerings including the Cultural Hub. Through its sponsorship the City Corporation will also retain absolute control to intervene if there is anything which threatens to damage its reputation.

16. The initiative would align with Corporate priority KPP5 of the Corporate Plan 2015-19 which seeks to increase the outreach and impact of the City Corporation's cultural, heritage and leisure contribution to the life of London.

Financial Implications

17. The total required funding has been estimated to be up to £180,000 is inclusive of any irrecoverable VAT as CPA whom the grant funding will be awarded to, may not be able to recover VAT. Once the VAT position is clear the final sum to be paid will be determined up to this maximum limit.
18. The contractual agreement underpinning this arrangement will be reviewed before completion to assist with understanding any VAT implications for both the CPA and the City and it is recommended that the Chamberlain is given delegated authority to make any changes to protect the City's position.
19. It is proposed that the required funding of £180,000 is drawn from your committees Policy Initiatives Fund (£60,000 from 2017/18, £60,000 from 2018/19 and £60,000 from 2019/20) and charged to City's Cash.
20. The current uncommitted balance available within the Policy and Resources Policy Initiatives Fund for 2017/18 amounts to £258,100, for 2018/19 £954,000 is available and in 2019/20 there is £1,184,000 available. This is prior to any allowances made for any other proposals on today's agenda.

Conclusion

21. The One City social media led platform has been established to promote the City and the increasingly diverse cultural and leisure offer direct to City workers. There are no other comparable platforms that provide this service and it is considered that the City Corporation should seek to promote the City and its attractions to workers to reinforce its attractiveness and relevance to a key audience. The proposed partnership with the CPA would ensure that the property industry works closely with the City Corporation through quarterly steering group meetings with all the key marketing teams of the development community to collectively promote the fast changing face of the City as being relevant to a new breed of City workers that want to enjoy a broader experience at their place of work.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – One City year one budget

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APPENDIX 1

One City year 1 budget

ONE CITY Budget

| June 17 - May 18 | | |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| General | TOTAL Year 1 Cost | COL Year 1 Contribution |
| PR/Press | 7,000 | 2,333 |
| Events for bloggers/influencers | 7,500 | 2,500 |
| Public promotional events | | |
| Photography Events - with key instagrammars | 2,500 | 834 |
| Food Events | 4,000 | 1,333 |
| Fitness Events | 3,000 | 1,000 |
| Workshops | 4,000 | 1,333 |
| Design/Branding | 3,600 | 1,200 |
| Promotional materials/Printing | 6,000 | 2,000 |
| Website | | |
| Website design and development | 4,400 | 1,467 |
| Funding for writers | 5,000 | 1,666 |
| PPC budget (AdWords) | 5,000 | 1,666 |
| Social | | |
| Instagram promotional budget | 12,000 | 4,000 |
| Twitter promotional budget | 6,000 | 2,000 |
| Scheduling and reporting tools | 7,000 | 2,333 |
| Administration | | |
| City Centre Director (part time. 12 - 14 hours per week) | 20,000 | 6,666 |
| Digital Media Officer | 28,000 | 9,333 |
| Content Officer (part time.) | 15,000 | 5,000 |
| Contingency | 10,000 | 3,336 |
| TOTAL Exclusive of VAT | 150,000 | 50,000 |
| TOTAL Inclusive of VAT | 180,000 | 60,000 |