

Committee(s): Policy and Resources	Dated: 03/05/2018
Subject: Sponsorship of the 2018 Battle of Ideas Festival	Public
Report of: Director of Communications	For Decision
Report author: Jan Gokcen, Corporate Affairs Officer	

Summary

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

The proposal is to sponsor the 2018 Battle of Ideas festival, organised by the Iol, which will take place on 13-14 October at the Barbican Centre. The event has established itself as London's major intellectual festival. The Iol would seek £25,000 for the sponsorship statuses of *Battle Champion* and *Debate Partner*.

Sponsorship will enable the City Corporation to shape the event's agenda, suggesting relevant topics for debate and providing speakers. The City Corporation, subject to the approval of your committee, will participate in select debates, demonstrating a public commitment to thought-leadership. Participation in the Battle of Ideas will also be an excellent opportunity to raise the City Corporation's profile, especially our work in various areas of public policy, among a wider audience.

Recommendation(s)

The Committee is asked to agree to provide £25,000 from the 2018/19 Policy Initiatives Fund categorised under 'Events' and charged to *City's Cash* to sponsor the Battle of Ideas Festival, taking place on 13-14 October 2018.

Main Report

Background

1. Having sponsored the Battle of Ideas festival in 2016 and 2017, the City Corporation would be working with the Iol for the third time. However, the Barbican Centre has hosted the event since 2012. The Iol provides a forum committed to open and robust public debate on 'controversial' topics.

Proposals

2. The proposal is to sponsor the 2018 Battle of Ideas weekend festival, organised by the Iol, which will take place on 13-14 October at the Barbican Centre. This is the event's thirteenth year, establishing itself as London's premier intellectual

festival. The Battle of Ideas festival brings a diverse range of international speakers, in addition to several thousand people from all walks of life, into the City.

3. Over 400 speakers took part in the 2017 Battle of Ideas. They included John Merry, deputy City mayor of Salford City Council; former Deputy Mayor of London for Education and Culture, Munira Mirza; Dr Rafael Schacter, author and teaching fellow at University College London; Dr Gerard Lyons, author and economist.
4. This year's programme is yet to be finalised but proposed topics – which the City Corporation would shape, inform and provide speakers for – include 'Ten years on from the financial crash: rebuilding trust in the financial services', 'Commerce and the Arts and Culture', 'Security in the digital economy' and 'Can London be a global city post Brexit?' Debates shaped and informed by the City Corporation will cover topics encompassing the full spectrum of work undertaken by the organisation.
5. As *Battle Champion* the City Corporation would help shape a maximum of ten debates, up from four last year, with nominated City Corporation speakers on key areas of interest and relevance to the City. This level of involvement would demonstrate a commitment to thought-leadership in the public arena.
6. The City Corporation would be credited in all publicity materials as *Battle Champion*: online and in print. Sponsorship would include complimentary VIP tickets for relevant speakers and 20 regular complimentary tickets to City Corporation representatives for the weekend, including 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. Sponsorship of the 2018 Battle of Ideas festival will include an offer of free day tickets to students up to the age of 18 from schools and academies affiliated to the City Corporation. Moreover, students from City Corporation affiliated schools and academies are eligible to attend the second day for a reduced charge of £10.00.
8. The Festival attracts an audience the City Corporation does not regularly engage with: students, post-graduates as well as researchers, professionals, teachers and academics. Sponsorship will therefore prove to be an excellent opportunity to raise the City Corporation's profile amongst such groups, enabling them to appreciate first hand the broad range of activity undertaken by this organisation.

Implications

9. It is proposed that the required funding of £25,000 is drawn from your committees 2018/19 Policy Initiatives Fund, categorised under Events and charged to *City's Cash*. The current uncommitted balance in the 2018/19 Fund is £571,441 prior to any allowance being made for any other proposals on today's agenda.

Conclusion

10. The proposed sponsorship of the 2018 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.

Jan Gokcen

Corporate Affairs Officer

T: 020 7332 3307

E: jan.gokcen@cityoflondon.gov.uk