

Meeting	Date
Public Relations and Economic Development Sub Committee (for information)	5 November 2019
Community and Children's Services Committee (for information)	7 November 2019
Education Board (for information)	14 November 2019
City Bridge Trust Committee (for information)	14 November 2019
Policy and Resources Committee (for decision)	21 November 2019
Subject Digital Skills Strategy, 2018-23 – Annual Report	
Report of Damian Nussbaum – Director of Innovation and Growth Andrew Carter – Director of Community and Children's Services	
Report Author Jessica Walsh – Digital Skills Strategy Officer Sufina Ahmad – Corporate Strategy Manager	For information/For decision

Summary

This paper presents the first annual report at Appendix One for the City of London Corporation's Digital Skills Strategy for 2018-23, which was approved by Policy and Resources Committee in September 2018. The report outlines the progress the City Corporation has made in the last 12 months in relation to the vision that *'People and businesses, across the City, London and beyond, are equipped to take advantage of digital technologies and innovations to help themselves and their economies thrive'*. The report is primarily aimed at officers and elected Members, but detail in the report can be used for external-facing communications.

The key highlights from the report include:

- a) The City Corporation's support to establish future.now (formerly known as the UK Coalition for Digital Intelligence), a coalition of 25 cross-sectoral organisations aiming *'...to motivate people and businesses across the UK to boost their digital skills to thrive in the digital age'*.
- b) The City No. 3 Digital Workshops which resulted in the creation of an app, a poster and video aimed at helping special educational needs and disabled (SEND) children to stay safe online.
- c) The development of the Catalyst funding stream by City Bridge Trust and other charitable funders, committing £2.1m to the charitable sector to fund and champion the digital skills agenda, by embedding digital skills in organisations and scaling up digital programmes that improve services and resilience amongst not-for-profits.

Recommendations

PRED Sub Committee, Community and Children's Services, Education Board and City Bridge Trust Committee are asked to:

- i. Endorse the Digital Skills Strategy Annual Report and provide guidance on how it should be shared with all Members.
- ii. Continue to prioritise the Digital Skills Strategy going forward.

Policy and Resources Committee is asked to:

- iii. Approve the Digital Skills Strategy Annual Report and provide guidance on how it should be shared with all Members.
- iv. Continue to prioritise the Digital Skills Strategy going forward.

Main Report

Background

1. The Digital Skills Strategy 2018-23 was approved in September 2018 by Policy and Resources Committee. The strategy focusses on three priority areas of Digital Competitiveness, Digital Creativity and Digital Citizenship, in order to achieve its vision that: *'People and businesses, across the City, London and beyond, are equipped to take advantage of digital technologies and innovations to help themselves and their economies thrive.'*
2. The delivery of the strategy has been overseen by the Digital Skills Group, which is made up of officers from the Department for Community and Children's Services (DCCS), including the Multi Academy Trust, Innovation and Growth (IG), Culture Mile Learning (CML), Town Clerk's (TC) and City Bridge Trust (CBT) and is chaired by the Director of IG and the Director of Community and Children's Services, as joint Senior Responsible Officers for the strategy. Dedicated officer support has also come in the form of a Digital Skills Strategy Officer (DSSO), who started in post on a 12-month fixed-term contract in March 2019.
3. Furthermore, the strategy was designed to align to the Rt. Hon. Lord Mayor Peter Estlin's 2018/19 Mayoralty Theme – Shaping Tomorrow's City Today. The programme focused on promoting innovation and technology, championing digital skills and addressing digital and social inclusion. This has meant that the delivery of the strategy has been supported by the Lord Mayor's Programme Board and his office too.

Current Position

4. Year one of the strategy has been supported by a comprehensive 12-month action plan, which identified 89 activities. Of these 61.8% are complete, and the rest are ongoing activities. The annual report is primarily aimed at officers and elected Members and highlights in more detail 14 of these activities, including:
 - a) **future.now:** In partnership with cross-sectoral organisations, including Accenture, BT, the Digital Skills Partnership, Lloyds Banking Group and 21 others, the City Corporation has set up future.now (previously referred to as the UK Coalition for Digital intelligence) - a UK-wide cross-sectoral coalition that wants *'...to motivate people and businesses across the UK to boost their digital skills to thrive in the digital age'*.

- b) **Digital Workshops:** The City No. 3 Digital Workshops resulted in the creation of an app, a poster and video aimed at helping special educational needs and disabled (SEND) children to stay safe online. They will also present their work at the launch of future.now.
 - c) **The Catalyst Fund:** City Bridge Trust and other charitable funders set up The Catalyst Fund committing £2.1m to the charitable sector to fund and champion the digital skills agenda, by embedding digital skills in organisations and scaling up digital programmes that improve services and resilience amongst not-for-profits.
5. The first-year action plan was created in March 2019 in line with the DSSO role, which means the next plan would begin in March 2020. As a result of lessons learnt it is recommended that the next action plan runs for 18-months from March 2020 until September 2021, resulting in the next report at the three-year mark.

Options

6. Digital skills will remain of strategic importance to the competitiveness and economic productivity of the UK, especially given their importance in ensuring that individuals and communities have the digital skills they need and are not left behind. In the coming 18-months, it is recommended that the City Corporation continues to commit to this agenda by:
- a) Providing in-kind support to **future.now** as it transitions into being an external-facing entity, following its launch on 10 October 2019.
 - b) Ensuring that the organisation's **new IT contract**, which is currently being procured, delivers social value activities that support the delivery of the digital skills strategy.
 - c) Establishing an informal partnership with **Microsoft** to collaborate on activities and projects that serve the strategy.
 - d) Fostering and embedding lifelong learning that is focussed on digital skills in community engagement work through coffee mornings with **Toynbee Hall**.
 - e) Working with Barbican and community libraries on the delivery of their current and future digital skills enhancement projects.
 - f) Fully implementing the strategy's **performance framework**.
 - g) Identify and develop **new activities** that we can deliver in this space, as well as **building on other successes** from this year, including the various digital skills and fusion skills curriculum pilots in the City Family of Schools.

Proposals

7. To deliver on the ambitions mentioned in paragraph six, it is proposed that this strategy remains a priority within the business plans for DCCS, IG, CML, TC and CBT. In the main these activities can be delivered through existing resources.
8. The in-kind support that has been offered for future.now includes:

- a) **Innovation and Growth:** Project Director consultancy for 36 days in 2019/20 financial year.
- b) **Town Clerk's:** Six days project support for 6-months, providing administrative support required for room and event bookings.
- c) **Mansion House:** The Mansion House can provide up to two free uses of meeting/event space in 2020 (post purdah) for the future.now coalition. Each booking request will be assessed on an individual basis and is subject to the Lord Mayor's programme and availability of meeting/event space at the time of booking. Additional costs such as catering and staffing will need to be funded by the future.now coalition.
- d) **Remembrancer's:** In kind venue support for four events and comprising two uses of Basinghall Suite and two uses of the Livery Hall. Ad hoc use of Committee Rooms and North Wing Meeting rooms will also be offered when available.
- e) **Governance:** A City Corporation representative will be part of the future.now Board. Attendance at other future.now activities can be organised via the Directors of Innovation and Growth and Community and Children's Services as the Senior Responsible Officers for the Digital Skills Strategy, 2018-23.

Corporate and Strategic Implications

- 9. This strategy supports the City Corporation to fulfil its vision, as outlined in its Corporate Plan for 2018-23, for a '*vibrant and thriving City, supporting a diverse and sustainable London within a globally-successful UK*'. The strategy supports all three aims that are outlined in the Plan of *contributing to a flourishing society, shaping outstanding environments and supporting a thriving economy*, and nine of the 12 outcomes that are listed as part of these aims.
- 10. It also links to our strategies on: Employability, Education, Skills, Cultural and Creative Learning, Bridging Divides (City Bridge Trust's five-year strategy), Philanthropy, Social Mobility, Culture, Culture Mile and Culture Mile Learning.

Health Implications

- 11. This strategy focuses on digital inclusion and recognises that a lack of digital skills can result in individuals experiencing poor physical and emotional wellbeing outcomes.

Security Implications

- 12. The strategy prioritises cyber security – with a particular focus on ensuring that businesses and individuals practise cyber safety successfully. This is also a priority for future.now.

Public Sector Equality Duty Implications

13. None identified – however the work of future.now, as well as the activities prioritised in paragraph six are likely to target those with protected characteristics and/or those experiencing inequalities and disadvantage.

Resource Implications

14. Plans are in place to ensure that an extension is not required for the post of DSSO, which is due to end in March 2020.

Conclusion

15. This annual report summarises in detail the work that has been completed in the last year by the organisation to deliver the City Corporation's Digital Skills Strategy for 2018-23 and recommends that it remains a strategic priority going forward.

Appendices

Appendix One – Digital Skills Strategy, 2018-23 – Annual Report

Sufina Ahmad

Corporate Strategy Manager

T: 020 7332 3724 (Int. Ext. 3724)

E: sufina.ahmad@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Jessica Walsh

Digital Skills Strategy Officer

E: Jessica.Walsh@cityoflondon.gov.uk