

Committee: Policy and Resources – For decision	Date: 19/03/2020
Subject: London Messaging Research	Public
Report of: Director of Communications	For Decision
Report author: Peter Cannon, Speechwriter	

Summary

It is proposed that the City of London Corporation work with London Councils to commission an external organisation to help develop effective messaging about London for UK audiences.

There is little research to show what language and imagery is most effective in conveying that a vibrant and thriving City helps a globally-successful UK.

Our aim would be to develop and test constructive and credible messages about London which could be used by business leaders, the voluntary sector and political figures when speaking about the capital to audiences across the UK.

We would intend to share this research with other London organisations.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Approve £40,000 of funding from the 2020/21 Policy Initiatives Fund to support this research.

Main Report

Background

1. In 2017, the City Corporation worked with London & Partners and the Greater London Authority to test and develop key messages about London for target audiences in overseas markets.
2. Those messages were tested amongst businesses, tourists and students in France, the USA, China, India & UK.
3. In summary these found the four strongest ways to portray London were;
 - a. A City of Old and New - This worked best for tourists and visitors, highlighting unique qualities of London.
 - b. A City of Discovery - This conveyed the richness of experience in a compelling but less unique way for tourists.
 - c. A City of Opportunity - A motivating story of personal and professional growth worked well for business and student audiences but did suffer from lack of differentiation from other cities.

- d. A City of Creative Energy – This was the message with broadest cross-audience appeal and impact portraying London as a city with a strong cultural history, diversity of ideas, a free-thinking mindset and a centre of talent.
- 4. This messaging has informed our engagement since then with international audiences, including in our online presence, our overseas visits and our participation in international events.

Current Position

- 5. The City Corporation is now engaging in a more strategic way with other cities across the UK, particularly but not exclusively with the six partner cities identified in our UK strategy: Belfast, Birmingham, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Leeds and Manchester.
- 6. Following the political developments of recent years, the issue of the relationship between London and the rest of the UK has also risen up the political agenda, most notably through the Government's stated commitment to 'levelling up' those parts of the UK outside London and the South East.

Proposals

- 7. As the City Corporation has developed messages for speaking about London to international audiences, we believe it would therefore also be beneficial for the City Corporation to develop and test messages for speaking about London to domestic audiences within the UK.
- 8. It is proposed that the City Corporation work with London Councils to commission an organisation to conduct research into constructive and credible messages which business leaders, the voluntary sector and political figures could use to speak about London across the UK. The results of the research would be shared with London Councils, the Greater London Authority and other partner organisations.
- 9. Members are asked to approve a contribution of £40,000 from the Policy Initiatives Fund to support this project, which would also be supported by separate funding from London Councils.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

- 10. This will help the City Corporation to achieve its central vision (as set out in the Corporate Plan) of creating a vibrant and thriving City, supporting a diverse and sustainable London within a globally successful UK, by helping to maintain and improve positive relationships between London and other parts of the UK.
- 11. It will also help the Communications Team to meet its Business Plan objectives of promoting positive media coverage and delivering effective political engagement.

Implications

12. It is proposed that the required funding of £40,000 is drawn from your Committee's 2020/21 Policy Initiatives Fund, categorised under 'Research' and charged to City's Cash. The current uncommitted balance available within your Committee's Policy Initiatives Fund 2020/21 amounts to £722,365 prior to any allowance being made for any other proposals on today's agenda.

Conclusion

13. Working with London Councils to support this project to develop and test messages about London for UK audiences would help the City Corporation and other London organisations to communicate and engage more effectively with other parts of the UK, helping to develop a more positive relationship between the capital city and the country it serves.

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