

Committee: Policy & Resources	Date: 10 December 2020
Subject: Electoral Registration Campaign Manager	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Outcomes 3, 4, and 10 of the Corporate Plan
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	Y
If so, how much?	£150,000
What is the source of Funding?	Committee Contingency
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Y
Report of: The Town Clerk and Chief Executive	For Decision
Report author: Angela Roach, Director of Committee and Members Services	

Summary

1. At its last meeting, the Committee agreed to support a programme of promotional activities to increase voter registration in readiness for the 2022 Ward Elections. As part of the City Corporation's efforts to enhance the diversity of the Court of Common Council, this also included promotional activities to encourage people from a diverse range of backgrounds to consider standing for election.
2. The Committee noted the efforts which had been made in previous years to encourage greater registration and voter turnout but was mindful that this had been met with moderate success at best. Therefore, support was also given, in principle, to the recruitment of a temporary, dedicated, campaign manager to manage this area of work during 2021, subject to the submission of further details. The purpose of the manager would be to raise awareness of the importance of business registration by developing relationships in businesses at all levels from Chief Executive to entry level employee and to develop a year-long campaign strategy and further activities to:-
 - increase voter registration amongst businesses and residents
 - use all available channels to encourage a greater diversity of candidates to stand in 2022 elections
 - increase voter turnout postal or physical

Recommendation(s)

3. The Committee is recommended to:-

- Reconfirm its support for the recruitment of a temporary Election Participation Campaign Manager to maximise numbers on the Electoral Register, encourage diversity of candidates and voter turnout in the elections.
- Approve a funding package of up to £150,000 to cover the cost of the post (approximately £75,000 plus £20,000 on costs the equivalent of Grade H and subject to job evaluation) and up to £55,000 to fund the cost of any additional campaign activities. The latter would be the subject of a further report by the postholder once the scope of the campaign had been developed.
- Note that the role will report to the new Deputy Town Clerk and Chief Executive and that in the interim the recruitment and other arrangements associated with the temporary post would be overseen by the Director of Communications.

Main Report

Background

1. The next Ward elections are scheduled to take place in March 2022. As with every all-out pre-election year, the City Corporation has agreed a series of promotional activities and initiatives aimed at eligible residents and workers in order to encourage them to register to take part in the 2022 elections and to use their vote. This is essential to demonstrate the validity of the organisation's democratic processes and to prove that its elected Members are properly representative of all the City's stakeholders.

Current Position

2. The Committee has already agreed to fund a programme of activities for 2021. However, Members expressed a desire that more be done to maximise the numbers registering to vote, to encourage greater diversity of candidates standing for election and to ensure voters use their entitlement. This will be critical in 2021 given that the numbers of workers (including contacts within firms) returning to the City certainly in the first half of the year may be drastically reduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will require more creative means than usual of educating the business population as to the City Corporation's role, activities and how their vote could help to shape what services are provided and how.

Proposals

3. It is proposed to recruit a temporary, dedicated, Election Participation Campaign Manager who would have oversight of all work in support of the three goals set out above, including the activities already agreed and those referred to at the last meeting requiring further development (e.g a special edition of CityView, an event in Local or National Democracy week and streaming Wardmotes). The post would be a one-year fixed-term position requiring an experienced, results-driven individual who would have responsibility for all areas of the campaign.
4. A funding package of up to £150,000 would be required to meet the cost of the anticipated salary and on-costs (£75,000 plus £20,000, the equivalent of Grade H

and subject to job evaluation) and extra campaign activity funding in addition to that already agreed by this Committee.

5. To further demonstrate the importance of voter registration and how seriously the City Corporation is taking local democracy, it is proposed that the postholder will report to the new Deputy Town Clerk and Chief Executive, with recruitment arrangements being overseen in the interim by the Director of Communications.

Key Data and Tasks

6. This role will require:

- someone who can quickly acquire an understanding and appreciation of the City's unique voting system;
- an ability to develop relationships at all levels to 'sell' the benefits of registering to vote – from Chief Executive to entry level employee
- the capacity to bring together and motivate a cross-teams function to work on this campaign
- creativity to develop ideas that will help achieve the set goals

7. Key tasks will include:

- to bring together a cross-department/skills team to work on the campaign;
- to audit communication channels across the organisation that could be used for messaging;
- to devise proactive ideas to generate greater registration numbers;
- to work with officers across the organisation to create a joined-up marketing effort;
- to put together a year-long strategy across all three strands of work;
- to run the initial campaign of maximising electoral registration numbers until the deadline of mid-December 2021;
- to report regularly to officers and Members on progress made;
- to use all available channels to encourage a greater diversity of candidates to stand in the 2022 elections;
- to promote use of the vote – whether on the day itself or via postal vote
- to promote wardmotes (or meetings of the ward) if wards are uncontested.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

8. This role will help meet the Corporate Plan target of Contributing to a Flourishing Society by promoting and championing diversity and bringing individuals and communities together in taking part in the electoral process.

Financial implications

9. The funding for this role and additional activities associated with the campaign cannot be met via Local Risk Budgets. It is therefore proposed that the £150,000

funding is met from the 2020/21 Policy and Resources Contingency Fund and charged to City's Cash. The current uncommitted 2020/21 Contingency Fund balance is £407,719.

Other Resource implications

10. Resource will necessarily be drawn into the activities planned from across the organisations. Senior Officers will be asked to supply non-financial resource on an 'as and when' basis to help support these activities and look at their own Business Plans for 2021 to see what channels they can offer.

Risk implications

11. Not applying sufficient resources to this initiative offers a risk that the City Corporation does not have a democratic mandate to represent all areas of the City if numbers registered to vote decrease significantly.

Equalities implications

12. The nature of this role is specifically aimed at encouraging a greater diversity of candidates, particularly those from demographic characteristics such as gender and race standing for election. This is necessary to ensure that the City Corporation is better equipped to perform its obligations effectively in today's competitive business landscape. This role will play a key part in effectively meeting an objective that the City Corporation has been thriving to achieve for many years.

Climate implications

12. The proposals included in this paper do not carry any implications for the Climate Action programme. However, the activities already approved, and any subsequent activities will need to be mindful of the use of low carbon materials and methods used to reach voters in order to assist with decreasing the City Corporation's footprint.

Conclusion

13. Members have expressed their desire for more to be done in the lead up to 2022 and have agreed in principle to the recruitment of the Campaign Manager to manage the activities already agreed and to develop and deliver a strategy of additional activities to raise awareness of the importance of electoral registration. The recruitment of a Manager will demonstrate the City Corporation's a commitment to local democracy as well as its commitment to enhancing diversity and inclusion. The approved programme of publicity and events to be held in the period preceding the elections will also assist with this.

Appendices: None.

Background Papers: Electoral Registration Report - Policy and Resources
Committee, 19 November 2020

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