

<b>Committee(s):</b> Education Board	<b>Dated:</b> 03/02/2022
<b>Subject:</b> Connecting Communities Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	3,5, 7, 8, 10
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Gwen Rhys, Business Manager, Connecting Communities, Department for Community & Children's Services	

### Summary

This report updates Members on the progress of the Connecting Communities programme in its first weeks of operation.

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. The Report to the Education Committee dated 3 December 2021 gave a detailed overview of Connecting Communities, an £18 million programme funded by the Greater London Council (GLA) and the European Social Fund (ESF) of which the Education Strategic Unit (ESU) will receive £ £669,000 to deliver the programme's outcomes and impacts over the next 18 months.

#### Current Position

2. The Connecting Communities Team consists of 7 experienced people: 1 x Business Manager, 1 x Employment Engagement Officer, 4 x Caseworkers and 1 x Administrator, all of whom are expected to be onboard by early February. At the time

of writing this report, the Business Manager, Administrator and 2 x Caseworkers are already in place.

3. The Team has begun to work with a group of Afghan refugees. The first cohort are those interested in applying for University in the UK. The second cohort will work with Caseworkers to determine the next steps towards meeting their training and work aspirations. Caseworkers also plan to make regular visits to the hotels where Refugees are living. It is anticipated that many of the refugees will be eligible to enrol as Participants on the programme.

4. Caseworkers plan to have a regular physical presence in the Small Business Research & Enterprise Centre enabling them to offer a drop-in service for anyone interesting in accessing the Programme.

5. In February the Team will receive training on APTM, the digital system that will monitor the programme's progress and effectiveness and will provide management information to ensure both inputs and outcomes are being met in a timely fashion.

6. The Business Manager has had several meetings with potential partners who can either refer potential Participants, provide a communication channel to Participants and/or Training Providers and Employers. These partners include, for example, the City of London secondary schools, City and Guilds, the Business and Innovation Centre, representatives of the Culture Mile and Livery Companies particularly those connected with the Construction and Hospitality sectors.

### **Options**

Not applicable.

### **Proposals**

Not applicable.

### **Key Data**

Not applicable.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

7. This initiative has the potential to make a significant contribution to a flourishing society by giving people an equal opportunity to enrich their lives and reach their full potential. Moreover, it supports a thriving economy by enabling industries to access to the skills and talent they need and ensuring that more individuals can reach their potential and secure good work. It shows that collaborative working can make the core city institutions even better connected and

responsive to changed needs. It builds individual and systemic resilience by enabling structures which can be mobilised in the shorter-term but are able to continue in a sustainable manner for the longer term.

### **Financial and resource implications**

8. A total budget of £18 million has been secured for Connecting Communities of which the ESU will receive £ £669,000 to deliver the programmes outcomes and impacts over the next 18 months. The proposal does not seek additional funds or resources from the City Corporation at this stage. Connecting Communities also aims to support the Livery Companies to make better, more joined-up use of the existing £7.9 million currently dedicated on an annual basis to skills development work. There is also the potential to work more closely with business partners and the Liveries to gain access to wider funding opportunities possible through the recently released government white paper “Skills for Jobs”<sup>1</sup> which focusses on post-16 education reform.

9. There are some officer resource implications in terms of management and implementation time.

### **Legal implications**

10. Connecting Communities is being managed through Central London Forward. Central London Forward (CLF) is a partnership of the 12 central London local authorities. They work together with their member authorities and with other stakeholders to support inclusive and sustainable growth in central London; so that our economy thrives, and our residents benefit from the opportunities this creates. CLF deliver large scale employment and skills programmes across central London.

11. The governance of the Livery Skills Initiative is with the Livery Committee. The collaboration partners, including the Livery are separate legal entities with their own decision-making processes.

### **Risk implications**

12. There are risk implications of not completing the important and urgent recommended actions, and people failing to secure the skills they need to secure good jobs.

13. There are contractual risk implications associated with not meeting the targets outlined by the European Social Fund contract with Central London Forward in regard to Connecting Communities.

### **Equalities implications**

14. Not every young person has access to a breadth of developmental relationships and life experiences, which facilitate and broker routes into employment. The least advantaged tend to not have access to networks, mentors, advocates, work experience opportunities, careers advice, and family support in the same way as their more advantaged peers. For example, only 46% of young people from low-income families take part in extracurricular activities, compared with 66% from higher income families and young people who attend private schools are twice as likely to get internships in London compared to state educated children. They are not supported to access potential pathways or understand how to reach their goals. There is a disconnect between what they learn in school and their aspirations and opportunities later in life. For example, in 1997, 42 per cent of 16-17 year old students were studying and working. By 2014 this figure had declined to 18 per cent.

15. A more equitable society is based on realising the potential of all people. This requires strong networks of support and trust. The Liveries could leverage that trusted network. They could use their connections to boost opportunities for structured work experience, internships, and employment. Young adults who have 'four or more employer contacts' are five times more likely to be in employment or training than those who have little or no contact with employers.

16. An equitable society is one where all people have access to meaningful and valued pathways, and opportunities to flourish and achieve success. There should be multiple pathways and routes in and out of learning throughout life, which is of benefit to us all.

17. This initiative has the potential to make a significant contribution to a flourishing society giving people an equal opportunity to enrich their lives and reach their full potential. Moreover, it supports a thriving economy by enabling industries to access to the skills and talent they need and ensuring the more individuals can reach their potential and secure good work. It shows that collaborative working can make the core city institutions even better connected and responsive to changed needs. It builds individual and systemic resilience by enabling structures which can be mobilised in the shorter-term but are able to continue in a sustainable manner for the longer term.

### **Climate implications**

18. There are no immediate Climate implications.

### **Security implications**

19. There are no immediate Security implications.

### **Conclusion**

20. Within its first month of operation, the City of London's Connecting Communities team has made a good start in raising awareness of the programme within the City and supporting Participants.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Presentation to Skills Forum and Head Teachers Forum

### **Background Papers**

Report to the Education Board dated 3/12/2021

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