

Committee(s): Economic & Cyber Crime Committee	Dated: 16/09/2024
Subject: Innovation & Growth – Update of Cyber & Economic Crime related activities	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Driving Economic Growth
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
What is the source of Funding?	NA
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Summary

The core objective of Innovation & Growth (IG) is to strengthen the UK’s competitiveness as the world’s leading global hub for financial and professional services (FPS). This includes promoting the strengths of the UK’s offer and enhancing the UK’s position as a leader in FPS technology and innovation.

The following report summarises the activity that has been taking place across IG in relation to cyber and economic crime, as well as cross-team working between IG and the City of London Police (CoLP) since the ECCC last convened in June 2024. The report features an update on the AI Innovation Challenge which will support the development of novel AI solutions to tackle online fraud.

Links to the Corporate Plan

The activities set out in this report help deliver against the Corporate Plan’s outcome to support dynamic economic growth. Specifically, ensuring that the City has the safest, most secure business environment in the world and promoting the UK as a place that is open, innovative, and sustainable.

Main Report

Innovation & Growth/City of London Police cross-team working

1. We continue to use this report to review those activities which demonstrate the benefits of IG and CoLP collaboration to make the UK the safest place in the world to do business. IG continues to look for ways to promote the activity of CoLP and support their work as part of our wider stakeholder engagement.

Collaboration

2. IG supported the Police Authority and CoLP by sharing a selection of industry guests for the upcoming Police Authority Dinner. These included representatives from financial and professional services, trade bodies, and the technology sector.

AI Innovation Challenge

3. At the previous Committee meeting, Members received an update on the AI Innovation Challenge. The Challenge will bring together innovative technology companies and FPS to collaborate across a 7-week sprint. Participants will engage 1:1 to develop and accelerate solutions which answer: *How can AI prevent online fraud at the earliest possible stage by identifying and tracking fake identities – including synthetic identities and image or audio deepfakes?* Participants will also benefit from input and expertise from Supporting Partners Microsoft, Department of Business and Trade (DBT), and London and Partners. On 4th December a showcase event will be held at Guildhall to highlight the achievements and key learnings from the Challenge.
4. Applications for technology companies to participate in the AI Innovation Challenge opened on Tuesday 25th June. CoLC announced the opportunity via a promotional video featuring Deputy Chris Hayward, Policy Chairman, and previous Innovation Challenge participants. The announcement was shared by a range of industry partners across social media platforms and newsletters.
5. IG committed to attracting technology participants from across the UK. The team engaged with a number of the regional fintech networks and cyber clusters. A virtual presentation and Q&A session was also held with stakeholders based in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
6. Applications closed on 26th July. 18 applications were received from a wide range of technology companies. Of these, 14 applicants had an existing presence in London/the UK and the remaining 4 were looking to establish a presence in the UK. On 6th August, IG and representatives from Microsoft and DBT, met to review applications. Prior to this meeting, feedback on applications was shared by Oliver Bolton, Police Authority.
7. Following the review session, 10 technology companies were chosen to participate in the AI Innovation Challenge. In terms of next steps, all technology companies will be updated on the outcome of their application and provided with feedback. IG are also organizing a variety of collaboration sessions which will complement the 1:1s across the 7-week sprint. These workshops and presentations will likely explore AI governance, Government support for export and pitching advice.

Cross-CoLC working on economic security

8. Since the last ECCC meeting there has been focussed activity, led by the Office of the Policy Chairman, to develop a cross-CoLC position on Economic Security. IG have provided input into a working paper that is being prepared which brings together the activity already underway across CoLC that falls within this definition. It also identifies key partners that CoLC works with who are progressing work in this space and potential gaps where future activity could be focused.

9. As part of this workstream, a cross-CoLC working group is also being set up by the Office of the Policy Chairman. This will bring together officers from different departments across the Corporation who have an interest in this topic. The working group is still in the early stages of being convened and its Terms of Reference set. However, one point for it to consider at an early stage will be its relationship with, and any reporting requirements into, this Committee.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. Strategic implications – This work supports the Corporate Plan outcome to drive dynamic economic growth.
11. Financial implications – All budgets are contained within existing departmental budgets and business planning.
12. Resource implications – All resourcing requirements are scoped as part of departmental business planning.
13. Legal implications – None identified for this paper.
14. Risk implications – None identified for this paper.
15. Equalities implications – The stakeholder work as part of this work is mindful of balancing the needs to have the right stakeholders identified while also supporting the City of London Corporation’s EDI commitments.
16. Climate implications – None identified for this paper.
17. Security implications – None identified for this paper.

Conclusion

18. IG has concluded a critical stage of the AI Innovation Challenge, with 18 applications received and reviewed. Preparation is now underway to deliver the Challenge sprint from September-November. IG will continue to support the work on Economic Security being led by the Office of the Policy Chairman and ensure that its activity is aligned with broader Corporation objectives in this space.

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