

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Digital Services Committee	Dated: 13/11/2024
Subject: Women in Tech Update	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes	Providing Excellent Services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	n/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	n/a
Report of:	Caroline Al-Beyerty, The Chamberlain
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Summary

This report provides an update on the recently created DITS Women in Tech network, which will work collaboratively with internal and external networks.

The network has representation across the Women's Inclusive Network (WIN), and the Women Pivoting to Digital Taskforce and is collaborating closely with both on the activity and outcomes.

This network will enable women in digital, data and technology across the City Corporation and its institutions to connect, encouraging networking and mentoring opportunities. It will support women's progression and support DITS ambitions to attract more women into IT roles

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. DITS recently co-hosted Hays recruitment agency's Women in Tech Connect networking event at Guildhall. The network aims to encourage women working in IT roles to connect and share ideas.
2. Speakers at the event were from COL, and included Zakki Ghauri, Director of IT, who welcomed the network to Guildhall and spoke about advocacy for such networks; Caroline Haines, who discussed her role as the Chair of the Women Pivoting to Digital Taskforce and the ambitions of the Taskforce; and Tara Crombie, who spoke about mentoring and supporting women's career progression.
3. Following the success of this event, an internal Women in Tech (WiT) network has been created to connect women working in digital, data and technology roles across the Corporation and its institutions, to encourage networking, knowledge sharing, and mentoring opportunities.

Current Position

4. DITS has ambitions to attract more women into IT roles and has been putting foundations in place to support this over the past few months. The first step has been to review recruitment practices, including the following:
 - Gather statistics on female representation across DITS – currently 29% (slightly above the industry average, which is 20%)
 - Review job descriptions, person specifications and job advertisements to ensure the use of gender-neutral language and avoidance of biases towards specific genders
 - Include skills-based assessments in hiring practices to complement the competency-based interview approach
 - Create career-graded roles where possible to enable progression
 - Run a pilot in the DITS Portfolio Management Office (PMO) before rolling out more widely across the department
5. Discussions with HR are ongoing and following the launch of Ambition 25 these approaches will be reviewed to align with the launch of role profiles to encourage movement and progression based on skills.
6. Discussions are ongoing with Hays, the recruitment partner for DITS to:
 - Review where jobs are advertised to attract more women to apply
 - Encourage a more diverse candidate pool for every role
7. The WiT network will work closely with the COL Women's network to ensure visibility and to pool resources. Updates are provided at each WIN Leads meeting.
8. The WiT network and Women Pivoting to Digital Taskforce will have cross-representation, as the ambitions of both align very closely.

9. DITS has been liaising with other organisations and external networks to gather insights into similar schemes, and what has been successful.
10. Women in non-technical roles in DITS have enrolled in the Tech for Her scheme run by Microsoft to upskill in technical areas, such as Cloud concepts, Security and AI as a precursor to certification.
11. DITS recently onboarded another female apprentice, continuing its ambitions to bring more women into IT roles

Options

12. The Women in Tech network will continue to reach out across all areas of the organisation to encourage women in digital, data and technology to be part of the network.
13. WiT will continue working with other organisations and external networks to arrange insight events and knowledge sharing.

Proposals

14. DITS will run a pilot scheme and be a best practice case study for the Women Pivoting to Digital Taskforce.
15. Feedback will be provided to the Taskforce to help inform the Business Case and Toolkit workstreams.
16. DITS will investigate the potential to bring in apprentices across more teams in the department, including mid-career apprenticeships, to encourage women to pivot into new roles

Key Data

17. Predicted to be 1 woman in every 115 tech roles by 2025
18. Industry average of women in tech roles 20% - DITS representation is at 29%

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – Providing Excellent Services. The Corporation will have a more diverse and balanced workforce, and upskilling people into new roles has been shown to reduce staff turnover.

Equalities implications – to increase female representation in IT roles.

Financial implications – none

Resource implications – none

Legal implications – none

Risk implications – none

Climate implications – none

Security implications – none

Conclusion

19. DITS will continue working towards its goal of bringing more women into IT roles, whilst working closely with both internal and external networks. Evidence of pilot schemes and successes will be fed into the Taskforce.

Appendices

None

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