

Charityworks Strategy 2022-24

September 2022

Objects

The Objects of the Charity are, for the public benefit, to advance education in such charitable ways as the Trustees think fit, in particular but not exclusively, the provision of training and development programmes for the benefit of the voluntary not for profit sector.

Registered Charity number: 1136964

Registered company number: 07304744

Background

This is both an opportune and necessary time to agree a new strategic direction for Charityworks. We are emerging from the unprecedented experience of a global pandemic and what that has done to the world of work in the UK and to Charityworks as a charity. The environment for the charity remains uncertain with current economic indicators and the advent of a new Government in September 2022.

The Charityworks portfolio comprises the established graduate trainee programme and the 2027 programme which will now conclude in 2025. The graduate trainee programme retains a highly positive reputation. It suffered an almost inevitable downturn during the pandemic although there are early signs of regaining its former uptake volumes. The charity has a reliance on a single longer-term product which raises challenges as to sustainability. Charityworks has evolved a collaborative delivery model with its supplier, Koreo, which has served beneficiaries well for over a decade. The Charityworks Board has embarked on a programme to strengthen governance having undertaken a governance review.

The Board is highly aware that its own resources are limited: the Board is entirely voluntary and most board members have many other calls on their time. The charity has no staff and has only recently engaged contracted support to help drive forward its activities. This therefore constrains what is possible and demands a focus on a clear and achievable direction.

Strategy review process

The process started informally with various ideas and suggestions emerging through successive Board meetings.

This was taken into a formal review process over the summer of 2022 which comprised -

- Two focus groups of current and past Graduate Trainee programme host bodies
- Discussion with the Recruitment and Employment Confederation
- Ideas elicited during trustee interviews
- Input from Koreo
- A political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal (PESTEL) analysis
- A strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis

The strategic options emerging from this were reviewed over several episodes involving current and incoming trustees and formal Board sessions, one with the input of Koreo. What follows is the distillation of that process and input.

The Board is grateful to all those who gave their time and energy to this process, including past and current trustees.

Strategic direction

The Board has agreed to focus its efforts on **restoring and growing the profile, impact and size of the graduate trainee scheme.**

This recognises the very strong brand that has been developed over the past decade and more. Within that brand are a number of factors:

- High quality trainees
- High quality programme components
- Track record of delivery
- The ability to flex the programme content and discovery – highly apparent in response to the onset of the pandemic

Equally, the Board recognises there is a need to –

- Innovate and keep the programme fresh and relevant
- Ensure it continues adapting to the changing world of work and the changing expectations of new graduates
- Demonstrate value for money. This has to be shown through programme content and be apparent through the cost of the programme

- Remain competitive with other schemes that seek to attract graduate attention; there are ever more options for graduates and, at the time this strategy was agreed, a very strong jobs market
- Work further on equality of access and inclusivity. There have been good strides on BAME uptake but that and other factors as regards inclusivity need a continuing focus

The Board has taken note of the feedback received through the focus groups and elsewhere and will work to address those points and the needs listed above.

The Board will underpin this with continuing governance reform which is essential for the charity to show that it is a fully compliant organisation that aligns with current good practice in governance.

The Board is finally cognisant that the economic situation and the charity's financial footing do not by any means guarantee continuity. While there is no imminent danger that the charity will fail financially, over the next two years the Board will remain focused on financial performance and indicators in that regard. It will therefore continue to bear in mind the need for beneficiaries to be served and that the best way of doing that in the medium and longer term may not necessarily be through the current structures.

What's next?

The Board will develop a delivery plan working with Koreo and will report on the implementation of this strategy through that Plan.

There is a need to expand the Board further. From a low point with just five trustees, the Board now has six including three new and enthusiastic trustees who have between them a very wide range of skills and experience. The Board will undertake a longer-term review of the skills it needs to drive its mission strategically as well as operationally and absorb new talent onto the Board with a further modest increase in trustee numbers (the maximum size of the Board is currently set at nine),

The Board will look to support its work with a continuous administrative function.