Committee: Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee
Date: 22 October 2018
Subject: Statue Recognising the Role of Women in the City
Report of: Town Clerk
Report Author: Greg Moore

Summary

At the meeting of the Court of Common Council on 21 June 2018, Members passed a Motion which sought to recognise the centenary of women’s suffrage and the various contributions made by London’s women by commissioning a statue (or other suitable depiction) celebrating the role of pioneering women in London’s history.

This report suggests that the City Arts Initiative, the body which currently considers and reviews similar proposals relating to artistic installations around the City, be asked to consider options and details relating to location, design, subject and cost, with a view to presenting a formal proposition to Members in due course. To assist, and consistent with the terms of the Motion, it is also suggested that a number of independent advisers be invited to help shape the proposals.

The Committee is also asked to consider a proposal received to fund the delivery of two statues already being planned outside of the City boundaries, rather than the design and delivery of a new statue within the City itself.

Finally, Members are asked to note that any proposal will have associated financial implications, depending on the type and nature of the statue or depiction agreed upon, and that a request for funds will need to be made in the usual manner once proposals have been worked up.

Recommendation(s): That Members determine whether to:-

- Fund existing statues outside the City boundaries, as detailed in paragraphs 9-11 of the report;

  OR

- ask the City Arts Initiative Group to commission and develop proposals for a statue or suitable depiction within the City boundaries, to be created pursuant to the terms of the Motion passed by the Court, with authority delegated to the Assistant Town Clerk & Culture Mile Director to invite expert advisors to assist in the process.

Main Report

Background

1. At the Court of Common Council on 21 June 2018, Members passed the following Motion:
“That this Honourable Court, in recognition of the centenary of women’s suffrage and in committing itself to make further strides forward in making the City of London an open, tolerant and inclusive place to live, work, and visit, resolves to recognise the contribution made by London’s women, by commissioning a statue or statues or other depictions to be placed in prominent public positions, perhaps of some of the pioneering women who first held high office in the City, such as Dame Mary Donaldson GBE JP (Lord Mayor 1983), Edwina Coven CBE JP DL (Chief Commoner 1987), or Dame Judith Mayhew-Jonas DBE (Policy Chairman 1997-2003), or other women who have added value to the life of London over the centuries; and to refer this matter to relevant committees (advised by an independent expert group) to determine the subjects, budgets, design, location, and other practical concerns.”

2. Whilst there are many statues of women outside of the City, within the City there are none to speak of, which could give rise to a perception that this is a traditionally male domain. There is currently a group working to raise funds (independent of the City) for a memorial to Tessa Tenant and Green Finance; however, this is unlikely to be a figurative image of her, the focus being on green finance.

3. Officers have discussed the anticipated funding requirements and suitable governance arrangements for the project, consistent with the terms of the Motion, and approval is now sought to progress this work accordingly.

**Proposal**

4. The terms of the Motion were clear in respect of a group of independent advisors being made use of to inform decision-making in respect of determining the subjects, budgets, design, location, and other practical concerns.

5. At present, proposals relating to the installation of new artistic works across the City, including statues, are currently considered through the City Arts Initiative (CAI) group. This group consists of a number of senior officers working across the City Corporation’s cultural departments with relevant expertise and experience, together with a number of senior Members of the culture Heritage & Libraries Committee. It is well-versed in the sorts of considerations required in respect of location, practical issues, value for money, and design which will be important in helping to draw together suitable proposals.

6. It is considered that it would be pragmatic to utilise the existing structures of the CAI to expedite appropriate decision-making in respect of this item, rather than seek to create a new decision-making body to which additional expertise would need to be recruited.

7. The CAI also has the benefit of Member involvement, with both the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Culture Heritage & Libraries Committee, two further nominees of the same Committee, and the Chairman of the Sculpture in the City Board serving. Using the CAI would therefore ensure Member engagement throughout the process.
8. However, consistent with the terms of the Motion, the advice of a group of independent advisers will need to be incorporated within this process. The terms of reference of the CAI currently allow for internal and external experts to be invited to attend meetings to provide advice in this fashion. It is therefore suggested that the Assistant Town Clerk & Culture Mile Director be authorised to identify and invite suitable individuals to advise the CAI.

**Alternative Option Relating to Existing Statues**

9. The suggestion has also been made by a small number of current and past Members that, rather than seek to design its own statues, the City Corporation might wish to donate funds to support the delivery of statues which are already being produced.

10. Two such works in particular have been proposed, namely, statues of Sylvia Pankhurst and Mary Wollstonecraft, which are intended to be located at Newington Green. Information relating to each is appended to this report.

11. It should be noted that the City Corporation has already donated some £10,000 towards the Sylvia Pankhurst statue. Members may also wish to note that both statues are also to be located outside the City boundaries at Newington Green, in the London Borough of Islington, which it could be argued is not entirely consistent with the spirit of the motion and its aims in respect of the City.

12. The suggestion has also been made that a series of plaques, commemorating the homes or places of work of prominent City women or marking where women ran businesses over the centuries, could be considered instead of a statue. It is suggested that this be referred to the CAI to consider in the context of their wider discussions as to design and the way forward.

**Financial Implications**

13. Whether the decision be to pursue the design and installation of a new statue or the allocation of resource towards statues which are already planned, a significant financial commitment is likely to be required.

14. The precise financial implications will of course be dependent on the type and nature of the statue or depiction that is ultimately agreed upon. Based on previous experience of similar projects, officers have advised that the sum required for a new, permanent statue could be in the region of £100,000. However, this is a speculative figure at this point in time and appropriate bids for funding will need to be made of the Policy and Resources or Finance Committee once proposals have been developed, in accordance with the usual processes.

15. For illustrative purposes, it may be helpful to note that the Mary on the Green appeal is seeking a total of £200,000 (although this sum is to fund both the artwork and the ongoing promotion of her legacy via educational materials, so the totality is not dedicated to the statue). The Pankhurst appeal is currently seeking a further £70,000, in addition to the monies received to date by the City Corporation and other sponsors.
Conclusion
16. The Court of Common Council resolved to recognise the contribution made by London’s women through the installation of a suitable statue or other depiction. This report identifies an option to fund statues already under development, or to instead approve a recommended route to allow proposals for a new statue to be drawn up and developed, facilitating formal costed proposals being put before Members for final decision. Your Committee is asked to approve the use of the City Arts Initiative for this purpose, should the latter option be selected.

Appendices
- Appendix A: Information relating to Sylvia Pankhurst Statue
- Appendix B: Information relating to Mary Wollstonecraft Statue

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