

Committee	Dated:
Culture, Heritage and Libraries – For Decision	25 January 2021
Subject: City Arts Initiative: recommendations to the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	3, 7 and 10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
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: Peter Lisley – Director of Major Projects	For Decision
Report author: Nick Bodger, Cultural and Visitor Development Director	

Summary

This report presents the recommendations of the City Arts Initiative (CAI) which met on 3 December 2020. At this meeting, the CAI considered the public art proposal:

- 1. HSBC Gates** - approval for the artwork to be decommissioned and placed in storage in accordance with the conditions of a planning approval to redevelop Millennium Bridge House

This report also presents the recommendations of the City Arts Initiative in relation to their involvement in wider City of London Corporation programmes:

- 2. City of London Blue Plaque Scheme** – a recommendation for the City Arts Initiative to provide strategic oversight and peer review of the City of London Blue Plaque Scheme.

- 3. Tackling Racism Taskforce: Historic Landmarks Consultation** – a recommendation for the City Arts Initiative to form a working group to help support and deliver the recommendations of the Tackling Racism Taskforce following the Historic Landmarks Consultation.

Recommendation(s)

Members of the Culture Heritage and Libraries Committee are asked to:

Ratify the City Arts Initiative's recommendations in relation to proposals 1-3 above as follows:

- **HSBC Gates** - approval for the artwork to be decommissioned and placed in storage for the immediate future, noting that the City Arts Initiative will review its future location in December 2021.
- **City of London Blue Plaque Scheme** – approval for the City Arts Initiative to provide strategic oversight of the Blue Plaque Scheme, providing a peer review system for future applications.
- **Tackling Racism Taskforce: Historic Landmarks Consultation** – approval for the City Arts Initiative to form a working group to help deliver the recommendations of the Tackling Racism Taskforce, noting that the Taskforce's recommendations are due to be ratified by Policy and Resources in January 2021.

Main Report

Background

1. The City Arts Initiative (CAI) was established to improve the management of public art in the City. It provides advice to your Committee and other service Committees as appropriate on proposals for new public art, the maintenance of the City's existing public art and, if necessary, decommissioning.
2. The CAI comprises elected Members drawn from your Committee and relevant officers across Planning, Highways, Open Spaces, and Cultural and Visitor Development, as well as those with specific expertise in the visual arts including some from external organisations.
3. At your Committee in September 2020, Members reconfirmed that those occupying the roles of Chairman and Deputy Chairman on the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee, and the Chairman of the Sculpture in the City Partner Board should have permanent seats on the City Arts Initiative. Your Committee also elected Judith Pleasance and Tom Sleight to serve on the CAI for the 2020/21 committee year.
4. Apart from officer time handling enquiries and managing the installations, there are no resource implications other than where specifically noted.

Current Position

5. The CAI met on 3 December 2020 to consider the proposals outlined below.
6. Full-colour visual representations of the proposed artworks are circulated electronically with this report and are available in appendix 1. Full details of all the applications to the CAI are available on request from the Director of Major Projects.

Proposals

HSBC Gates

7. The CAI received an application to decommission (remove and relocate) a set of sculptures created by the late Sir Anthony Caro, in accordance with the conditions of a planning approval to redevelop Millennium Bridge House on 14th July 2020.
8. The removal and relocation of the HSBC Gates have been a long-held aspiration since 2013, when they were considered as part of a wider Millennium Bridge Area public realm improvement project.
9. Their removal from their current location was supported by Sir Anthony Caro but he passed away in late 2013. In order to show courtesy to the Caro Family and Estate, the City agreed to put their removal on hold.
10. In July 2020, the Planning and Transportation Committee upheld the decision to have the HSBC Gates removed from the current location and this is now a formal condition of the planning approval for redeveloping Millennium Bridge House.
11. Their removal will be fully funded by the developer as part of the planning agreement. Contractors who installed the artworks originally have already been contacted.
12. The sculptures are owned by Bridge House Estate. A separate report is therefore being submitted to Policy and Resources Committee so that the City Corporation can fulfil any legal obligations as a trustee of the Bridge House Estate and its assets.
13. No immediate location for the artworks has been identified. The City Arts Initiative agreed that the future siting of the artworks should be reviewed in December 2021, noting that the immediate priority is to remove the sculptures from their existing location to fulfil conditions of the planning agreement.
14. Until a new location has been identified and the artworks can be relocated, the storage of the artwork will be funded by the Caro Estate.

15. **The CAI agreed to recommend the application for approval and review the future siting of the sculptures in December 2021.**

City of London Blue Plaque Scheme

16. There are approximately 170 blue plaques sited in the City of London. Administration and governance of the scheme in the Square Mile is led by the City Surveyor's Department, with support from the London Metropolitan Archives and Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department.
17. Currently, an average of two applications for new plaques are made each year. The City Corporation quotes five years as a timescale to achieve a successful installation and to manage the applicant's expectations. This is in line with the circular English Heritage plaques.
18. However, depending upon the proposed location and supporting evidence of the plaque, applications may only take 18 months. For instance, if the plaque is proposed for a City-owned property and, therefore, external permissions are not necessary.
19. Under the current process, external applicants are asked to pay for all the costs involved in manufacturing the plaque. Administration costs are met by City Surveyor's.
20. Siting and information on the plaques is agreed by all parties, but the City Corporation holds the final decision on the text on the plaque and its location.
21. Following a recent review of the current arrangements, officers in City Surveyor's have advised that there is currently no peer-review element of the process and that the CAI may have the appropriate expertise to fulfil this role going forward.
22. At their meeting on 3rd December, the City Arts Initiative was asked to review the current process and discuss:
 - a. If City of London Blue Plaque applications should be incorporated into the group's remit
 - b. What specific role the City Arts Initiative should play when reviewing applications
23. Suggested roles for the City Arts Initiative:
 - a. Recommending applications for approval (both the subject and location)
 - b. Maintaining oversight of applications that are in the programme pipeline

- c. Reviewing the City of London Blue Plaque applications programme, ensuring that opportunities (where possible) are aligned with the City Corporation's Recognition of Women programme and Tackling Racism Taskforce
- 24. The CAI agreed that the selection and siting of future plaques may benefit ongoing programmes connected to representation and diversity in the public realm, citing the Recognition of Women programme and future work as directed by the Tackling Racism Taskforce.
- 25. The CAI's expertise may also assist in developing the programme to ensure it can embed community participation and representation into its future processes.
- 26. The Blue Plaque scheme would continue to be financed under the existing combined model of applicants and the City Surveyor's department.
- 27. It was recommended that the CAI secretariat, working with officers in City Surveyor's and those sitting on the City Arts Initiative, could support the administration of the Blue Plaque Scheme.
- 28. **The CAI recommended that the Blue Plaque Scheme's process be updated so that the City Arts Initiative may provide strategic oversight and a peer review service with its recommendations to be ratified by your Committee. Its roles will include:**
 - a. Recommending applications for approval (both the subject and location)
 - b. Maintaining oversight of applications that are in the programme pipeline
 - c. Reviewing the City of London Blue Plaque applications programme, ensuring that opportunities (where possible) are aligned with City Corporation's Recognition of Women programme and Tackling Racism Taskforce

Tackling Racism Taskforce – Historic Landmarks Consultation

- 29. The debate over contested heritage, within and outside the City of London, has proven to be politically divisive. Following global protests after the death of George Floyd, there was a re-examination of the suitability of certain contested pieces of heritage, namely public statues that displayed subject matters associated with slavery and other forms of racism. The protests and forced removal of the Colston Statue in Bristol was a catalyst for businesses, educational facilities and civil society organisations to re-assess their own cultural artefacts on public display.

30. The City of London Corporation responded by establishing a dedicated workstream, within the Tackling Racism Taskforce, to identify what action if any, should be taken regarding these items. Following approval from the Policy and Resources Committee, the Tackling Racism Taskforce launched a consultative exercise in September 2020 to assist in determining what items existed within the City of London and the future suitability of these items on display.
31. This exercise formally opened to public submissions on 1st September 2020 and closed on 24th November 2020.
32. The consultative exercise was designed to encourage consultees to send their responses, in free form writing, to a bespoke email and postal address.
33. The Tackling Racism Taskforce received 1580 individual responses to the consultative exercise on historic items.
34. The exercise proved to be an important signposting initiative that has helped assess the preferences of the public, of City Corporation staff and other valued stakeholders on this matter, including cultural and educational bodies.
35. On 3rd December, the City Arts Initiative met to review the headline findings and contribute their views on how any potential subsequent recommendations may be developed and put into action.
36. This discussion took place before the Tackling Racism Taskforce meeting on the 11 December so that the CAI's recommendation could be agreed and then formally presented to Policy and Resources in January 2021.
37. Noting their expertise across the visual arts, the built environment and heritage, the City Arts Initiative put forward a recommendation to establish a working group that would seek to understand relevant logistics involved in delivering consultation and Taskforce views, and to explore potential future commissions and/or re-interpretations pertaining to Tackling Racism Taskforce culture workstream.
38. The working group would also work to address how the objectives of the Taskforce may be embedded within current and planned visual arts and public realm programmes run by the City Corporation.
39. This recommendation was passed onto the Tackling Racism Taskforce for decision at its meeting on 11 December 2020 and was agreed.
40. **The CAI agreed to recommend that a working group of CAI members and relevant officers and external experts be formed to support the actions recommended by the Tackling Racism Taskforce in response to its Historic Landmarks Consultation.**

Corporate & Strategic Implications

41. The City Arts Initiative was formed to support the City's management of public art which supports the delivery of the City's Cultural and Visitor Strategies.

Conclusion

42. This report summarises the discussions of the City Arts Initiative and presents recommendations in relation to the public art applications considered on 3 Dec 2020.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: CAI Images, 3 Dec 2020

Background Papers

Full details of the applications received by the City Arts Initiative are available on request from the Director of Major Projects.

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