

Committee:	Date:
Establishment	27th March 2014
Subject: Annual Staff Lunches	Public
Report of: Director of Public Relations	For Decision

Summary

The Annual Staff Lunches are an important and popular part of the festive calendar for City Corporation staff. The overall cost of the lunches in 2013 was £66,000 which was covered by a contribution from this committee of £47,158 and by a £10 per head contribution from staff which amounted to £18,865.

The charge from the caterers has been £33 per head for the last three years however with the need to ensure a continued quality of food, it is necessary for that cost to rise to £34 per head for the standard meal. Most dietary requests can be met from that standard cost (gluten free, dairy free, vegetarian) however for the provision of kosher meals there is a cost per head of £89. Over the last two years such requests have been fewer than 10 members of staff attending the event.

Whilst accepting that need for a cost increase, Members are asked to consider how the additional £2,100 should be funded and whether there should be any change in the contribution that is sought from staff.

For regular catering provision in the staff restaurant (The Gild) a range of special requirements are provided for (gluten free, healthy options, vegetarian/vegan) however because of the very strict requirements associated with provision of some meals, particularly kosher, it is not currently viable for the Corporation or the contractor to make this a standard provision.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the provision of special dietary requirements in The Gild;
- Determine the ongoing contribution which the Committee will make to the Annual Staff Lunches; and
- Determine the contribution that staff members attending should make to the cost of the Annual Staff Lunches.

Main Report

Background

1. This report follows from the questions raised at your meeting in February 2014 when an earlier report was presented on this matter. The aim in the paper is to set out the wider context of the overall cost of the annual lunches and the costs associated with them and address the questions that arose.
2. The City of London Corporation has provided hospitality for staff around the festive period for over twenty years in the form of a Staff Annual Lunch. The lunch is organised on three consecutive days in the Great Hall; all members of the City Corporation's staff are invited to attend on a first come, first served basis, owing to capacity constraints in the Hall. The invitations include non-Guildhall staff from the Barbican Centre, Open Spaces Department, Museum of London, civilian staff at the City of London Police, and non-teaching staff at the City's independent schools.
3. Over the three days there is a maximum attendance of 2,100 people. Those attending the lunch are served a three course meal: a starter; a main course (either turkey, fish or vegetarian option) with vegetable accompaniments and sauces; a dessert; white and red wine, beer, soft drinks, port and brandy; mince pies; coffee or tea.

Cost of the event and special requirements

4. The Chief Commoner grants the use of the Great Hall at a no user charge to the Committee. The full cost to hire the Great Hall over the four days (including one set up day) at the 2013 commercial rate would be £48,600 (although a commercial client may not pay the maximum hire rate).
5. The breakdown of expenditure for the 2013 Lunches is as follows:

Expenditure Item	£
Catering costs*	64,557
Toastmaster (for three days)	630
Printing costs (meal tickets, menu cards)	590
Gifts (crackers for top table, cufflinks for Lord Mayor's Consort)	40
Agency staff	<u>206</u>
Total	66,023
<i>Less staff contributions</i>	<i><u>(18,865)</u></i>
Grand total	<u>47,158</u>

*1,940 standard cost meals (£33) and 6 kosher meals (£89.57)

6. In addition to these costs, additional security staff are on duty and funded from the City Surveyor's local risk budget.
7. Some special dietary requirements are catered for at no additional cost including gluten free, allergies to monosodium glutamate (MSG), halal, no dairy, nut allergies, and vegan. Kosher meals are also available for those who require them on religious grounds at a total cost of £89.57 per person.
8. The kosher meal costs are so much higher than a standard meal because of the necessity for very specific items:
 - brand new china;
 - brand new cutlery;
 - the kosher staffing cost; and
 - delivery costs of the food which is prepared off site under specialist conditions.
9. The kosher meal prices are very much in accordance with standard kosher meal fees. In 2013, the number of staff requesting kosher meals at the Staff Annual Lunch was 6 in total; in 2012, this number was 9.
10. The cost of the meal has remained at £33 per person for the past five years; the cost to staff has also been held at £10 per person for five years. Over the years, the increasing popularity and success of the lunches, along with the growing expectation of a greater provision of food and the rise in food prices, means that this current price is now unsustainable.
11. Seasoned Events have catered the Staff Annual Lunches for the past two years and have held the price at a competitive cost of £33 per person. Feedback from staff who attended the lunches in 2013 has been extremely positive, with praise of both the quality and quantity of the food served. As a consequence of this feedback and competitive pricing, Seasoned Events have been chosen as the caterer for the 2014 Staff Annual Lunches at a price of £34 per person.

Options

12. Based on the attendance the cost of the increase from Seasoned Events will be up to £2,100 which could be met by:
 - a. Increased contribution from the Committee taking the estimated cost for to £49,000 for 2014; or
 - b. Seeking an increase in the contribution from staff to £11 per person
13. Alternatively, Members may decide that they wish to reduce the contribution made by the Committee on behalf of the Corporation which would then need to be made up by those attending. Each £1 contributed by staff reduces the cost by up to £2,100.

Other catering offering

14. At the last meeting, a question was raised about the staff restaurant and its ability to meet dietary and religious requirements. Appendix 1 gives an example of the weekly menu which makes provision for gluten free, vegetarian/vegan and healthy options.
15. Our specification for The Gild includes the following clause:

“Special and Religious Diets. Where products for ethical or religious diets are required, the Service Provider is to agree with the City the standard of compliance. It is to agree specific assurance processes for this compliance and is to provide appropriate evidence.”
16. The current offering does include each day, a vegetarian hot food choice (including soup) and a salad bar. Regarding specific religious requirements, some meat is halal and will be indicated on daily menus. For reasons set out above about the requirements for kosher catering, this is not practical with the current set up of the facility.
17. The catering contractor for The Gild (ISS) had the previous contract before being awarded the current one in the more recent tender exercise (2013). There are therefore are fully aware of the historic ethnic and religious requests received over the past 4 years. These have been minimal and therefore more specific provision with the current foot fall and customer profile is currently deemed by both parties to be cost prohibitive.

Conclusion

18. The Staff Annual Lunches are an important and popular part of the festive calendar for City Corporation staff. Given rising food prices and demand from staff for slightly more substantial meals, it is inevitable that after 3 years, a modest increase in cost is warranted. The way in which that cost is met is a matter for the Committee to decide.
19. Some aspects of special diets can be delivered in the staff restaurant (The Gild) however there is limited demand and what is provided must be cost effective for both the Corporation and the contractor in order that the facility can be maintained.

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Background Papers

Report to Establishment Committee, February 2014, Annual Staff Lunches

The Gild lunch menu

Breakfast - Lunch - Salad - Sandwiches - Grab and Go

Key: [GF] = gluten free, [H] = healthy option, [S] = spicy, [V] = vegan

Menu for week beginning Monday 10th March 2014

	Monday 10 March	Tuesday 11 March	Wednesday 12 March	Thursday 13 March	Friday 14 March
Soup (85p) [H]	Leek Potato & Crème Fraiche [GF][V]	Scotch Broth	Cream of Potato & Celeriac [V][GF]	Roasted Plum Tomato [GF][V]	White Onion & Rocket [GF][V]
Bread roll (25p)	Chicken & Sweetcorn [GF]	Spiced Pumpkin [GF][V]	Minestrone [V]	Prawn & Vegetable Chowder [GF]	Pepper Paprika & Chilli [GF][V][S]
Traditional (£3.30)	A Taste of Home	A Taste of Home	British Sausages	A Taste of Home	Chip Shop
Friday Chip Shop(30p - £1.80)	Grilled Pork Steak with Roasted Peppers [GF]	Char-Grilled Rosemary & Garlic Chicken Breast, Grilled Tomato, Honey & Herb Yoghurt [GF][H]	Grilled Cumberland Ring served with Crushed Potatoes & Red Onion Gravy	Lamb Mince & Vegetable Pie with Short Crust Pastry	Sausage in Batter Assorted Pies Breaded Fish Goujons
Chef's Meal(£3.30)	Chinese Theatre	Little Italy	Borough Market Sandwich	Brick Lane Curry Bar	Billingsgate Fish Bar
Pho Bar Tue11th(£3.75)	Chicken & Vegetable Stir-Fry cooked in a Sweet & Sour Sauce served with Rice [H]	Mamma's Meatballs with Penne Pasta and Parmesan Cheese	Piri Piri Chicken with Harissa Yoghurt, Crispy Cos Lettuce in a Floured Bap [H][S][S]	Beef Madras served with a Poppadum & Mango Chutney [GF][S][S][S]	Battered MSC Fish of the Day served with Lemon & Tartar Sauce
Vegetarian (£2.45)	Welsh Goats Cheese & Red Onion Tart with Green Leaf Salad	Grilled Mushrooms with a Creamy Herb Sauce topped with Sliced Potatoes	Thai Green Vegetable Curry served with Noodles [S]	Baked Couscous Cakes with a Spicy Tomato & Onion Salsa [S][H]	Pepper & Bean Cassoulet served with Steamed Rice [GF][H]

APPENDIX 1

<p>Carbohydrates (£0.70 / £0.95)</p>	<p>Chipped Potatoes</p> <p>Lemon & Oregano Potato Wedges</p> <p>Buttered Greens</p> <p>Sweetcorn & Peppers</p>	<p>Chipped Potatoes</p> <p>Savoury Herb Potatoes</p> <p>Green Beans</p> <p>Cheesy Leeks</p>	<p>Chipped Potatoes</p> <p>Crushed New Potatoes</p> <p>Braised Star Anise Red Cabbage</p> <p>Steamed Broccoli</p>	<p>Chipped Potatoes</p> <p>Roast Potatoes</p> <p>Pilau Rice</p> <p>Roast Cauliflower & Chilli</p> <p>Steamed Spinach</p>	<p>Chipped Potatoes</p> <p>Gravy</p> <p>Curry Sauce</p> <p>Garden Peas</p> <p>Mushy Peas</p>
<p>Pudding (£1.15)</p>	<p>Sticky Date Pudding with Custard</p>	<p>Plum Sponge with Custard</p>	<p>Mixed Fruit Pie with Custard</p>	<p>Bread & Butter Pudding with Custard</p>	<p>Lemon Tart with Custard</p>