

Committees:		Dates:
Policy and Resources	- For decision	02 October 2014
Finance	- For decision	21 October 2014
Culture, Heritage and Libraries	- For information	27 October 2014
Subject:		Public
Request for support: feasibility for a Great Fire of London public spectacular		
Report of:		For Decision (P&R and Finance) For information (CHL)
The Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries		

Summary

The Great Fire of London is one of the best-known events in the City's history and one of its most significant drivers for visitor traffic. 2016 marks the 350th anniversary of the Fire and there is a public and partner hope that the City will commemorate in a significant way. Plans are already in place for a programme of regular activity which sees exhibitions, walks, talks, activities and events in City assets that include the Museum of London, the new Heritage Gallery and the Monument.

The Great Fire is an important event nationally – it is part of Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum, has inspired a major new ITV series, and delivers 1.5m unique page views for the Museum of London annually and around quarter of a million visitors to Monument each year. Its anniversary is wholly a City affair, giving the City a chance to shine in a way not afforded by other such anniversaries (like Magna Carta) and to deliver a major event for the enjoyment of London and all those who live, work or visit here. Such events not only help to cement reputational recognition for the City but also bring economic benefits through increased visitor traffic.

Working closely together, officers in Culture, Heritage and Libraries (CHL), the Barbican and the Museum of London have been in contact with one of the UK's leading creative companies, Artichoke, to discuss options for a major public event.

This report seeks funding to commission Artichoke to undertake a feasibility study that will investigate the viability of delivering a major event in the City and raising funds of between £1.5 and £2million to finance it. Should viability be proven, the City Corporation (through your Committee) would subsequently be expected to provide seed funding not to exceed £300,000; without such an investment, it is unlikely that public or corporate subsidy from elsewhere could be secured and the project could not go ahead. Members are therefore asked to note this when taking the decision to fund the study or not.

This anniversary offers the City a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to show London, the nation and the world the extent of our cultural and heritage offer, to enhance the City's reputation and to support London's position as a world city.

Recommendations

Members of your Policy and Resources Committee are asked to:

- Agree to provide a total sum of £19,600 in support of a report examining the feasibility of a major public event commemorating the Great Fire of London to be met from your Committee's contingency and charged to City's Cash in 2014/15.
- Note that if the feasibility study shows the event to be viable, a further report will be received by your Committee seeking a sum not to exceed £300,000 to be met from Policy & Resources 2015/16 contingency, this being the total that the City Corporation will be asked to provide towards the project which has an anticipated value of up to £2million.
- Note that an additional sum of up to £20,000 may also be sought towards the Great Fire education and website project currently being scoped in detail. This project is estimated could cost in the region of £200,000 and will be the subject of an external funding bid as it could not be resourced through the Museum of London's, London Metropolitan Archives' (LMA) and the Monument's local risk budgets.
- Recommend that the Finance Committee agree to waive the procurement regulations in accordance with regulation 9.2 to enable the selected supplier of the feasibility report and the final project (Artichoke) to be appointed.

Members of the Finance Committee are asked to:

- Receive and note the contents of this report and the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee
- Formally waive the procurement regulations in accordance with regulation 9.2, so enabling the City Corporation to procure the feasibility study from Artichoke for £19,600 and for the project itself which has an estimated value of £2million, should viability be agreed and a decision to progress with the project be made.

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

- Receive this report for information and note its contents

Main Report

Background

1. The Great Fire of London, which devastated the City in September 1666 and led to its almost total reconstruction, is one of the most well-known events in its history, with great popular resonance and an obvious opportunity for an anniversary to be marked with cultural and educational events.
2. The fire destroyed 373 acres of the City, burning around 13,200 houses, 84 churches and 44 company halls, displacing 100,000 people (one sixth of

London's population) and killing an unknown number. Afterwards, radical rebuilding schemes were proposed, but complexities of property ownership led to the recreation of much of the old street layout. A special Fire Court was set up to resolve disputes between tenants and landlords. Improvements in hygiene and fire safety were made and, most importantly, buildings were reconstructed of brick and stone, amongst them the St Paul's Cathedral we know today, and 50 of the City's churches.

3. The story of the *Great Fire*, as it has become known, has mass appeal the world over but with particular interest shown by UK audiences and 'local' Londoners. Its value as a story that captures the imagination has helped it to become an essential part of the City's cultural and heritage offer and a driver for tourists, families, schools and history enthusiasts to visit 'the place where it happened'.
4. It is that authenticity of place, the stage set where one of the biggest events in London's history unfolded, and our unique archives and collections that make the Great Fire one of the most valuable assets in our visitor portfolio. This importance is exemplified by:
 - a. the Great Fire being on the National Curriculum at Key Stage (KS) 1, (5- to 7-year-olds) providing a critical way of engaging children with London's history;
 - b. a 'fire bucket from the Great Fire of London' enjoying the number one spot on a recently-published list of 100 objects for teaching history to school pupils, compiled by the British Museum and Department for Education;
 - c. a new, epic, four-part drama of *The Great Fire* being written for ITV by ITN's Political Editor Tom Bradby – starring Charles Dance and Andrew Buchan and airing this autumn
 - d. the Great Fire website – a microsite within Museum of London's own site that can be found at www.fireoflondon.org.uk – being the most visited area of the Museum of London's website and achieving 1.5m page views per annum;
 - e. the Museum being unable to meet with the demand from London schools for visits on the subject of the Great Fire given its value as a compelling local story;
 - f. over 20,000 copies of a Great Fire self-guided walk (published for the first time earlier this year) being picked up by visitors to our City Information Centre in less than six months (four times as many as any other walk in the series, necessitating a reprint 18 months ahead of time);
 - g. the Monument (to the Great Fire of London) continuing to achieve record footfall year-on-year with just under 250,000 visitors recorded in the 2013; and
 - h. the City – and its Fire related assets – enjoying bumper half term weeks on a regular basis, with families visiting to explore the place where it happened and support their children's education.

Current Position

5. September 2016 marks the 350th anniversary of the Great Fire and there is a growing expectation that the City will commemorate it in a significant way. The Fire plays into the history and heritage of the Square Mile, and the City's capacity for continual reinvention – two key themes delivering a wealth of opportunity that will deliver resonance and impact.
6. This is a story that is uniquely City. This sets this anniversary apart from others such as Magna Carta's 800th next year for which City support enables a rich and varied programme across the country but for which impact for the City itself sits alongside other headline projects such as the British Library's *Magna Carta: Law, Liberty and Legacy* exhibition and the events at Runnymede.
7. This paper seeks funding to test the viability of creating a big, public spectacular event that would form the centrepiece of a programme of smaller (and already partially-planned) activities in our attractions and libraries (these being funded from local risk budgets and/or through sponsorship and grants). Such events are often put on by major cities seeking to create memorable and impactful activities in association with important cultural occasions.
8. For this particular element, the City has been approached by a company called Artichoke which has a highly respected track record of high-profile projects of this nature in London, Durham, Liverpool and elsewhere across the UK.
9. After consideration of the market and Artichoke's credentials, your officers within CHL, the Barbican and the Museum of London are in agreement that this highly-regarded and innovative arts consultancy and producer is the only company working in the UK today that could offer the kudos, inventiveness, public profile and stakeholder buy-in that would be needed to deliver an event for something as special to the City as the Great Fire.
10. Its suitability for the project (and distinction from other commercial-based event companies) is supported by their Registered Charity status and the high level of interaction with local communities and groups that a typical Artichoke event will have, both in the logistics around the event and in the creation and tailoring of the artistic content. This may have particular resonance for our schools and the communities in our neighbouring boroughs.
11. A list of Artichoke's achievements which include *One & Other* (Antony Gormley's fourth plinth project in Trafalgar Square) is included in their *Proposal for Feasibility Study*, along with a client list that includes the Mayor of London, LOCOG, the Arts Council, Durham County Council, Liverpool City Council and Accenture. Testimonials and a list of client to external funding ratios for a number of their projects are given in appendix 2. These testimonials include one from Boris Johnson:

“In a city full of wonderful experiences, Artichoke have been responsible for some of the most astonishing and talked about events of the last few years... Artichoke exemplifies Britain's creativity and ability to shock, surprise and tantalise.”

12. In addition to these proposals, the Museum of London, LMA and Monument have come together to examine the options for refreshing the Museum of London's Great Fire website and developing a complementary education programme.

Options

13. A series of options for commemorating the 350th anniversary of the Great Fire are offered to Members for their consideration and support. No one option excludes or is reliant on another.
14. **OPTION 1: provide activities within City Corporation assets and, utilising our collections to best advantage, deliver a three-month public programme of Great Fire events:**
 - a. Proposals discussed include exhibitions at Guildhall Library, within the new Heritage Gallery and in the Guildhall Art Gallery itself, an 'experience' piece at Museum of London and a series of walks, talks and other activities delivered by all partners including, of course, the Monument.
 - b. All activity will be met by local risk budgets and/or from third party funding and sponsorship.
 - c. In addition, your cultural and visitor development team will work with City partners in tourism and hospitality to deliver a complementary programme; it is likely that St Paul's Cathedral and the City's churches would play some significant role given their rebirth from the ashes of the Fire.
15. **OPTION 2: deliver a high-profile, public spectacular as a centrepiece to the programme outlined in option 1:**
 - a. This option would require a feasibility study to be undertaken (and completed by March 2015) to define the shape of the event, the logistics of producing it and to assess the sites on which it might happen, as well as investigating potential partners and funding sources.
 - b. The study proposed by Artichoke will cost £19,600 and this is the sum sought from your Committee's contingency; Members should note that the expected final cost of a project is likely to be in the region of £1.5 to £2million and that the City Corporation would be expected to contribute between £250,000 to £300,000 of this amount in order to secure the investment of others.
 - c. The return on investment realised by the direct spend of audiences and the value of PR for a number of projects previously delivered by Artichoke are given on p20 of Artichoke's Feasibility Study. These are impressive; for example, the Lumiere in Durham shows that for an investment of £3.5million over three festivals, PR value of over £6million was achieved with an economic impact of over £11.5million.
 - d. Such an event would help to encourage collaboration and co-operation between the cultural and other organisations of the City, supporting the new Cultural Strategy which has a particular focus on working with

business and supporting our (smaller) cultural partners through collaborative working.

- e. Similarly, it would provide a perfect illustration of the development of the cultural hub concept, providing the hook to position it within the City and a wider London context, and enabling all to share in a vision and themes that will deliver a substantially-increased collective impact.
- f. It will also underpin our “Supporting London” agenda by delivering a truly astounding public event that may be enjoyed by all who live, work and visit the capital as well as supporting a shift in perceptions about the City and City business in a positive and engaging way.

16. OPTION 3: refresh and expand the Great Fire of London website so that it may become the official repository for information about the great Fire and deliver a complementary schools programme in 2016:

- a. Education teams at Museum of London, LMA and the Monument are jointly scoping the appetite for an expanded and improved Great Fire of London website and associated educational and community programmes.
- b. The website will be aimed at a broad audience (not just schools) and would be the place to go for authoritative information about the Fire, pulling together, for the first time, all of the City’s Great Fire holdings and contributing to its wider archival digitisation programme.
- c. The schools section of the website will be highly interactive with features such as a virtual reality ‘fly-through’ of the City as the Fire begins, 3D objects that children can spin around and explore in detail, and films and other content generated by children themselves, while lesson plans and activity ideas will enable teachers to incorporate the rich content from the other parts of the site in their teaching.
- d. A programme for schools will also be developed and rolled out during 2016; initial ideas include a London-wide teacher training programme and drama-based shows in primary schools.

Proposals

- 17. It is recommended that Members of the Policy and Resources Committee approve a sum not to exceed £19,600 from their contingency to fund the feasibility study to be undertaken by Artichoke, noting the commitments being made from the local risk budgets of participating assets in Options 1 and 3.
- 18. Members are asked to note that the completed study will be presented to their Committee in January or March next year and that, if the delivery of a major public event and the sponsorship necessary to achieve it is assessed as viable by the study, a further bid for between £250,000 and £300,000 will be made towards the cost of this project then.
- 19. This may be funded from your 2015/16 contingency which, at the time of writing, has a balance of £645,000). No further sum towards the public event will be sought from your Committee.

20. It should be emphasised that it would not be possible to realise the project without this level of funding because the City Corporation's commitment is essential to securing public subsidies (that will be matched to its investment or a proportion of it), and that private and corporate sponsors will be led by example.
21. Members of the Finance Committee are also asked to agree to waive the procurement regulations in accordance with regulation 9.2 to enable the selected supplier – Artichoke – to be appointed, noting that while artists' services are exempt from our procurement regulations, the marketing and sponsorship services that will be a part of the package are not. It is anticipated that the total value of the project will not exceed £2million.
22. Members of the Policy and Resources Committee are also asked to note the Great Fire website and education project that will complement the other activities. The total cost of this project is anticipated to be £200,000 and, should the consultation phase be successful, a bid for between £15,000 and £20,000 may be made to your committee along with the feasibility study report findings. The remaining monies for this project will be met through external funding to be secured by the Museum of London, LMA and the Monument.
23. In addition, a programme of corporate hospitality and corporate affairs activity may be co-ordinated by the Remembrancer and Director of Public Relations in 2016. A request for support may be made to your Committee at that time but, as yet, detail is not known.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

24. The proposals in this report are aligned with the City Corporation's Corporate Plan KPP5 "increasing the impact of the City's cultural and heritage offer on the life of London and the nation". They do this by supporting objectives within the cultural and visitor strategies and by developing and improving the physical environment around our key cultural attractions.
25. The proposals also align with *The City Together Strategy 2008 /14* in that they help to realise two key themes, to support our communities and to deliver a City that is "vibrant and culturally rich".
26. The animation of the 350th anniversary of the Great Fire is specifically referenced and supported in the City's Visitor Strategy 2013/17 (action A1.11) and aligns with the City's Cultural Strategy 2012/17 *Animating the Heritage* theme. The development of a partnership between the City's cultural and non-cultural stakeholders is also reflected in the City's new Cultural Strategy 2015/19 which is currently at draft stage. This focuses particularly on the engagement of business with the City's cultural offer and the support of our cultural partners through our cultural assets.
27. These proposals also support the vision outlined in the City's Education Strategy 2013/15 which states that "The City will maximise the educational opportunities that its cultural, heritage and environmental assets offer to City residents, the City schools and children throughout London". Specifically, they are aligned with strategic objective 3 within the strategy.

Implications

28. The precedent for funding major events from Policy and Resources contingency was set by the Olympics in 2012, with an initial grant of £250,000 made to the 2012 (Policy and Resources) Sub Committee to fund Olympic and Paralympic activity and promotions. Similarly, your Committee funded Magna Carta 800th anniversary activity with £88,000 from its contingency earlier this year and £40,000 from its Policy Initiatives Fund.
29. The total amount sought for the public event will not exceed £319,600 with £19,600 of that amount being for the feasibility study (and subject of this report), to be met from your Policy & Resources 2014/15 contingency, the current balance of which is £141,000.
30. A further sum of between £250,000 and £300,000 may be sought from the City Corporation if the project is proven to be viable, to be taken from your Committee's 2015/16 contingency which, at the time of writing, has an available fund of £645,000.
31. The feasibility study will identify where the remaining monies for the major public event can be sourced. Artichoke's track record for delivering this level of funding for similar projects should be noted. It is not anticipated that any additional request will be made to your Committee for this element of the project because the study will be robust and a commitment to realising it will not be made without full confidence that its targets can be achieved. This will be reflected in our contract with Artichoke should the study be sanctioned.

Conclusion

32. The City owns the Great Fire story. It is a story that stirs public imagination and stimulates the senses. The occasion of the Fire's 350th anniversary presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the City to commemorate, delivering impact for its leisure economy, its destination profile and its importance to London, and shifting perceptions about the City in a wholly positive way.
33. This is an anniversary that cannot be claimed by any other part of London or the wider UK. There is an expectation that the City will do something and a major public event is one that will excite audiences from across the capital and further afield, driving footfall and reputational benefits now and in the years to come.
34. This is not about cultural frippery; it is a response to our audiences and a way to advance our agendas around education, culture and heritage, visitors, Supporting London and City business. It is about examining the contemporary relevance of the Fire for London and themes of displacement, urban design, the environment and utopian visions. It is a vehicle through which we can demonstrate the value of the cultural hub, kick start the digitisation of our archives, start working holistically, and engage – really engage – with the communities we serve.
35. To do nothing is not an option. To do little is missing a great opportunity. To invest in a major event that positively positions the City within London and cements London's reputation on the world stage is to raise a phoenix from the ashes of 1666 to welcome new audiences from across the globe, inviting

them to share in a great story and a great place. Members are therefore recommended to approve the bid for £19,600 in support of a feasibility study by Artichoke if they believe the financial implications of a positive outcome are acceptable to them.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – **Artichoke: Feasibility study costs and schedule**
- Appendix 2 – **Artichoke: testimonials and subsidy ratios**

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