

Committee(s)	Dated:
Culture, Heritage and Libraries – for decision Policy and Resources – for decision Finance Committee –for decision	02 March 2015 26 March 2015 14 April 2015
Subject: 350 th Anniversary of the Great Fire of London: feasibility study recommendations	Public
Report of: Director of Culture. Heritage and Libraries	For Decision

Summary

In October 2014, your Policy and Resources Committee approved funding for one of the UK’s leading creative companies to undertake a feasibility study into a major public spectacular to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Great Fire of London (September 2016).

This report highlights the study’s headlines (the full report being available under the non-public agenda of this meeting) and suggests the reasons for the City Corporation becoming the “Founding Sponsor” and committing £300,000 seed funding towards the projects proposed. These reasons include reputational gains, economic benefit for London, the support of local and London communities, the project’s alignment with a number of our corporate objectives and the project’s significant legacy.

The study recommends a window between August and November 2016 (finishing with the Lord Mayor’s Show) in which all events may take place, with the Great Fire dates of 2 to 5 September (which fall over a weekend) being the focus for major activity, including a one-off spectacular.

The detail of what this might be is provided in the study which also outlines Artichoke’s plans to provide a platform through which stakeholders may promote their programmes (driving traffic to their events), a conference of international standing, a weekend of fire-related events and a supporting education programme.

Members are asked to note that without funding, it is unlikely that the resonance suggested in the study could ever be realised, albeit some of the City Corporation’s own institutions would collaborate to realise a smaller programme of activity.

Recommendations:

Members of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries and Policy and Resources Committees are asked to:

1. Receive and endorse Artichoke's feasibility study presented under the non-public agenda of this meeting, and to support their bid for a £300,000 contribution towards a major City spectacular to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Great Fire in September 2016, for onward approval by the Finance Committee
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries to ensure that the City Corporation's objectives as "Founding Sponsor" are realised through the delivery of the event, subject to the decision of the Finance Committee to fund the project

Members of the Finance Committee are asked to:

3. Approve the proposal for a major City spectacular in commemoration of the Great Fire as outlined in Artichoke's proposal, delegating authority to the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries to oversee the City Corporation's role as "Founding Sponsor" ensuring its objectives in supporting the event are met
4. Approve a sum of £300,000 towards the cost of the project to guarantee the City Corporation the role of "Founding Sponsor", to be taken from the Finance Committee's City's Cash Contingency which, at the time of writing (February 2015), stands at a total fund of £905,000

Main Report

Background

1. In October 2014, your Policy and Resources Committee approved funding for a feasibility study into a major public spectacular to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Great Fire of London (September 2016).
2. The appointed company – Artichoke – completed the study in February of this year and this is presented to Members under the non-public agenda for this meeting, the information contained within the document being of a sensitive nature in both artistic and business contexts.
3. A Project Board comprising internal and external stakeholders and chaired by the Director of the Museum of London ensured that Artichoke were fully aligned with the City Corporation's objectives and related work streams in their development of proposals and has facilitated a significant number of interviews and forums to enable them to get the widest possible understanding of the views of all stakeholders.

4. Without exception, these views have been positive and the role of the City Corporation in commissioning the study has been highly commended.

Current Position

5. The consultation for the study targeted over 150 stakeholders, including cultural venues, Livery Companies, potential funders, London's promotional agencies and its licensing authorities. A full list is provided in appendix 1.
6. What has emerged is a very strong sense of enthusiasm for something that will commemorate the Great Fire in a major way, with a great many of those consulted already committed to activities that could support such an initiative. These include digital programmes, lectures, talks, exhibitions and performances related to the anniversary, as well as interest from the broadcast media.

Proposals

7. This has led Artichoke to suggest that they deliver a platform (likely to be a website) to which stakeholders can upload their event information. Given the millions of visitors ordinarily accessing Artichoke project sites, this provides a highly desirable means of promotion for local culture providers, retailers, the Livery and others planning events and initiatives around the Great Fire and will be the hook for driving traffic to their webpages as well as delivering profile for associated initiatives like the Great Fire education project being developed by the London Metropolitan Archives and the Museum of London.
8. To ensure a focus for these activities (and so that impact is not diluted across the year), Artichoke also suggests that a window to contain all activities is set as August through November culminating in the Lord Mayor's Show.
9. Over the dates of 2-5 September 2016 (the dates the Great Fire blazed, falling Friday to Monday in 2016), they propose that the City hosts an international conference on a related theme (to take place on Thursday 1 September), a major spectacular and fire-related events that stretch the full extent of the City, involving all of its communities. An education programme, specially designed app and opportunities for apprenticeships support this suggested programme.
10. The full cost of the project is anticipated to be £3m. The City Corporation is being asked for a 10% contribution (£300k) for which it will secure the credit of "Founder Sponsor". This funding is vital if Artichoke is to achieve their target from other sponsors from across the public and business sectors, the City Corporation's commitment providing a valuable endorsement and pot against which subsidies might be matched.

11. Such a commitment is a significant investment for the City Corporation but will prove its value by:

- a. meeting the groundswell of expectation from local, London and national stakeholders for the City to mark the event and to provide a framework through which they can contribute to a shared programme of activity;
- b. ensuring ownership of the Great Fire (our biggest cultural export) – only the City can mark this anniversary in a meaningful way because the Fire is wholly ours;
- c. providing a significant opportunity for the City Corporation to demonstrate its contribution to London as a world City on a global scale – this is our chance to shine;
- d. delivering significant economic benefits for local and London businesses as evidenced by the economic impact details of past Artichoke events outlined in the study (appendix 1);
- e. providing an opportunity for the City’s cultural providers to work together on a shared theme in a major way, aligning with the aspirations of the Cultural Hub through the Museum of London and Barbican, and delivering a legacy or networks across exponents, funders, retail and other businesses
- f. aligning with the City Corporation’s own visitor, cultural and education objectives as stated in its related strategies (detailed in the next section); and
- g. delivering legacy benefits that include:
 - i. reputational gain and a positive shift in perceptions about the City, especially in light of the interest shown by national broadcasters
 - ii. profile for our education and related activities, driving audiences
 - iii. skills for apprentices and on-going recognition of the City Corporation’s contribution to the national curriculum (the Great Fire is Key Stage 1)
 - iv. the furtherance of London’s developing role as a “Smart City” and a leading voice for resilience matters
 - v. hitherto unsecured funding partners for our cultural activities – a legacy of networks and relationships

Corporate & Strategic Implications

12. 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.
13. The proposals also align with the objectives originally laid out in *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".
14. The animation of this anniversary 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, and 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.
15. The 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

16. The precedent for the City Corporation funding major events 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. Similarly, the Policy and Resources Committee funded the Magna Carta 800th anniversary activity with grants of £88,000 and £128,000 from its contingency and £40,000 from its Policy Initiatives Fund in 2014 (totalling £256,000).
17. The total amount sought for the Great Fire commemoration spectacular is £300,000, to be met from your Finance Committee City's Cash 2015/16 contingency, the current balance of which is £905,000 (February 2015). This was the suggested City Corporation contribution in the bid to your Committees in October 2014 for funding towards the feasibility study.
18. Following extensive consultation, the feasibility study suggests the remaining monies for the major public event can be sourced from a number of sources including public grants and business sponsorship. Artichoke's track record for delivering this level of funding for similar projects should be noted.
19. The list of suggested activities within the feasibility study is a shopping list, not all can be realised within the £3m sought to fund the project. However, it is expected that the conference, a major public spectacular, an umbrella platform to promote all Great Fire commemoration activity from various City partners and a supporting education programme can all be realised within the budget proposed.
20. Should the full £3m not be raised, the City Corporation will **not** be asked for further funding, rather, the programming will be tailored to meet the available resource.

Conclusion

21. The City wholly owns the Great Fire story – anniversary activities cannot be effectively led by any agency other than the City Corporation and there is mounting expectation and excitement about the role it has taken in commissioning the feasibility study.
22. The anniversary provides the City with an opportunity to shine; to contribute to London's cultural agenda in a major way, to positively shift public perceptions about the City and to deliver recognition for the City Corporation on a global scale.
23. The legacy of the proposed activity will live on, as audiences in their millions remember the spectacle and connect with the Great Fire story through our educational and archival channels.
24. Similarly, the City's cultural institutions will enjoy newly established business and funding networks, borne of the work undertaken by Artichoke, and closer working relationships.
25. It is therefore recommended that the City Corporation invest the requested £300,000 towards the cost of this project, noting its potential to generate a further £2,700,000 in sponsorship and millions in economic and reputational benefit, as well as a legacy that supports major corporate objectives including our Supporting London agenda and the Cultural Hub proposals.

Appendices

- **Appendix 1** – letter of support from London's Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture, Munira Mirza
- **Appendix 2** – letter of support from the Chief Operating Officer at London & Partners, Andrew Cooke
- **Appendix 3** (appearing under the non-public Committee's non-public agenda) – Feasibility study for a public programme of events in September 2016, commemorating of the 350th anniversary of the Great Fire, produced by Artichoke

Background Papers

- Request for support: feasibility study for a Great Fire of London public spectacular: a report of the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries to the Policy and Resources and Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committees in October 2014

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