

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Culture, Heritage and Libraries	13 July 2015
Subject: Romans: a partnership with Museum of London	Public
Report of: Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries	For Information
Summary	
<p>The City was founded by the Romans in around AD50 and is the place from which today's thriving metropolis grew. This makes it unique in London and delivers a legacy of Roman heritage sites that are unrivalled in the rest of the capital.</p> <p>Following your Committee's decision to approve plans to animate Guildhall Yard earlier this year and aligned with the objectives of the Cultural Hub (to deliver shared thematic programming in partnership) and the Service Based Review (to ensure maximum income from our assets where there is opportunity to do so), your Cultural and Visitor Development Team have joined forces with the Museum of London to deliver two significant pilot projects that will see the Gladiator Games return to the Yard this summer and regular weekend openings of the Roman Bathhouse to the public from late August to mid-December.</p> <p>Both projects come from a desire to ensure that we make the most of our underused sites, championing public access and celebrating our heritage - the Yard being largely unused except as a delivery point for maintenance works to the Great Hall throughout August and the Bathhouse being closed to the general public except on Open House weekends in September each year when it attracts visitors in their thousands. Both projects are pilots that will test the appetite and viability of our Roman offer, with the Games set to become a regular summer fixture in the Yard and the Bathhouse openings becoming a permanent arrangement should footfall and finances suggest this is an appropriate proposition.</p> <p>Depending on ticket sales, the Games, it is hoped, will be cost neutral for both the Museum and the City Corporation (with the Museum taking the financial risk). The Bathhouse is set to return a small profit not exceeding £3,500 each for both partners, if the sales target is met. This money will be used to further promote the City's Roman offer. Your City Information Centre and the Museum of London will both sell tickets to these events.</p>	
Recommendation(s)	
<p>It is recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members receive and note the contents of this report 	

Main Report

Background

1. The City has a Roman heritage second to none within London. Founded sometime shortly after the Romans' invasion of Britain in AD43, sites including the Roman Wall, Roman Fort (under Museum of London), Temple of Mithras, Roman Amphitheatre and Roman Bathhouse conspire to deliver a compelling offer for those seeking to discover Roman London. However, while receiving significant exposure in the media, the majority of these sites are not open to the public and can only be accessed via professional or educational tours. This can result in disappointment and frustration for the visitor.
2. That said, London's Roman story is expertly told in the Museum of London's Roman Galleries and these are some of its most popular, with artefacts from regular excavations, made possible by the City's high turnover of new buildings, delivering a growing must-see collection for all who come here.
3. Late last year, your Cultural and Visitor Development Team partnered with the City of London Archaeology Trust (CoLAT) and Museum of London (MoL) to deliver a self-guided walk around some of the City's free and publicly accessible Roman assets.
4. Recognising the interest in our Roman story, the leaflet joined the growing suite of popular walks provided by the Team and sought to bring together our Roman heritage offer for visitors in a more holistic and joined-up way – a readymade itinerary for those looking to explore this popular theme. Since delivery and up to the writing of this report, 6,000 leaflets have been picked up by those visiting our City Information Centre, suggesting a strong interest in the Romans and highlighting the potential if we were to make more of the assets we hold.
5. In addition, while the Roman Bathhouse has only been open to educational and special interest groups (tours being curated by the Museum of London), public access on Open House London weekends (usually September) has seen up to 2,000 visitors in just one day. Sadly, in recent months, the tours have had to stop because of various health, safety and maintenance issues that your Cultural and Visitor Development Team and the City Surveyor are working hard to resolve.
6. Of the City's other Roman assets, the Roman Fort under the Museum of London car park is only accessible as part of a specially-arranged group tour and the Temple of Mithras has been closed to the public for some years now while Bloomberg build their new headquarters off Queen Victoria Street at Bloomberg Place. Scheduled for completion in a reimagined curatorial context in September 2016, the Temple will once again be open and freely accessible to the public.

Current Position

7. With the recent Members' decision to animate Guildhall Yard with ad hoc markets and other activities throughout the year and with the month of August being assigned exclusively for public events without impacting on Guildhall bookings, an opportunity has arisen for a regular and returning summer event

in the Yard that has the popularity and profile to drive audiences and grow the Yard's reputation as a space for our visitors and workers to enjoy.

8. Its proximity to London's Roman Amphitheatre (the Yard sits over it) suggests a Roman theme may be appropriate and, if the event were popular, may well help to grow footfall to the Amphitheatre and Guildhall Galleries more widely.
9. Plans for the new Cultural Hub are also gathering momentum and a key objective for this project is to foster closer working relationships between our cultural organisations with shared themes helping to build audiences and deliver greater impact.
10. In 2011, the Museum of London produced a weekend of "Gladiator Games" in the Yard. These proved extremely popular with the entire run of shows selling out and the Amphitheatre receiving a record number of visits. Sadly, because of the limited number of shows that could be hosted in one weekend, the Museum suffered financial loss, despite the sell-out success of the venture.
11. While any event in an outside space like the Yard is going to be weather dependent (the 2011 shows enjoyed the very best of British summertime), your Cultural and Visitor Development Team and the Museum of London have come together to discuss the viability of re-presenting these shows for an extended run, acknowledging that with more shows, income may be greater and make the shows a more viable proposition.
12. At the same time, the Museum and the Team have discussed access to the Roman Bathhouse and the extraordinary popularity of the Open House London public openings. A new walkway within the Bathhouse makes viewing a safer and more enjoyable experience and this has become the impetus for your officers to look at a pilot of weekend openings over four months.
13. At present, the Bathhouse earns the City Corporation no money to offset its maintenance and running costs. With the objectives of the recent Service Based Review, officers were asked to look at ways in which we might better sweat our assets and the Bathhouse became a focus for the Culture, Heritage and Libraries department. The proposition is our response.

Proposals

14. In August this year, the Museum of London, in partnership with the City Corporation, will present the Gladiator Games in the Guildhall Yard once more. This time, the Games will straddle two weekends from the 8 to 16 August with two shows each Saturday and Sunday and shows on two weekday evenings – a total of 10 shows. With a capacity of 1,500 per show, a maximum of 15,000 visitors will enjoy pre-show entertainment in "Roman Londinium", the spectacle of the Gladiators and the opportunity to visit the Roman Amphitheatre in Guildhall art Gallery before and/or after the show.
15. A wide consultation across departments and with the church St Lawrence Jewry has been undertaken and the shows will not negatively impact on Guildhall maintenance works, activities within the church or on the lives of the residents above it (the vicar and his family being away in August).
16. The show is mounted at the financial risk of Museum of London, with the City Corporation providing the Yard gratis and supporting the campaign through its

own marketing and media channels without charge. Any profit or loss will be borne by the Museum of London.

17. Shortly afterwards, opening on the 22 August and running to 13 December, Museum of London will open the Roman Bathhouse at weekends for paying members of the public. Running every hour from 10:30 to 16:30 on both the Saturday and Sunday and with a maximum capacity of 20 per tour, access will be enabled for up to 4760 visitors over the period of operation. A decision has been taken not to run the tours in late December because of the strong visitor interest in Christmas retail opportunities at weekends. Indeed, if footfall drops off on the later tour planned in the lead-up to Christmas so as to not make staffing viable, these tours may yet be cancelled.
18. Tickets will cost £8 (£6 concessions), which aligns with the market for tours of this nature and duration. A conservative and realistic estimate on take up suggests that profit will be in the region of £7,000, with Museum of London and City Corporation sharing this total at around £3,500 each.
19. The tours will be staffed by Museum of London and marketed in partnership with the City Corporation who will ensure that all the relevant health and safety checks are in place.
20. The City Information Centre will sell tickets for both the Games and the tours but not take commission given the interest the City Corporation has in the these initiatives being a success. Tickets will also be sold via Museum of London channels.
21. If successful, and demand can be demonstrated, it is hoped that the Gladiator Games becomes a summertime feature of Guildhall Yard and that the Bathhouse tours can continue on a permanent basis. Financial risks and profit sharing will be reviewed after this year's pilot programmes.
22. Looking forward, it is proposed that the Bathhouse tour is complemented by a half day Roman City itinerary that takes visitors on a curated tour of the Bathhouse, Temple of Mithras (September 2016), Roman Amphitheatre, Roman Galleries at Museum of London, Roman Fort and to some of the best preserved parts of the Roman Wall.
23. For the Games, if successful, early discussions are underway to explore whether the same seating set-up can be shared with a company looking to present Shakespeare's plays in parts of London where they have situational relevance. The Roman connections for the Yard suggest these might include Julius Caesar, Coriolanus and Anthony and Cleopatra amongst others. This would complement our celebrations around Shakespeare 400 in 2016.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

24. Our Roman roots are an essential part of our heritage and the sites mentioned in this report best explain this story to visitors. Many assets, however, are closed and this can be frustrating and disappointing for all our communities who have seen these assets within the media and want to experience them for themselves.
25. With this in mind, it can be demonstrated that the pilot programmes outlined in this report support a number of our strategic objectives. These include:

- a. alignment 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";
- b. alignment with the objectives originally laid out in *The City Together Strategy 2008 /14* under the two key themes: to support our communities and to deliver a City that is "vibrant and culturally rich";
- c. alignment with the City's Visitor Strategy 2013/17 (action A1.3, 1.5 and 1.7) and with the City's Cultural Strategy 2012/17 *Animating the Heritage* theme; and
- d. alignment with major corporate projects including our Supporting London agenda, the Cultural Hub proposition, the animation of Guildhall Yard and the Service Based Review.

Conclusion

26. The animation of the Yard, the Cultural Hub proposition and a real need to look at how we can open up our assets and achieve income to offset their cost have brought into focus the ideas behind these programmes.
27. The City has a distinct advantage over other parts of London in that its Roman offer is unique within the capital and provides the potential to grow our visitor numbers and the visitor economy while helping us to achieve a number of corporate objectives as outlined above.
28. The pilot programmes proposed will help us to understand that potential more and to harness it where appropriate, with cultural organisations working together to support one another and showing the City Corporation in a good light by increasing access and contributing further to the cultural life of the capital.
29. A review of the outcomes of these two pilots will be submitted to your Committee in spring next year, with a set of proposals for developing these ideas further (subject to their success).

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