

Committee: Policy and Resources	Date: 17 March 2016
Subject: Lord Mayor's Show 2016 – Fireworks Display	Public
Report of: Director of Communications	For Decision
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Summary

1. The former Public Relations Office undertook to review whether fireworks displays should continue to follow the Lord Mayor's Show after 2015. As part of the review the Director of Communications consulted officers in Mansion House and Guildhall as well as the Pageantmaster. The views of a number of Members were also sought informally.
2. There is a fair amount of ambivalence towards the fireworks within the City Corporation with some feeling it is an unnecessary expense whilst others believe it is a popular event driving crowds towards the Lord Mayor's Show.
3. There is an opportunity in 2016 to cancel the fireworks with the least-possible criticism after they did not take place in 2012 because of the Olympics year and in 2015 as a mark of respect to the victims of the Paris terrorist attack. However, with the London Mayor's decision to start ticketing and charging for the New Year's Eve fireworks there is also an opportunity to promote the show as "Central London's last free fireworks display". Proper promotion will bring positive media coverage, open up opportunities for sponsorship in future years and be seen as a generous gesture towards the people of London.
4. Members are therefore asked to support the public fireworks display to be held on the day of the Lord Mayor's Show for a further period of three years (in 2016, 2017 and 2018) at an annual cost not exceeding £125,000.

Recommendation

Members are asked to agree:-

- a) That a public fireworks display be held by the City of London Corporation following the Lord Mayor's Show in 2016, 2017 and 2018 with full legal and financial responsibility for its management and delivery.
- b) Expenditure not exceeding £125,000 per annum for the provision of all aspects of the planned fireworks display, including the fireworks display itself, and all the traffic management, public safety, and crowd and related events management issues, to be met from your Committee's contingency for 2016/17 and charged to City's Cash.
- c) The re-appointment of AD Health & Safety as the specialist provider to deliver the operational requirements of the event in 2016.

- d) That the City of London Corporation considers how best to secure sponsorship to cover all or some of the costs associated with the future delivery of the event.
- e) That authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to agree all arrangements and provide assurances (including warranties and indemnities), required to enable the fireworks display following the Lord Mayor's Show in 2016, 2017 and 2018 to proceed safely and successfully.

Main Report

Background

1. The fireworks take place on Lord Mayor's Show day at 17.15 with a seven to ten minute display fired from a barge between Blackfriars Bridge and Waterloo Bridge at a cost not currently exceeding £125,000. The event is free to view, with an estimated 100,000 spectators congregating on Victoria Embankment, Blackfriars Bridge, the pedestrian areas of the South Bank and Waterloo Bridge.
2. To facilitate safe viewing, road closures are required to stop traffic on Victoria Embankment, Blackfriars Bridge and Waterloo Bridge. The event requires considerable liaison with Transport for London (TfL), the City of Westminster and other London boroughs to ensure it is delivered successfully and safely. In the past the event was delivered by the Pageantmaster. However it was agreed in 2013 that, given his demanding commitments on Show day, the overseeing of this event would be undertaken directly by senior officers of the City of London Corporation. The Department of the Built Environment (DBE) now delivers the event through contracting to AD Health & Safety (a specialist event management company).

The Review

3. The former Public Relations Office undertook to produce a comprehensive report on the existing arrangements for the Lord Mayor's Show fireworks. As part of the review the Director of Communications consulted officers in Mansion House and Guildhall as well as the Pageantmaster. The views of a number of Members were also sought informally.
4. It has been concluded that there is very little empirical evidence relating to the cost and benefit of the fireworks show. Most of the evidence is anecdotal and hearsay. Those who believe the fireworks show should be cancelled point to the cost, the large amount of officers' time which is taken up and the reputational risk that the high cost in relation to short length of the fireworks display makes the City Corporation look wasteful. There is also a belief that there is not enough connection between the fireworks and the Lord Mayor's Show and that the spectators who watch the fireworks are different from those who watch the Lord Mayor's Show. Alongside the sceptical view is a separate strand of thinking that the fireworks could be moved to a venue more closely identified with the City such as near Southwark Bridge or Tower Bridge. The clear opinion of the police and

officers with safety responsibilities is that this is not possible because the large numbers of narrow riverbanks, roads and dead ends in the City would prove either dangerous to the crowds or prohibitively expensive.

5. Those in favour of continuing the fireworks believe it drives large crowds to the show and point out that the one year (2012) it was announced in advance there would not be any fireworks the attendance on the street for the Show was significantly down, despite good weather. There is also the view that the fireworks keep people in the City for longer after the show to the benefit of the City's food outlets, restaurants and bar. The fireworks can also be seen as an important part of the Show itself and the Show which is free to watch, non-commercial in content, no cost to the public purse, tradition lasting 800 years is a key part of the City brand, identity and distinctiveness. Therefore it is fair to say there is little consensus about the fireworks display although there is little outright hostility.
6. All those consulted agreed that the lack of a clear decision about the future of the fireworks was harmful as it led to a large amount of officers' time being wasted in reconsidering the decision and a lack of commitment to promote and market the fireworks. There was also agreement that a clear decision would be helpful to commit to the fireworks for a minimum three-year period or to cancel them.

Reputational risks and opportunities

7. If a decision is taken to cancel the fireworks there is little doubt this year would be the most opportune time to do so. The lack of a display in 2012 and then in 2015 established a question mark over the event and the Director of Communications would draw up a media strategy to minimise negative coverage. However, a clear reputational risk still exists by the cancellation of a popular and free fireworks display available for all to enjoy. The decision would attract negative publicity, focus attention on other areas of City Corporation's spending and on the future of the Lord Mayor's Show itself.
8. An opportunity has been created by the decision of the Mayor of London and the GLA to make their annual New Year's Eve fireworks a ticketed and paid-for event. The decision by the GLA led to controversy and negative publicity about the lack of Londoners at the event. This creates an opportunity to promote the Lord Mayor's Show fireworks as "Central London's last free fireworks display" and obtain some positive coverage for the City of London Corporation. Positive coverage should create more willingness amongst sponsors to come forward. If a decision to go ahead was taken officers would conduct a review on sponsorship opportunities in the future with a view appointing a specialised consultant to raise some supporting funds on a commission basis.

The use of a specific contractor

9. The DBE is of the view that the previous contractor, AD Health and Safety (AD H&S), should continue to be used. AD H&S is a specialist event management company which has significant experience in planning and managing safety at major events. It has successfully delivered the Fireworks Display in the last 3

years albeit the 2015 event was cancelled on the day as a mark of respect for the victims of the Paris terrorist attacks. A fireworks display presents a number of safety challenges and risks, and as such the event manager is required to identify and mitigate the risks associated with a complex and sensitive event. It also requires extensive liaison with TfL and City of Westminster to ensure both parties are satisfied with the safety arrangements and traffic management planning. For this reason a “tried and tested” event manager is needed.

10. Indicative costs for the safe delivery of this event have been provided by AD H&S and take into account both the experience of running the same event in the last three years, and the various requirements needed to ensure it is delivered safely including specialist third party payments e.g. stewarding, barriers. In commissioning these services early, AD H&S are able to obtain competitive rates and pass on these savings to the City. In the light of all these considerations, it is recommended that the Committee agree to the re-appointment of AD Health and Safety, without a competitive tendering procedure in 2016.
11. It is acknowledged that should the City agree to delivering this event in future years, that a procurement process for a delivery partner be undertaken on a full competitive tender process.

Garden Bridge

12. As part of the review a number of people commented on the impact of the display on the proposed Garden Bridge project. Despite receiving planning permission in 2014, there is an element of controversy surrounding it. Therefore it is unlikely that construction will commence in 2016. Notwithstanding this, should the project go ahead, it is probable that it will have an impact on future firework displays as the barge from which the fireworks are launched is within the vicinity of the bridge’s proposed location. There is a risk that the display might be affected from 2017 onwards. Officers will keep the matter under review and continue to monitor the progress of the project.

Event costs

13. The total expected cost of a 2016 display (the same as 2015), are as follows:-

Fireworks display and directly related costs	£32,150
Traffic management, public safety and related costs	£76,055
Management fee for AD Health and Safety @ 12%	£13,310
Miscellaneous and contingency	£3,485
Total	£125,000

Financial and Risk Implications

13. There is no scope to meet the cost from existing local risk resources. Due to the one-off nature of the expenditure no provision exists within in the Public Relations or other local risk budgets. It is therefore proposed that the required total funding of £125,000 is drawn from the Committee's contingency, 2016/17 and charged to City's Cash particularly as it would not have been possible to allocate funds for the project as part of the preparation of 2016/17 budget. Consideration is being given to transferring the cost to the DBE in future.

Conclusion

14. It is important to establish the ownership of public events in good time to assist with its delivery as well as manage any associated risks. Having conducted a short review, on balance, the Director of Communications is of the view that the fireworks display should go ahead following the Lord Mayor's Show in 2016. To open up possibilities of positive coverage and attracting sponsorship opportunities it is felt that a commitment should be given to holding a fireworks display in 2017 and 2018 also. In order to proceed with the planning arrangements the Committee should agree to assume full responsibility for the event and to underwrite all delivery costs.

Appendices

None

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