

Committee(s)	Dated:
Culture, Heritage and Libraries	24/10/2016
Subject: Culture, Heritage and Libraries Christmas Card	Public
Report of: Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries	For Decision
Report author: David Pearson, Director of Culture, Heritage & Libraries	

Summary

For many years, a Christmas card has been produced underwritten by the local risk budget of Culture, Heritage & Libraries, with profits paid to the Lord Mayor's Appeal. Numbers produced, and sales generated, have steadily fallen, reflecting wider social trends. It is suggested that this tradition now be ended.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to agree the recommendation that a Christmas card is not printed for sale, from 2016 onwards.

Main Report

Background and Current Position

1. By longstanding tradition, the Culture Committee (and the Libraries, Archives and Guildhall Art Gallery Committee before that) has commissioned and had printed a Christmas card, which is sold across various Corporation outlets to generate income for the annual Lord Mayor's Appeal.
2. The image chosen for the card has usually been one from the City's collections – often, a painting from Guildhall Art Gallery – though in recent years more variety has been introduced. The image is typically chosen by the Chairman or Deputy Chairman from a selection of possibilities identified by officers.
3. For all the obvious reasons – the declining popularity of physical cards in society at large, a growing tendency to send greetings electronically, or to make a donation to charity rather than send out cards – sales of these cards have steadily declined over the last decade or so. In 2006, 12,000 cards were printed, of which 10,500 were sold, with a donation of £240 made to the Lord Mayor's Appeal. Five years ago, in 2011, 6000 were printed, and last year 2000 were printed, of which 970 were sold, leading to a donation of £29.10. However, when all the actual costs of production are weighed against income, the 2015 card is reckoned to have generated a net loss of £202.
4. A table summarising costs, quantities produced and sales between 2004 and 2015 is included as an Appendix.

5. For 2016, an image has been chosen from a set of photographs of Hampstead Heath in the snow, taken by Andy Barnard from the Open Spaces Department; another of these was used in 2011 when it proved popular. We are in time to have this printed to go on sale in November, but before doing so the Committee is asked to consider the card more in principle and decide whether to continue the cycle of annual production.
6. Given the steady decline in sales and financial returns, it is likely that card will not sell out and may again generate a loss. We have a limited number of retail outlets and marketing opportunities and must recognise the decline in popularity for Christmas cards more generally noted above.

Proposal

7. In the light of declining sales, it is proposed that Culture, Heritage and Libraries ceases the annual production of a Christmas card.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

8. Other departments across the Corporation have sometimes taken copies of the CHL card for their own use but it has always depended on their local preferences year on year. It is not expected that ending production would have any significant corporate impact.

Appendix

- Table of quantities and sales of Christmas cards, 2004-15

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Appendix: quantities produced, and sales of Christmas cards, 2004-15

Year	Number of cards printed	Total cost	Number of cards sold	Lord Mayor's Charity donation
2004	15000	£2,702.50	12400	£372.60
2005	12000	n/a	11000	£330.00
2006	12000	£1,909.38	10500	£240.00
2007	10000	£1,357.13	8500	£315.00
2008	12000	£1,386.51	10000	£255.00
2009	12000	n/a	7500	£300.00
2010	6000	n/a	2100	£153.00
2011	6000	£1,200.00	3000	£225.00
2012	3000	£782.40	2500	£300.00
2013	3000	£807.60	2550	£102.00
2014	2000	£855.60	2000	£60.00
2015	2000	£728.40	970	£29.10