

Committee(s)	Dated:
Culture, Heritage and Libraries – For Decision Hospitality Working Party – For Decision Corporate Asset Sub Committee – For Information	24/10/2016 09/11/2016 18/11/2016
Subject: Developing the public events programme for Guildhall Yard and promoting use by City workers	Public
Report of: Director of Culture, Heritage Libraries	For Decision
Report author: Nick Bodger, Culture, Heritage and Libraries Department	

Summary

In July, your Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee received a presentation about the Guildhall Yard's public programme of activities after a full year of operation.

The presentation provided headlines about the success of the programme and highlighted issues faced by officers when organising activities. These included detailed approval procedures and a busy diary of Guildhall bookings resulting in certain activities not being possible, anticipated budget constraints when agreed Service Based Review savings are taken in 2017/18 and the limited seating provided for Yard users, impacting on dwell time and enjoyment.

This report seeks to address these issues, requesting that:

- Approval of event content (not Yard availability) is delegated to the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries, informing the Chief Commoner and Remembrancer;
- A total number of 12 days throughout the year and a further block of 10 days in August are allotted to the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries exclusively for the purpose of public events with specific dates agreed in January for the budget year April to March, and in October for the summer block (identified dates being subject to the same cancellation terms as Guildhall bookings) – it should be recognised that this will, however, compromise the letting ability of the Guildhall complex in that, if a reserve is put on the Yard on a forward basis, a potential loss of letting income arises;
- A sum not to exceed £20,000 is ring-fenced from the budget of the successor event to City of London Festival for Yard events;
- Permission is granted for chairs to be locked and stored in the Yard to alleviate limitations on storage space within Guildhall and reduce the time it takes to put them out and take them in on a daily basis, provided that this can be accommodated without detrimentally affecting the other uses of the Yard.

Recommendation(s)

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

- Approve a sum of £20,000 to be ring-fenced from within the budget for the new City of London Festival model to deliver events for the Yard, complementing one another's programmes.

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

- Delegate authority to the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries to approve event content, consulting with the Remembrancer, Chief Commoner and/or Director of Communications as appropriate should any element of reputational (or other) risk be anticipated, but always informing the Remembrancer of all plans;
- Agree to a total number of 12 days throughout the year and a further block of 10 days in August being allotted to the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries exclusively for the purpose of public events with specific dates agreed in January for the budget year April to March, and in October for the following summer, so precluding other activity on these days, noting the impact this is likely to have on letting income for the Guildhall complex;
- Approve the option for chairs to be locked and stored in the Yard in a space identified by the City Surveyor and agreed with the Remembrancer.

Members of the Corporate Asset Sub Committee are asked to:

- Note that the City Surveyor will retain the overall operational management of the complex to ensure its full operational activity. The City Surveyor will also retain responsibility for the ownership and deployment of the chairs.

Main Report

Background

1. In late 2014, Members endorsed a proposal for the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries to deliver a programme of public activities in Guildhall Yard, so animating the Yard to deliver a 'space for the people', with a particular emphasis on encouraging use by the City's working community.
2. In April 2015, the first of a series of monthly lunchtime markets took place (coinciding on days when the Court of Common Council sits and the Yard and Guildhall cannot be booked for commercial activity). The markets have enjoyed considerable success, growing in popularity and, while initially costing the City Corporation around £550 per market, now realise a small return of £2,700 per annum. On average each market serves 1,507 City workers.
3. With the exception of the market dates, all other events have required the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries to undertake a complex series of

approvals including seeking the permission of the Remembrancer, Chief Commoner, City Surveyor, church residents and others before committing to an activity.

4. In July, your Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee received a presentation updating Members about the Guildhall Yard's public programme after just over a year of operation. The presentation provided headlines about the success of events such as the markets described above, summer activities like *Gladiator Games* and this year's Outdoor Cinema, *Somme 100*, and the Shakespeare and Magna Carta Son et Lumieres. All in all, it was estimated that 109,419 visitors had attended events over the year, the majority of these being City workers.
5. The presentation also highlighted some of the issues faced by officers when organising activities. These include:
 - a. Time needed for consultation with other departments sometimes results in activities being lost because officers are unable to act swiftly when opportunities for events arise;
 - b. A busy diary of Guildhall commercial and ceremonial bookings impacting on officers' being able to plan ahead or to find dates for events when unsolicited (but worthwhile) proposals are received;
 - c. A significant maintenance programme during the summer months requiring officers' to negotiate workarounds for block booking events such as *Gladiator Games*, limiting event scope and impacting on the Yard's attractiveness to event producers;
 - d. Anticipated budget constraints when agreed Service Based Review savings are taken in 2017/18 with activities until now having being paid from budget carryovers and additional income realised by the City Information Centre in advance of planned budget reductions; and
 - e. Limited seating provided for Yard users, impacting on users' dwell time and enjoyment.
6. As a result of the presentation, the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee requested that the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries return a report to their October meeting outlining the above issues with recommendations that would ensure the continued success of the Yard programme.
7. A report with recommendations for a successor model for the City of London Festival is to be received at the October meeting of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee. In the report, it is recommended that provision of £20,000 from the overall Festival grant is ring-fenced for Yard activity, supporting the proposals made later in this report.

Current Position

8. Each year, around 12 separate event days are required exclusively for public programme activity in addition to a block booking of 10 days in August when a summer offering like *Gladiator Games* or *Outdoor Cinema* takes over the Yard. Exhibitions such as *Somme 100*, which was hosted in the Yard for one month,

can run concurrently with Guildhall commercial and ceremonial activities and add value to these bookings.

9. Dates have – until now – been secured on an event-by-event basis, depending on availability in the bookings diary held by the Remembrancer and – in the case of the summer block booking – the maintenance programme for Guildhall and resulting access/egress needed through the Yard.
10. Under the current arrangement (and excepting the markets for which dates are predetermined and agreed year-on-year to coincide with Court of Common Council), the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries undertakes the following process when proposing an event:
 - a. Proposed dates are checked with the Remembrancer to ascertain availability;
 - b. If the dates are available, an application is made to the Remembrancer who, with the Chief Commoner, assesses whether the event is suitable and consults with the City Surveyor and the church to see if there any issues – this process can take weeks, on occasion, months;
 - c. Further consultation with the City Surveyor to determine logistic feasibility and with church residents regarding the impact of noise – this is a relatively quick process; and
 - d. For some events where an element of reputational risk is involved (eg the appropriateness of films screened as part of our Outdoor Cinema), the Director of Communications is also consulted.
11. The length of time this process takes jeopardises the event because contracts with suppliers and marketing and fundraising drives must be put on hold until approvals are received. This can prevent the event going ahead as producers can become impatient and take events elsewhere and/or not enough time is left to secure sponsorship and/or promote the event.
12. In terms of the programme budget, events have been paid for from a budget carry forward and additional income raised by the City Information Centre in advance of planned Service Based Review savings, which are expected to be taken from the 2017/18 budget year onwards. This will leave no discretionary spend in the Culture Heritage and Libraries budget to pay for events and to market them.
13. For Guildhall Yard activity to date (April 2015 to July 2016), the Department of Culture, Heritage and Libraries has invested a total of £62,500 (production and marketing).
14. With so many free events in and around London, it is not feasible to charge admission to most events (so that costs may be recouped) as this would set the event at a competitive disadvantage. To charge is also likely to do the exact opposite to the mandate set by Members to attract use of the Yard by the City's communities, closing it to those who have not bought a ticket and attracting only a small audience of paying customers. The logistics and cost of running a box office also make such an option preclusive.

15. However, lunchtime markets now run in profit (£2,700 per annum) and the summer block bookings (Gladiator Games and Outdoor Cinema) have both been realised at no financial risk to the City Corporation. The opportunities for such arrangements with producers are few as the risk of poor sales due to so many events (such as outdoor cinema) being offered freely by others result in them asking the City Corporation to underwrite costs.
16. At the current time, up to 100 chairs are put out in the Yard on a weekday during the summer months. This is the complete stock of chairs. The chairs are much used by workers enjoying their lunches or relaxing in the sunshine.
17. Increasing the number of chairs in the Yard during the summer presents a number of problems. These include the limited space in which to put them out without interference to vehicular traffic unloading, turning and/or parking, the one-off cost of buying the chairs, the staff resource required for putting the chairs out each day and then taking them in, and the very limited storage space in Guildhall in which to house them.
18. While chairs are not currently stored in the Yard, event fencing is, secured under discreet covers with minimal impact on Yard aesthetics and/or movement of vehicles and people.

Proposals

19. To help to secure a future for Guildhall Yard public programming and grow audiences, it is proposed that a series of actions to streamline processes and to support the funding of activity are approved by your Committee(s).

Dates

20. In order that officers can plan a programme of activity well in advance, it is proposed that in January of each year, a series of 12 dates are agreed between the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries and the Remembrancer for the forthcoming budget year (April to March), when public programme activity can take place and no commercial bookings are taken for the Guildhall.
21. Dates should include at least two occasions when two-day events can be planned (likely to be a Friday and Saturday).
22. In addition to the above arrangement, in October each year, it is proposed that a run of 10 days is identified and booked for the following August with the City Surveyor and the Remembrancer. This should be when maintenance work will not preclude the Yard from hosting events but not prevent essential maintenance and renewal works being undertaken at the complex. This will enable maximum opportunity for the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries to identify a summer activity and offer this to an event producer who can plan on the basis that the dates are secure.
23. Prioritising dates for public activities above the commercial interests of Guildhall is not uncommon; this is currently done for London Open House and Lord Mayor's Show as a matter of course.

24. However, it should be noted that by reserving the Yard for public events on specific dates, the letting ability of the Guildhall complex is likely to be compromised and that this will be likely to result in a potential loss of income for the City Corporation.
25. Any external letting of the complex is subject to a standard condition that the letting will be cancelled if the premises are needed for an event of national or political importance. The dates booked as a consequence of the above proposals would be subject to the same condition.
26. In addition to the above, dates for temporary exhibitions and/or ad hoc activity should be negotiated with the Remembrancer on the same basis as they are now.

Approvals

27. Given the approval processes described above, it is proposed that the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries is given delegated authority to approve public event content, consulting with the Remembrancer, Chief Commoner and/or Director of Communications as appropriate when he perceives there to be a potential risk (ie in terms of reputational PR) from the content of the event. This will allow officers to act more swiftly when event opportunities arise.

Budget

28. The investment in Yard events by the Department of Culture, Heritage and Libraries has been in excess of £60,000 over the past using surplus generated by the City Information Centre in anticipation of SBR savings in 2017/18. Going forward it is proposed that a sum of £20,000 is ring-fenced within the budget of the model proposed to succeed the City of London Festival for the exclusive purpose of Yard activity, aligning the Festival closely with the Yard and using this money to complement one another's programming.
29. The balance of £40,000, it is hoped, can be realised through the securing of events at producer's financial risk and/or through sponsorship (made easier with the streamlined processes outlined above) as well as any funds from the City Information Centre's commercial activity if a surplus is realised.

Chairs

30. It is proposed that a sum of £5,000 is made available for the purchase of 30 more chairs (taking the total to 130) and two permanent stone benches for the Yard funded from the market surplus cited in item 2 and supplemented by Culture, Heritage and Libraries local risk budget.
31. The additional chairs, it is proposed, will form part of an on-going programme to incrementally increase seating in the Yard year-on-year subject to loading, turning and parking of vehicles within the space not being impacted and all health and safety protocols adhered to.
32. To alleviate the strain on staff resources for the City Surveyor in the putting out and gathering in of chairs during the summer months, and to help mitigate issues around limited storage, it is proposed that chairs are stored each night in the Yard, locked and covered, with an appropriate space to be identified by the City Surveyor in consultation with the Remembrancer. It is anticipated, as with the

fencing currently stored by the church, that the Yard's aesthetic and the free movement of people and vehicles will not be impacted by this proposal.

33. Furthermore, it is suggested that Library Service Assistants (within CHL) are deployed to work with the City Surveyor in the assembling and taking in of chairs with the level of assistance to be agreed between the City Surveyor and the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

34. The proposals in this paper 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") in that they support our objectives to implement the cultural and visitor strategies for the City and to develop and improve the physical environment around our key cultural attractions.
35. The animation of the Guildhall Yard is specifically referenced and supported in both the City's Visitor Strategy 2013/17 (action A1.3) and its Cultural Strategy 2012/17 (under the *Breaking down Barriers* theme).
36. It is also supported within the Guildhall Area Strategy 2011 under the theme of *Identity and welcome: informal activity*.

Conclusion

37. The success of the Guildhall Yard public events programme has been widely recognised and has generated a significant increase in use of the Yard by the City's communities, especially City workers.
38. After a full year of operation, it is now time to reflect on these successes and to implement change where this will help to grow audiences, streamlining processes to allow for greater flexibility and improved programming, while supporting costs following budget cuts.
39. The Yard is an architecturally magnificent space and one that should be enjoyed by all those living, working or visiting the City. This report seeks to ensure that work towards the vision of the Yard as a public space for the people continues, whilst balancing the needs of private events and essential maintenance works to be carried out during these times.

Appendices

None

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