

Committee(s)	Dated:
Culture, Heritage and Libraries – For Information	06/02/2017
Planning and Transportation – For Information	07/02/2017
Subject: The Illuminated River – The Story So Far	Public
Report of: Peter Lisle, Assistant Town Clerk and Cultural Hub Director	For Information
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Summary

The Illuminated River, a new public art initiative for the bridges between Albert and Tower, will transform central London by using the structures as canvases for light and enlivening the riverscape at night. An innovative design team including American light artist Leo Villareal and renowned British architects and urban planners, Liftschutz Davidson Sandilands, has been selected to realise this vision.

Initially led by the Rothschild Foundation and the Greater London Authority (GLA), a new charity – the Illuminated River Foundation – has been set up to provide ongoing management of the project.

The Foundation will raise the funds needed to realise the project (estimated to be £20m) and announced first pledges in November 2016 totalling £10 million. In addition, a contribution of £500,000 from the City Corporation was made towards delivery of the first phase of the installation. This funding derives from its Bridge House Estate bridge maintenance budget and will be spent on London Bridge to upgrade it to the necessary standard for the lighting.

This report seeks to brief Members on progress since the City Corporation pledged its funding in September 2015 and to provide background information on the project ahead of a presentation being made by the Illuminated River Foundation to your Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. In September 2015, the City Corporation received a request from the then Deputy Mayor for London, Munira Murza, to your Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee soliciting support for the Illuminated River Project.
2. Initially led by the Greater London Authority (GLA) in partnership with the Rothschild Foundation, the Illuminated River is a new public art initiative for the bridges between Albert and Tower that seeks to transform central London by using the structures as canvases for light and enlivening the riverscape at night. Together, the newly-illuminated structures will create a unified and inspirational ribbon of light, transforming the Thames into a visual and vibrant visitor attraction after dark which celebrates one of London's most recognisable features.
3. In addition, it will help to sustain London's momentum as a world centre for creativity and enterprise, providing the opportunity for growing London's night time economy, reducing its energy consumption, and inspiring visitors and Londoners alike.
4. Committing £500,000 from its Bridge House Estate bridge maintenance budget, the City Corporation's contribution to the project is set to be spent on London Bridge, upgrading it to the necessary standard for the lighting. It is expected that this will form part of phase one of the project's realisation in 2018.

Current Position

5. In 2016, a new charity – the Illuminated River Foundation – was set up to provide ongoing management of the project, including raising the funds needed to realise the project in full (estimated to be £20m). This support will be sought from private and philanthropic sources rather than the public purse.
6. To select a design appropriate for a project of this magnitude and profile, Malcolm Reading Associates were appointed to manage an international design competition and your City Arts Initiative elected the Head of Guildhall Art Gallery and London's Roman Amphitheatre to sit on the design assessment panel which shortlisted the entries received.
7. As a significant stakeholder in the project and owner of five of the bridges being considered under the scheme, the City Corporation was also represented on the competition's technical assessment panel through your Assistant Director Engineering and Assistant Highways Director from the Department of the Built Environment (DBE).

8. A shortlist of six entries was agreed by the above groups. These were:
 - a. **Blurring Boundaries** by Adjaye Associates with Chris Ofili, Thukral & Tagra, Doug Aitken, AKTII, HPF (Hurley Palmer Flatt), Four Communications, DP9, Plan A and DHA Designs;
 - b. **The Eternal Story of the River Thames** by AL_A with Asif Kapadia, Simon Stephens, SEAM Design and GROSS.MAX;
 - c. **Synchronizing the City: Its Natural and Urban Rhythms** by Diller Scofidio + Renfro with L'Observatoire International, Arup, Transsolar, Jennifer Tipton and Oliver Beer;
 - d. **A River Ain't Too Much to Light** by Les Éclairagistes Associés with ecqi, ewo, Federico Pietrella, and GVA Lighting Europe Limited;
 - e. **Current** by Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands with Future\ Pace, Leo Villareal, Pentagram, Price & Myers, Atelier Ten, Beckett Rankine and Core Five; and
 - f. **Thames Nocturne** by Sam Jacob Studio and Simon Heijdens with Electrolight, Daisy Froud and Elliott Wood.
9. A public exhibition of the shortlisted entries was hosted at the Royal Festival Hall in November 2016. At the same time, the Illuminated River Foundation announced first pledges of support totalling £10 million.
10. In December, following assessment by a grand jury, **Current** (item e in the above list) was announced as the winner by Mayor of London Sadiq Khan at a reception at the Tate Modern. The innovative design team delivering this project includes renowned lighting designer Leo Villareal who delivered the Bay Lights scheme in San Francisco.
11. Going forward, design development, project management and stakeholder engagement will be led by the Illuminated River Foundation, with your Head of Cultural and Visitor Development representing City Corporation interests on the Illuminated River Project Board, and representatives from your DBE sitting on the Bridge Owners Group which will assess technical requirements for each bridge and how the system is controlled at both a local and London-wide level. Presentations from the Foundation to your City Arts Initiative have and will continue to be received as the design and installation progresses. It is expected that at least four bridges across London will be complete and working by the end of 2018.
12. Given the variety of other considerations to this project, including highways, visual amenity, ecology, suicide prevention, residential amenity, river traffic, and potential listed building impacts amongst others, material planning considerations will need to be addressed as part of a potential planning application in due course.
13. Significant recognition for the City Corporation's support of this project has been received with credits appearing on all print, exhibition and digital collateral throughout the competition period, on all press releases relating to the project and through name checks given by a number of high-profile speakers at launches and receptions – these include Hannah Rothschild and Sadiq Khan.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. The City Corporation's support of this project aligns with the strategic aims of its corporate plan by providing "valued services, such as education, employment, culture and leisure, to London and the nation" and with Key Policy Priority 4 in that it helps to "maximise the opportunities and benefits afforded by our role in supporting London's communities".

Implications

15. The contribution of £500,000 from the City Corporation's Bridge House Estates maintenance budget was already assigned to upgrading lighting on London Bridge but brought forward in its maintenance plan to meet with the timeframe necessitated by this project.

Conclusion

16. The delivery of a cohesive and consistent lighting scheme for London's bridges help to sustain London's momentum as a world centre for creativity and enterprise, providing the opportunity for growing London's night time economy, reducing its energy consumption, and inspiring visitors and Londoners alike.

17. The City Corporation's contribution to the scheme aligns with its supporting London agenda and demonstrates its commitment to the continued promotion of the message that "London (and the City) is open".

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