

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Policy and Resources	7 June 2018
Subject: Lord Mayor's Show, 2018 – Fireworks Display	Public
Report of: Director of Communications Report Author: Sheldon Hind	For Decision

Summary

On 17 March 2016, the Policy & Resources Committee agreed to support a public fireworks display following the Lord Mayor's Show in years 2016, 2017 and 2018. Members agreed a budget of £125,000 per annum for delivery, however last year expenditure exceeded this amount by £9,066 due to additional security measures required.

It is highly likely that the agreed fireworks budget for this year will also be exceeded as similar security measures will be needed. It therefore appears timely to review the appropriateness of a fireworks display, and instead to consider whether there are alternative ways to enhance the visitor attraction for the Show which could create a 'platform' on which to build in future years.

This report examines whether the fireworks should be retained this year; whether they be cancelled; or whether they be cancelled and funding for them channelled into another form of display that would reflect well on the Show and continue to draw audiences.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to agree that:

1. The fireworks are cancelled for this year's Lord Mayor's Show regardless of other alternatives being explored.
2. The fireworks funding of £125,000 (City's Cash) already agreed be reallocated to deliver a light display around Bank Junction - subject to the grant of relevant regulatory approvals given the nature and location of the proposed display, and subject to full funding for the project being identified.
3. That authority be delegated authority to the Town Clerk to agree the final proposal in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, the City's Remembrancer, the Director of the Built Environment and the Chamberlain, and to instruct the Comptroller and City Solicitor to enter into all necessary legal documents.

Main Report

The fireworks display

1. The fireworks take place after the Lord Mayor's Show at 5.15 pm. It is a 10-minute display fired from a barge towed by a tug, stemming the tide between Blackfriars Bridge to the east and Waterloo Bridge to the west at the point between HQS Wellington moored on the north embankment and the ITV Tower on the South Bank.
2. The event is free to the public, with spectators congregating on Victoria Embankment, Blackfriars Bridge, the pedestrian areas of the South Bank and Waterloo Bridge. To facilitate safe viewing, road closures are put in place to stop traffic on Victoria Embankment, Blackfriars Bridge and Waterloo Bridge. Last year some closures had to remain much later than in previous years because of additional security measures on Waterloo Bridge. Roads did not fully reopen until 8pm (around two hours longer than previously) causing significant traffic congestion, particularly within Westminster where the majority of viewing takes place. The City of Westminster and Transport for London expressed their concerns about the congestion and disruption caused. If the event takes place again, both delivery partners will seek reassurance from the City Corporation that disruption is minimised before consenting to the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order, without which road closures cannot be put in to effect.
3. Anecdotal evidence suggests limited public recognition of the connection between the fireworks and the Show, and that both events attract different audiences. It also suggests the fireworks are associated more with City Hall than the City Corporation. The location of the fireworks is within Westminster's boundaries, and whilst consideration has been given to moving it to another venue closer to the City, e.g. in the vicinity of Tower Bridge, there is insufficient viewing area for the anticipated crowd numbers, estimated to be around 100,000. In addition to costs associated, in particular with crowd management and security, there is also an increasing amount of officers' time involved in the planning process.
4. The fireworks nevertheless continue to be popular and cancellation might attract negative publicity, therefore alternative proposals have been considered.

Proposal

Light display at Bank Junction

5. Following previous successful examples of light shows both in Guildhall Yard and the Beech Street tunnel, options have been examined for a similar display in the area in front of Royal Exchange at Bank Junction. It has been suggested that this be built around a single beam of light near the London Troops War Memorial that would signify the centenary of the end of the First World War and link with Remembrance Sunday which takes place the day after the Show. It is anticipated that the display would operate continuously for a number of hours after dusk (and possibly over a number of days) and would therefore not involve the same crowd and risk management considerations arising from a 10 minute fireworks display. It is anticipated that certain elements would be visible in the immediate vicinity, but also that the beam of light would be visible from outside the City.

6. The Pageantmaster has been in contact with a number of companies to develop proposals and competitive quotes for a temporary network of digital multimedia projections on the surrounding architecture of Bank Junction. Such work would be carried out in collaboration with City Corporation officers if deemed logistically feasible but would be subject to any statutory restrictions around access, listed building consent and any other regulatory and risk management issues. It would also be subject to the full funding being identified. Members should be aware that this may not be deliverable if costs or logistics prove unworkable.
7. Funding would be accommodated by that already agreed for the fireworks with any additional costs met by the Lord Mayor's Show Ltd. The Director of the Built Environment has also agreed to explore other funding options if felt prudent (and subject to relevant approvals).

Financial and Risk Implications

8. Risk management for delivery of significant public events, such as a public fireworks display, is anticipated to remain a significant and costly undertaking for this year, and the budget of £125,000 which has been allocated from City's Cash will not cover these increased costs for Show Day fireworks in 2018. Therefore, should there be fireworks, funding required to address and mitigate such event risks and management costs would need to be identified.
9. The alternative proposal of a light display would not have the same risk implication. It could also be seen to provide greater value for money to the City Corporation and potentially open the experience to different groups of the public. As it would be set up within the City it is expected this would reduce the impact on our neighbouring boroughs.
10. There is no possibility of meeting the proposed financial support from existing local risk resources, because it would entail substantial one-off expenditure for which no provision has been made in the Communications or other local risk budgets. It is therefore proposed that this Committee agree to the transfer of £125,000 funding allocated for fireworks this year to the provision of a light display in the Bank Junction area subject to the conditions set out at paragraph 6 above; and approval of the final proposal by Town Clerk under delegated authority.

Post Event Review

11. Officers will review any new activity and present a report to Members for consideration for future Lord Mayor's Shows.

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