

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Culture, Heritage and Libraries	20/01/2020
<b>Subject:</b> City Outdoor Arts Programme: 2019 performance evaluation report	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Peter Lisley, Director of Major Projects	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Nick Bodger, Cultural and Visitor Development Director	

### Summary

This report provides an overview of the achievements of the 2019 Outdoor Arts Programme including *Fantastic Feats: The Building of London* and associated activities in Guildhall Yard (eg Lunch Markets) and Aldgate Square.

Assessing performance against the golden thread principles agreed by your Committee in October 2016 when the Programme was first established, headlines this year include the securing of more than double the value of the Programme's core budget through partnership; a record number of events delivered in more outdoor City spaces than ever before; quadruple the number of new commissions, with audiences rating these as 'very good' being the highest in the Programme's history; and a rise of 71% in attendances year-on-year with the programme's resonance demonstrated through significant increases in domestic visitors from outside of London and from overseas.

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of this report.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. Following consultation with relevant Members, officers and stakeholders, a proposal for a successor model to the City of London Festival was presented to your Committee in October 2016. As part of that proposal, it was agreed that funding previously allocated to the festival would be allocated to Town Clerk's (Cultural Services) for a period of three years to enable delivery of an annual Outdoor Arts Programme. In December 2018, your Committee agreed to extend the funding term for a further five years (to 2024/25)

2. From the outset, it was agreed that delivery of the new Outdoor Arts Programme would align with a set of principles which form a 'golden thread' against which performance evaluation is monitored. Those principles are to:
  - a. Work in partnership;
  - b. Enliven and open up City spaces;
  - c. Produce excellent and innovative work; and
  - d. Attract new audiences, particularly from the City worker group.
3. It was also agreed that the Guildhall Yard Public Programme (eg lunch markets) and the cultural elements of any major London or national events to which the City Corporation contributes (eg London Landmarks Half Marathon) would be supported by the team established to deliver the new Programme. In addition, with funding from The Aldgate Partnership, the team took responsibility for delivering an annual programme of events in Aldgate Square in 2019.
4. Since its inception, the Outdoor Arts Programme has taken a major theme each year, programming "hero" or hook events and inviting City and City Corporation stakeholders to contribute to an umbrella programme which the team has also publicised. This model has delivered significant dividends noting that these stakeholders, in turn, promote the programme to their audiences so extending marketing reach.
5. Launching with the theme *Londinium* in 2017 which celebrated the City's Roman past, and followed by *Women: Work and Power* in 2018, an exploration of women's rights and achievements tied closely with the centenary of women's suffrage, this year's Outdoor Arts Programme focussed on City and London architectural and engineering achievements.
6. Entitled *Fantastic Feats: The Building of London*, the 2019 programme was tied to key City and London anniversaries including the 200<sup>th</sup> birthdays of Sir Joseph Bazalgette and Sir Horace Jones, 125 years since Tower Bridge was completed, and 150 years since Blackfriars Bridge and Holborn Viaduct first opened. The launch of the Illuminated River was also a key component of the programming.
7. In 2020, events and activities will focus on themes of tolerance, freedom, diversity and worship. *Believe! Stories of faith, freedom and football* takes its inspiration from another set of City and London anniversaries as well as major London events. These include 400 years since the Mayflower set sail, 850 years since the murder of Thomas Becket (born in Cheapside), 150 years of the United Synagogue (whose records are held at the London Metropolitan Archives), the first major Mela to be held in Aldgate Square and the Euro 2020 championships.
8. The results presented in this report are drawn from a number of sources. These include internal data collection as well as an extensive audience survey delivered by the Audience Agency and a survey of Yard lunch market attendees by Infocorp Ltd. Reports are available on request from the Director of Major Projects.

## Current Position

### Partnerships

9. Reporting against the golden thread principles outlined in item 2 above, the 2019 Programme (across *Fantastic Feats* (FF) events) and associated programmes (Guildhall Yard and Aldgate Square as well as major London and national events), attracted 32 partners. This compares to 37 in 2018 and 22 in 2017, a decrease of 14% and increase of 45% respectively.
10. While the decrease against 2018 may seem disappointing, it is worth noting that this year's programme delivered £120k in cash sponsorship and £316k in benefit in kind (BIK) through partnership. This compares with £8.9k sponsorship and £0.5k BIK in 2018, and £37k BIK in 2017 when no sponsorship was achieved.
11. In percentage terms, the overall value of partnership has therefore increased by 4,538% on 2018, and 1,078% on 2017, highlighting the significant and concerted efforts of the Outdoor Arts team to proactively use programming funds to attract match support from co-commissioners and other sponsors and to deliver greater value for the City Corporation across its cultural output. This is borne out by the number of events produced or facilitated by the team this year, climbing to 129 for 2019 from 82 in 2018 and 66 in 2017, rises of 57% and 95% respectively.
12. Of the 32 partnerships achieved this year, the most significant is that established with Greenwich + Docklands International Festival which – given the success achieved by the collaboration – has led to the Festival committing to a second year of partnership in 2020. This delivers a programming and marketing legacy, enabling new commissioning and driving new audiences, while helping to cement the City Corporation's strategic destination alliance with Visit Greenwich.
13. Similarly, newly established partnerships with the Aldgate Partnership (funding), Whitechapel Gallery's *Nocturnal Creatures* programme (through Sculpture in the City), and Culture Mile all look likely to be repeated next year, helping further to strengthen the programme's appeal locally while supporting internal and external stakeholders who play a significant role in the City's overall cultural offer.

### City spaces

14. Against the second golden thread principle – to enliven and open up City spaces – the 2019 programme animated 31 unique spaces. This includes the major *Thank You For Having Us* event which used Cheapside, New Change and St Paul's Churchyard to host audiences of around 3,000, while delivering the first major City-produced on-street performance event in this area since *Celebrate the City* in 2012.
15. In comparison to previous years, the total number of spaces animated in 2019 shows strong and steady growth with 27 animated in 2018 and 15 in 2017, increases of 15% on 2018 and 106% on 2017.

## Excellent and innovative work

16. The third principle outlined in item 2 (programming excellent and innovative work) is measured by the number of new commissions undertaken and the satisfaction ratings of the audiences engaged with them.
17. In 2019, 30 new commissions were undertaken across *Fantastic Feats* and its associated programmes. This compares to seven in 2018 and five in 2017, delivering increases of 329% and 500% respectively.
18. In terms of legacy, the *Liminal* sculpture (a joint commission with the London Festival of Architecture) is moving to Newstead Abbey on a permanent basis, subject to planning consents being achieved, *Volo: Dreams of Flights* and *Thank You for Having Us* are set to tour nationally and internationally, and *Bodies in Urban Spaces* has inspired a new temporary exhibition in the City Centre on Basinghall Street.
19. While delivering benefits for audiences, destinations and programmes locally, nationally and across the world, the commissioning of these works and their association with the City, helps to amplify the Outdoors Arts Programme at a global level, and build the City Corporation's reputation as a significant investor in new and innovative work.
20. For overall satisfaction, 54% of *Fantastic Feats* audiences rated their experience as very good, a climb of 10% on 2018 and 3% on 2017. This is clearly an endorsement of the quality of events delivered and indicates that more people considered the work shown to be excellent than in any year previously.
21. However, those rating their experience as good was down on both years with only 30% choosing this rating in 2019 compared to 49% in 2018 and 39% in 2017. This brings those satisfied at a good or very good level down to 84% from 93% and 90% in 2018 and 2017 respectively.
22. This may reflect similar observations over 2019 across activities in other London programmes and could be a result of wider feelings of dissatisfaction within the UK. If this is the case, the climb in those rating their experience as very good this year is all the more notable, suggesting a significant rise in the quality of events programmed.
23. Similarly, the reduction in those rating their experience as good may be due to a larger number of "Metroculturals" being engaged with this year's programme (a rise of 7% year-on-year). This group, as identified in the profiling tool Audience Spectrum, are more culturally engaged than others and so can be more critical of cultural experiences. If this is the case, it again indicates that the 10% climb in a very good rating acknowledges an exceptional year for quality of events.
24. The rise in the Metrocultural segment this year is likely borne of a reduction in press coverage (see item 35 below) resulting in more audiences being engaged through City Corporation and partner cultural feeds on social media.

## New audiences

25. The principle of attracting new audiences is measured across a series of criteria. The first of these is the number of those engaging with an event. In 2019, 96k engaged with a *Fantastic Feats* event or associated activity (eg in Guildhall Yard or Aldgate Square). This compares to 56k in 2018 and 61k in 2017, a rise of 71% and 57% respectively and so suggests a significant increase in new audiences this year.
26. For the sake of comparison, the above totals do not include major pan-London events such as London Landmarks Marathon for which City-only attendance is difficult to assess or on-street exhibitions produced or facilitated by Programme in areas of high footfall where a formula of 2% of passing pedestrian traffic is used to calculate engagement (as this can distort figures when footfall is very high).
27. The Outdoor Arts Programme has always sought to engage City workers. In 2019, it is estimated that 32% of audiences for *Fantastic Feats* were from this group. This compares to 35% in 2018 and 31% in 2017, a fall of 3% on last year and a rise of 1% on 2017. With a margin of error calculated across all figures of 5%, the slight fluctuation presents no cause for concern and suggests that City worker representation has stayed broadly the same, at around one third of all audiences.
28. A survey of audiences at Guildhall Lunch Markets was, this year, undertaken for the first time. This suggests that 79% of visitors to these events are from the City worker group, 64% of them being 39 or younger (a younger demographic than for most City Corporation funded cultural activities). Ninety five percent of these audiences considered the markets good for the City's image, with 90% believing that they enhance a sense of community in the City.
29. The representation of BAME communities amongst *Fantastic Feats* audiences has slightly increased on 2017 figures (a rise of 1% on those identifying as Black or Black British, and 2% on those identifying as Asian or Asian British), and is slightly down (by 1%) for Asian or Asian British audiences against 2018. However, representation of Black or Black British communities is significantly reduced when compared to 2018 (down 11%) when events such as the *British Barbadian Nursing Revolution* and other activities targeting this segment were programmed.
30. That said, diversity is still at the heart of the Programme, with events taking place this year targeting LGBTQ, Asian and South American audiences. These included a Diwali lunch market (Yard), a Columbian Fiesta (Aldgate), *Notice Me* (LGBTQ focus, Aldgate), a small-scale Mela (Yard) and *Fiesta de Mexico* (Yard) which attracted well over 5,000 attendees. Most of these events fell outside of the scope of the appointed evaluation agency which focussed on *Fantastic Feats* programming only, albeit the demographics of such audiences are not currently recorded in any case. It is hoped, in future years, that an extended list of

ethnicities and characteristics may be captured to include a larger number of ethnicities.

31. It is worth noting is that next year's *Believe!* programme with its themes of diversity, worship and tolerance and including a large-scale Mela in Aldgate Square, exhibitions exploring native Americans and Judaism and other targeted events, will capture a larger and more diverse demographic than the programme has seen in any previous year.
32. Particular gains under the new audiences' principle for this year were seen in visits from those outside London (supporting the Programme's role as a vehicle to drive tourism and demonstrating its growing resonance). This year, 64% of audiences were from London, 17% from elsewhere in the UK and 19% from overseas. This compares to 73% London, 13% UK, and 13% overseas in 2018, and 90% London, 5% UK and 5 % overseas in 2017.
33. This delivers increases of 4% in domestic audiences and 6% in those from overseas against 2018, and 12% and 14% respectively against 2019. Noting the growth in audiences overall (see item 26) and thus the growth of the segments, the drops of 9% on 2018 and 26% on 2017 in the London contingent of audiences is actually growth in real terms, with 61k Londoners enjoying events in this year's programme against 41k in 2018 and 55k in 2017.
34. All other captured profile characteristics for this year are broadly aligned with previous years.

### **Press and PR**

35. Press and PR coverage of *Fantastic Feats* has been disappointing across the year, albeit comparisons are not helpful given the increased scope of the programme and thus the growth of the number of events requiring coverage. A number of hypotheses have been offered to explain this, not least of these is the focus on political issues within the news.
36. This has not impacted on audience numbers however, with capacity audiences achieved at many events this year – a result of increased and concentrated campaigning through social media, both internally and through the channels of our partners, stakeholders and umbrella event contributors.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

37. The City's Outdoor Arts Programme aligns with all aims within the City Corporation's Corporate Plan delivering the specific outcomes:
  2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing
  3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential
  4. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need
  7. We are a global hub for innovation in financial and professional services, commerce and culture
  10. We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration

38. The programme significantly supports the City's Cultural Strategy 2018/22 in that it can clearly evidence its impact in shifting perceptions about the City as a cultural hub (a key driver of the Strategy's vision). It also supports six of the Strategy's ten objectives: to transform City spaces, deliver cultural excellence, promote our cultural strengths, widen audiences, engage with City business, and connect with the wider cultural ecology of London.
39. It is also closely aligned with the City's Visitor Destination Strategy 2019/23 in that it supports five of Strategy's 10 priorities: to exploit our capacity, to share the City's great story, to create and curate a portfolio of new experiences, to develop our assets and stakeholders, and to support London and the UK.

## **Conclusion**

40. The success of the Outdoor Arts Programme is growing. Working in partnership, it continues to attract new audiences to the City, commission excellent and innovative work and enliven City spaces. Furthermore, it has, this year, excelled in the size of audiences it has attracted and the sponsorship and benefit-in-kind it has secured, over doubling the value of its core local budget to deliver significantly more major events, many of international standing.
41. The Outdoor Arts Programme is a great complement to the City's cultural offer, attracting audiences not widely catered for across existing (indoor) programmes, and delivering populist outdoor activities that may be enjoyed by all. As noted in previous reports: following six years of Audience Finder research and analysis (2013-2018), it has become a consistent and demonstrable fact that outdoor arts attract a wider-ranging and more diverse audience that is more truly representative of the total population than those attracted by other artforms. As such, it is often argued that free, outdoor arts events are the most democratic artform.
42. These assertions are evidenced by the results shown in this report.

## **Appendices**

- None

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