

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Corporate Asset Sub Committee – For Decision	<b>29/01/2020</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Future location for fixed stone bench seating in/near Guildhall Yard.	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> City Surveyor	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Sophy Morrison (Guildhall Visitor Services Manager, City Surveyor's Dept)	

### Summary

Members previously asked the City Surveyor to outline suitable options for locating additional fixed stone seating in the environs of Guildhall Yard should a future need arise. Overall 6 locations have been identified as suitable, notably: two locations adjacent to the pond outside the West Wing Member's entrance, two locations along the north wall of St Lawrence Jewry, one location adjacent to the dance porch and finally, one location in front of the Art Gallery.

### Recommendation

- Members are asked to agree the recommended locations identified below to be considered for additional fixed stone seating in the future, once the St Lawrence Jewry restoration project has been completed and the Guildhall Yard has been repaved.
  - Adjacent to the pond outside the West Wing reception area.
  - Along the north wall of St. Lawrence Jewry.
  - Adjacent to the dance porch.
  - In front of the Art Gallery positioned in the 3<sup>rd</sup> archway from the North east corner

### Main Report

#### Background

1. In 2017 the Hospitality Working Party asked the City Surveyor to outline suitable options for locating additional fixed stone seating in the environs of the Guildhall Yard should a future need arise. Two locations adjacent to the pond outside the West Wing Member's entrance were identified as suitable.
2. Following on from that Committee report in May 2017, the City Surveyor was asked again to investigate further suitable options for stone seating in the Guildhall Yard.

3. Capacity for additional fixed seating within the Yard is severely limited due to the competing requirements for other uses as outlined below and detailed in Appendix Two.
4. Nevertheless, an additional four locations were identified as potentially suitable, giving a total of 6 new locations. (see Appendix 1)
5. A fifth additional location positioned under the 6<sup>th</sup> archway of the Art Gallery was also considered. However, this arch (far right as you look at the Art Gallery) is a trip hazard (as is the 7<sup>th</sup> archway). This is due to those arches being elevated with steps. The advice from health and safety is to refrain from installing a bench in this position as the City of London would be legally obliged to remove the bench should visitors injure themselves. It is also worth noting that the first two arches (1 & 2) (far left as you look at the Art Gallery) are required to be kept clear as they house the Fire Door and Emergency exit. Plenty of space is required to evacuate people in a timely manner. The middle two arches (4 & 5) are accommodating the entry and exit doors.
6. Members' received interest from various Livery Companies in funding the benches.
7. Enquiries through the Highways division led to a quote from Albion Stone Restoration of £23,049 plus VAT for the supply and installation of six Portland stone benches.
8. Portland stone was the stone of choice, as it replicates the existing stone benches.
9. This quote was too highly priced and rejected by the Liveries.
10. Members' made further enquiries and through Livery contacts managed to negotiate a price of £11,413.40 plus VAT. This was considered acceptable by the Liveries, as was the engraving costs( lettering at £4 for a one inch letter) This doesn't include the installation of the benches or the paving groundworks to be taken up, so that the block style benches can sit just below pavement level. This will cost £6,552.50 and would need to be met from City Surveyor's local risk budget, if given approval.
11. If this were to be agreed, then the City will initially pay the full supply and installation fees for the benches but will be partially offset by a donation of £11,413.40 from the Liveries. A recoverable project would need to be set up, however, the net cost to the City of £17,965.90 will have to be met from the City Surveyor's local risk budget for the Guildhall.

### **Current Position**

12. There are currently seven fixed seating benches (five stone, two wooden) in Guildhall Yard itself and seven limestone benches located around the pond.
13. Guildhall Yard is a multi-use public and venue space. It provides pedestrian thoroughfare, point of access for loading and unloading event production vehicles and equipment, VIP vehicle drop off and parking for City events, a performance

area for City cultural, ceremonial and civic events, and a display area for art installations, public information and private events.

14. The restoration project for St Lawrence Jewry is due to commence in January 2021 for a duration of 18 months. This project will see extensive scaffolding around the church itself and the adjacent pond will be drained and covered. All seating provision will be removed from around the pond and along the north wall of St. Lawrence Jewry (see appendix 1, area G). Both areas are proposed for additional seating.
15. Following on from that project and dependent on funding approval, it is likely that the Guildhall Yard will be repaved. Any remaining seating provision will be removed as part of these works.
16. Therefore, it is recommended to delay the installation of any new benches until the church restoration is completed and fix the new benches in place to coincide with the new paving stones being laid in the yard.
17. This project could then be reviewed again, as, perhaps, part of an overall Guildhall enhancement plan for the yard.

### **Options**

18. The area within the perimeter of Guildhall yard has been reviewed (see Appendices 1 & 2) and six suitable locations have been identified below;
  - Option One (marked “I” on the map in Appendix 1) abuts the south west corner of Guildhall Yard near the entrance to St Lawrence Jewry Church.
  - Option Two (marked “J” on the map in Appendix 1) is adjacent to the pond near the junction of Aldermanbury and Gresham Street, directly outside the West Wing Members’ entrance.
  - Option Three (marked as “K” on the map in Appendix 1) is next to the dance porch.
  - Option Four (marked as “K” on the map in Appendix 1) is positioned in the 3<sup>rd</sup> archway of the Guildhall Art Gallery.
  - Option Five (marked as “L” on the map in Appendix 1) is along the north wall of St. Lawrence Jewry.
  - Option Six (marked as “L” on the map in Appendix 1) is along the north wall of St. Lawrence Jewry.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

19. Seating provision links to the City Corporation’s Visitor Strategy 2019/23 and Cultural Strategy 2018/22. Specifically, it supports the ambition to develop the Yard as an attractive and animated environment and increase dwell time by City workers and other audiences.

### **Implications**

20. Both Highways and Planning (DBE) have confirmed the area surrounding the pond fall within the ownership of the City of London Corporation under the responsibility of the City Surveyor.

21. DDA and pedestrian access should be maintained around the seating/pond area. St. Lawrence Jewry Church have been consulted regarding option One, due to its proximity to the church entrance.

### **Conclusion**

22. Six suitable locations for fixed seating have been identified and are recommended should future need arise.

23. Once we are ready to proceed with the installation of the stone benches discussions will be had with City Procurement and the Comptroller on the procurement options and any side legal agreement required with the livery companies.

### **Appendices**

- **Appendix 1 – Stone Bench Location Proposal**
- **Appendix 2 – Area Assessment**

### **Background Papers**

A Committee report was submitted (For Information) to the Hospitality Working Party in May 2017, outlining suitable options for additional fixed stone bench seating in/around the Guildhall Yard.

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