

Committee(s):	Date:
Policy & Resources Committee Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee	9 July 2020 13 July 2020
Subject: Recognition of Women: progress report	Public
Report of: Peter Lisley, Director of Major Projects	For Information
Report author: Nick Bodger, Cultural and Visitor Development Director	

Summary

In July 2019, your Policy and Resources Committee (P&R) approved £61,000 from its Policy Initiatives Fund to deliver a programme of activities around a *Recognition of Women* theme.

The programme was led by an expert *Recognition of Women* group which sought to deliver a robust response to Deputy Lord's motion to Court of Common Council on 21 June 2018, proposing a statue or other depiction of a woman (or women) be located within the City's public realm. The group's recommendations were approved by P&R Committee in July 2019 with monies invested in better equipping the City Corporation to be able to identify and recognise historical women connected to the City area when opportunities to do so arise. This element of the work was realised through an agreed schedule of research and public and internal consultation.

In response to the call for a statue, your Committee approved funds to install and maintain *Fearless Girl* (a work owned and managed by State Street Global Advisors) as a permanent feature in the City's streetscape.

Halted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the indefinite postponement of the *Fearless Girl* installation, most of the programme's activities have been realised or are ongoing with some few on pause until a new normal is established post-crisis.

This report seeks to update Members on progress made and to return the funds allocated to the *Fearless Girl* statue.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report and the return of £23,000 to the Policy Initiatives Fund (PIF) in relation to the indefinite postponement of the installation of *Fearless Girl* within the City's streetscape.

Main Report

Background

1. Your Policy and Resources Committee approved £61,000 for a *Recognition of Women* (RoW) programme in July 2019 from its Policy Initiatives Fund (PIF). To further support the programme, an additional £47,000 of funding was identified from Town Clerk's – Cultural Services' local risk budget and the external provider of *Fearless Girl*, State Street Global Advisors (SSGA).
2. The programme comprised six elements of work which sought to deliver a robust response to Deputy Lord's motion to Court of Common Council on 21 June 2018, proposing a statue or other depiction of a woman (or women) be located within the City's public realm.
3. It was proposed by an expert *Recognition of Women* (RoW) Group comprising external visual arts and gender representation specialists from the Greater London Authority, Historic England, Artichoke, the Illuminated River Foundation, Museum of London and the Fawcett Society, officer representation from the City Corporation's Women's Network, Public Realm and Barbican, and Members Anne Fairweather and Jeremy Simons. The group was led by your Acting Chair of Culture, Heritage and Libraries and facilitated by your Cultural and Visitor Development Team (CVDT).
4. The programme comprised:
 - a. Commissioned research to improve the City Corporation's knowledge of how women are currently recognised across its archives and collections and within the City's public realm;
 - b. Commissioned research into individuals or groups of women with a connection to the City who may be celebrated, noting that there is a paucity of information within existing archives and records;
 - c. The launch of a public callout to enable external audiences to play an active role in the programme's development and further improve the City's knowledge base;
 - d. The development of a *Recognition of Women* Charter to help embed gender balance across the City Corporation's programmes;
 - e. The installation of *Fearless Girl* within the City's streetscape on a permanent basis; and
 - f. A cultural output collating the findings from the research and public callout while supporting the City Corporation's efforts to commemorate and celebrate women from the City's past and present more publicly.
5. In December 2019, the RoW group convened to receive an update on the workstreams listed above and direct the your CVDT on next steps.

Current Position

Research

6. Two pieces of research were commissioned in September 2019 and are published on the Celebrating City Women website (detailed in item 11). The reports are also available on request from the Director of Major Projects. The research reports are:
 - a. **A commentary on how women are recognised and documented across the City's archives by Virginia Rounding**, presenting a narrative about how groups of women have influenced and shaped different industries in the Square Mile while helping to highlight the lives of individual women with a connection to the City who have delivered positive benefit to London, the UK or wider world.
 - b. **A report on the representation of women in the Guildhall Art Gallery's collections and the City's public realm by Dr Jessamy Harvey and Janet Foster** comprising two surveys that show the names and details related to women as makers of art, donors of art, and/or historical or memorial subjects of art, as well as streets or locations named after women.
7. In May 2020, two subjects highlighted in these research papers were included in the Mayor of London's, *London History Day* Family Activity Pack, a free creative resource for young people which celebrated London's resilience.
8. At the meeting of the RoW group in December, an absence of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) representation within these reports was noted and your CVDT were directed to commission a final report specifically focusing on this topic. The report was commissioned in January 2020 and is awaiting a foreword by Blondel Cluff, Chief Executive of the West India Committee. An advance copy is available to Members on request from the Director of Major projects. Details of this report are:
 - a. **A report focusing on Black and Asian Women in the City of London, 1600-1860 by Chihyin Hsiao**, seeking to uncover the histories of BAME women who have made a positive impact on the City. However, the social status of minority women in the period considered means that many records are not available and/or that the stories of these women are often negative. As such, Hsiao acknowledges the structural racism and trades during these times in order to contextualise the paper. Of note is her assertion that "while it is difficult to locate a specific person, it seems relatively easy to determine how City merchants contributed to the mass migration movement across the British colonies".
9. In 2018, the Guildhall Art Gallery updated its Collections Development Policy to set a new framework for collecting across three specific Priority Collecting Areas. These were:
 - a. To increase the representation of women, BAME, LGBTQI+ and disabled artists who live and work in London

- b. To acquire work which reflects, explores and is inspired by the breadth of London and Londoners, in particular works which explore the experience of women, BAME, LGBTQI+ and disabled Londoners
- c. To acquire works which broaden the range of subjects in sculpture and expands the representation of makers of sculpture.

During the last two years, the Gallery has acquired five works by BAME artists. They include *Top Shelf*, (2018) by Liz Johnson Artur (Russian /Ghanaian) and *Carnival Procession* (2016) by Ferha Farooqui (Indian). In small part, these works provide some redress and offer two positive representations of BAME women within the City Corporation's collections. In addition, works by non-BAME women artists have also been acquired. These include artists Grete Marks, Fiona Banner, Catherine Yass, Joanna Price and Hannah Starkey.

- 10. All research papers have provided suggestions on how the City Corporation can build on this knowledge base and narrative in the future.

Public callout / website

- 11. A new website www.celebratingcitywomen.co.uk was designed and launched in March 2020, enabling the public to download the research reports, read summarised histories of women from the City's past, and nominate other historical women connected to the City that have created positive benefit for the area, or for London, the UK or wider world. This continues to help the City Corporation build a repository of information that may be used to support any future opportunities for naming City streets (for example) or selecting subjects to be commemorated in some other way within the public realm.
- 12. The material gathered has also enabled your CVDT to profile the contributions of women to the City over time through regular features on its *Our City Together* website (www.ourcitytogether.london), launched to provide a platform from which to deliver cultural content from City partners as part of an audience engagement response to Covid-19. Features on individual women also appear in the team's *City Resident* and *Visit the City from Home* newsletters, as well as across social media and on screens in the reception areas of Guildhall.

Charter

- 13. The RoW programme also sought to deliver a charter that would help embed gender balance across the City Corporation's programmes and activities. In December 2019, 64 Million Artists were commissioned to lead two drop-in sessions and three workshops for City Corporation staff to inform this work.
- 14. Drop-in sessions took place outside of the Guildhall's staff canteen, providing an opportunity to raise awareness about the three creative workshops on offer to staff to help develop the charter. Within these workshops, activities enabled participants to imagine participatory projects inspired by Deputy Lord's motion that champion subjects from the research, and offered a chance to take part in

an in-depth discussion about gender representation both within the City Corporation and threaded throughout its cultural offer.

15. In all, 36 members of staff from various departments took part in the workshops.
16. While the Charter was signed off by your CVDT in March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic prevented internal approval processes from going ahead as relevant officers across the City Corporation switched focus to deal with the crisis. It is anticipated that this process will restart later in the year and that the Charter will be presented to your Committees with an implementation plan in the near future. For information, the Charter proposes eight key objectives:
 - I. To ensure City Corporation cultural organisations champion gender diversity
 - II. To ensure City Corporation institutions actively pursue the gender diversification of their collections and archives
 - III. To prefer gender neutral language in internal and external communications
 - IV. To ensure that City Corporation spaces (in real life and digital) are inclusive for all gender identities
 - V. To ensure that intersectionality is considered in relation to City Corporation gender diversity
 - VI. To ensure Committees, panels and consultation processes relating to City Corporation cultural activity represent gender diversity
 - VII. To ensure the City Corporation's cultural activities are sensitive to historical concepts of gender
 - VIII. To ensure staff are involved in ongoing training around gender diversity in relation to City Corporation's cultural offer

Fearless Girl

17. The RoW programme also aspired to install *Fearless Girl* in the City on a permanent basis, following its temporary siting in Paternoster Square, the groundswell of positive press around this and the statue's significance both as an advocate for more women in leadership roles and as a symbol of empowerment and strength for women the world over.
18. City Corporation officers in the CVDT and your Department of the Built Environment worked closely with State Street Global Advisors (SSGA) throughout 2019 to establish a suitable location for the statue. However, in December 2019, the project was indefinitely postponed due to unforeseen complexities that necessitated a pause and review. It is hoped that the installation will be reactivated at a future date.

Cultural output celebrating research and histories

19. As detailed above, the final element of the programme was to deliver a cultural output that would help celebrate women from the City's past and present more publicly. In a three-pronged approach, aimed at delivering a picture of women

in the City today, celebrating those from the past and promoting this work to City communities across the worker, learner, visitor and resident spectrum, the following activities were undertaken. While the first of these is delivered the second and third were paused in response to lockdown measures.

20. A new Artist in Residence programme was established in 2019 at Guildhall Art Gallery. Noting the RoW mandate, your officers directed this to explore the theme *Celebrating City Women*. From an impressive shortlist of applicants, the artist selected for the residency was renowned photographer Hannah Starkey who, in response to the theme, delivered 12 new artworks which explore the role of women in the City today. These formed the content of a new exhibition in the Gallery's Temple Room, opening on the 9 March and running until 20 May. Sadly, the Covid-19 crisis saw the Gallery enter lockdown on 17 March, but it is hoped that the exhibition may be extended. All 12 works are available to view on the *Celebrating City Women* website.
21. Working with creative agency Premier, your officers also commissioned a short, creative and cinematic-type documentary. To be uploaded to the *Celebrating City Women* and *Our City Together* websites (see items 11 and 12), the documentary will explore the original research for the RoW programme and the roots of the 2018 *Women, Work and Power* programme (delivered by the City Corporation), examining how the women's charter movement impacted working women from its conception to the present. Concluding, it will tie these themes together by exploring the work of Hannah Starkey (see above) – and her exhibition – and consider perceptions of women in the City today. The BAME research, relevant histories and selected interviewees will help contextualise and reference recent events within the piece. It is hoped that the film will be released in summer 2020, subject to the viability of filming during the Covid-19 pandemic and shared through the RoW partners and other networks to amplify reach, with City workers a key target.
22. A legacy of the Hannah Starkey work was the awarding of the Freedom of the City to the photographer. Scheduled for March 2020 but delayed because of the pandemic, a Q&A with students of art was planned as a follow up to the ceremony. It is hoped that this still might be realised once lockdown is lifted. Similarly, in consideration of this work as a learning tool, opportunities to develop the film into an education resource for schools are being explored by the Guildhall Art Gallery's Education Officer.
23. The City Corporation's Outdoor Arts Programme 2020/21 is set to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the death of John Keats. Entitled *A Thing of Beauty* – the programme seeks to consider the recurring motif of beauty in Keats' works and will focus on climate change and the beauty of the planet on which we live. In response to recent events, the programme will now be extended to celebrate the beauty of diversity in all its forms too, with work commissioned from artists from across the BAME, LGBT and disability spectrum. The programme will also seek to explore gender identities, building on the research and outputs described above.

Proposals

24. Members are asked to note this report and the return of £23,000 for the installation of Fearless Girl which is postponed indefinitely. Should the project be reactivated, or a replacement opportunity be identified, a separate report may be submitted to request support depending on the required funding model of the new or revised project. It is not anticipated that such an opportunity will arise in in the 2020/21 financial year.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

25. The proposals in this report align with the City Corporation's Corporate Plan in that they support actions:

- a. 3a – Promote and champion diversity, inclusion and the removal of institutional barriers and structural inequalities
- b. 4a – Bring individuals and communities together to share experiences and promote wellbeing, mutual respect and tolerance
- c. 5c – Support, celebrate and advocate responsible practices and investments
- d. 8a – Promote the City, London and the UK as attractive and accessible places to live, learn, work and visit.

26. They are also aligned with its Cultural Strategy 2018/22 under strategic objectives 7 and 9, stating that that the City Corporation will:

- a. Support cultural excellence in a range of fields and champion an ethos of creative risk taking, innovation and artistic citizenship
- b. Play our part as a catalyst and convener in supporting and connecting with the wider cultural ecology of the capital, the rest of the UK and globally.

Conclusion

27. The work described in this report has delivered a significant resource for the City Corporation by providing a wealth of subject matter that may be used to recognise and celebrate women and better balance gender representation within its collections, assets and public realm. Furthermore, it has championed the role of women in the City today, with Hannah Starkey's contemporary perceptions sparking debate and interest amongst City communities, as well as providing a legacy that redresses – to some small degree – the number of women artists represented in City Corporation collections.
28. Never before have diversity, balance and inclusion – across all communities – been so important. The RoW programme acknowledges this and has been swift to ensure intersectionality is considered within its outputs, recognising overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. This, in turn, has and will continue to inform cultural programming but there is some significant way to go before the balance of male to female representation is redressed within the City Corporation's holdings and the City public realm so that these are truly representative of the modern-day communities the City Corporation serves.

Appendices

- None

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