

Committees:	Date:
Corporate Asset Sub Committee – For Information	15 September 2020
Subject: The Heritage Estate Portfolio - Overview	Public
Report of: The City Surveyor	For information
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Summary

The report provides an overview of the characteristics and challenges in relation to the City Surveyor’s responsibility for the asset management of the City Corporation’s extensive Heritage Estate of over 780 historic assets.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

Main Report

Background

1. The City’s heritage asset portfolio tells the story of London from well before Roman times, through the Medieval ages to the twentieth century. The most ancient asset is the Tumulus on Hampstead Heath, dated in between 2000 and 750 BC and the most recent the Grade II listing of the 1960’s 65/65a Basinghall Street, by the architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott.
2. Today there are over 780 heritage assets ranging from memorials, to police call posts, state and antique furniture and coaches including the Lord Mayor’s as well as many notable buildings; the Mansion House, the Central Criminal Courts and the most significant of all in terms of the City’s own history, the Guildhall Great Hall, perhaps the greatest secular medieval hall in Europe.
3. It also includes assets such as Bunhill Fields which accounts for only one of the 780, and yet within it contains 2333 memorials (79 are individually listed).
4. The City’s heritage portfolio spreads far beyond the City of London, to Hampstead Heath and other locations across London, north to Epping Forest, and south to Ashted Park, Surrey. Therefore, the portfolio is as wide ranging and complex as it is extensive. See Appendix 1 for a further breakdown.
5. The size and significance of the City’s heritage portfolio ranks within the top five of UK heritage assets owners such as the National Trust, which has over 500

properties and English Heritage with over 400 sites. While the Guildhall and Tower Bridge generate income directly, much of the portfolio, like the remains of the City Wall and the Mansion House, contributes considerable social capital in terms of culture and education and are of national and international importance.

Heritage Estate Asset Management

6. The Heritage Estate has two dedicated officers within the Corporate Property Group responsible for a wide range of activities including: -
 - Strategic heritage conservation expertise across the City and beyond
 - Commissioning conservation management plans (CMPs) for priority assets
 - Generating 20-year forward maintenance plans for heritage assets
 - Bidding for funding
 - Commissioning routine inspections of all Scheduled Monuments and Listed Landscapes to ensure that they are being maintained properly.
 - Scoping/briefing of maintenance/repair works
 - Commissioning and managing complex projects with multiple stakeholders
 - Management of reactive repairs due to health and safety concerns
 - Conservation and delivery of the Lord Mayor's Coach and semi-state coaches for the Lord Mayor's Show
 - Providing ad hoc reactive advice to the many internal and external parties
 - Managing the City Surveyor's Archaeological Finds Register.
7. Cutting across the above are works to remove and/or prevent assets being added to the Heritage at Risk Register (HARR), Historic England's published list of heritage assets it considers are not being adequately conserved to maintain their listed characteristics. An annual separate HAAR update will be presented to CASC in June 2020; this report will cover the subject of which of the City's assets are at risk and those in danger of becoming at risk.
8. The City Surveyor's Operations Group deliver the majority of the maintenance/repair works with the exception of projects that are more complex due to cross-departmental interests and/or external stakeholders such as other Boroughs, the Diocese of London, heritage interest groups and Historic England. This is particularly the case for assets on or at risk of being added to the HARR.

Budgets and funding

9. The Heritage Estate has a limited local risk budget of £117,000, excluding staff costs, within the City Surveyor's Department. The majority of budget for specialist conservation works to difficult properties such as the remains of the City Wall, is funded from the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) and subject to the annual prioritisation in which health and safety and reputational risk scores are most applicable.
10. A small number of large projects will require capital funding, which is obtained via a bid into the central capital bid process. A recent example of this is the £2m secured to examine and consolidate the internal stonework of the Great Hall at Guildhall.

Key Heritage Portfolio risks

11. The following strategic risks are identified.
 - Resourcing and limited cross-City heritage expertise
 - Poor heritage portfolio visibility resulting in lack of organisational support/awareness
 - Climate change and extreme weather conditions accelerating fabric deterioration
 - Health and safety issues which are difficult to predict
 - Reputational risk

Proposals

12. In order to help address resourcing constraints, non-conservation responsibilities have been identified, such as monitoring of the City-wide National Lottery Bids and delivering the Lord Mayor's and semi-state coaches for the annual show. The former will now be undertaken centrally and options for the delivery of the latter are currently under review.
13. A key area of improvement is efficiency in procurement of works. In order to inform this the service is developing a new database and information infrastructure which will support with identifying across the 122 overarching twenty-year forward maintenance plans (some plans contain several heritage assets) and CMP's, works that can be bundled for procurement, thus releasing officer time from fragmented activity.
14. A new database also provides the opportunity to rationalise, update and ensure an accurate understanding of the entire portfolio. It will also enable sharing of information across City departments so services can make decisions locally for minor matters, thus releasing heritage officers' time while also addressing the issue of expertise being held by the few, which presents its own risks.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

15. Heritage assets are included in the annual CWP bid process, competing against the rest of the Corporate Properties, except for housing. Most bids for heritage assets are successful, those not successful are usually deferred at the most for a year. Lack of appropriate maintenance would permit decay and increase repair costs. Failure to invest in these assets may also contribute to the eventual loss of these irreplaceable historic assets while posing reputational risk to the City as well as health and safety risks.
16. It should be noted that Heritage assets are currently covered in the City Surveyor's Corporate Property Asset Management Strategy to 'To remove and prevent further assets from the Heritage at Risk Register wherever possible provided only that it is cost effective to do so'.

Conclusion

17. The City's Heritage portfolio is of national significance and the most extensive in terms of the heritage timeline and diversity when compared to other national heritage organisation contemporaries. It is synonymous with the City's history.
18. Given the extent of the portfolio, it is not possible to have at any one time a full understanding of the condition of every asset. Within the available resources the primary assets with the greatest reputational risk are maintained to a fair

standard. However, some assets will face increased risks with climate change which may result in it becoming more challenging to predict potential health and safety issues.

19. There are still eight properties on the Heritage At Risk Register, some of which are scheduled to be removed as and when finance is made available for repair and conservation works. This number is very low, when you consider the City owns and manages 780 heritage assets.
20. Embedding a better understanding of the heritage portfolio across the City is important to ensure it continues to be appropriately maintained as well as supporting continuity of knowledge.
21. While service improvements may free up officer time, the resource is constrained to focusing on the prevalent health and safety/reputational priorities and is less able to provide a proactive asset management for the wider portfolio without more investment.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Breakdown of the City's historic Assets