

Committee(s)	Dated:
Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee Streets and Walkways Sub Committee	23 November 2020 1 December 2020
Subject: Special Events on the Highway	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2,3, 7,10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Director of Built Environment	For Decision
Report author: Ian Hughes, Deputy Director, Transportation & Public Realm	

Summary

This report outlines the major special events planned for 2021 and provides Members the opportunity to consider & comment on the appropriateness of those events, taking into account their nature, scale, impact and benefits. It also provides an update on COVID 19 and the impact the pandemic has had on events in 2020 and its likely effect going forward into 2021.

The number of regular sporting, ceremonial or celebratory events that take place on the City's streets is usually around 15. These core events typically generate a range of charitable, reputational & promotional benefits to the City and delivered with minimum disruption.

However, in 2020 all but one event was cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic. Whilst it is anticipated that a similar number of events that took place in 2019 may also take place in 2021, some events have been rescheduled for later in the year as organisers attempt to secure a higher degree of certainty in their planning as they anticipate a greater easing of COVID 19 restrictions in the summer and autumn.

The report also outlines one-off events that are planned to support the City's Cultural and Visitor agenda, the Transport Strategy and / or the aims & objectives of key City partner organisations and community groups. These events were similarly affected by COVID 19 in 2020, but planning for potential events next year is underway.

Recommendation(s)

Members are recommended to:

- Agree to support the proposed events outlined in this report subject to the appropriate constraints and guidance related to COVID 19.

Main Report

Background

1. On-street events in the City typically provide a combination of social, financial or community benefit, balanced against the City Corporation's need to ensure the impact on residents, businesses and traffic is minimised. Considerable planning takes place well in advance of each event to minimise their impact and to co-ordinate them into the wider programme of works taking place on the City's streets. Officers from the Department of the Built Environment lead this process with the assistance of a variety of departments, including Town Clerks, Markets & Consumer Protection, Remembrancers and the City Police.
2. The Director of the Built Environment has delegated authority to write traffic orders for roads to be closed for special events, so Member approval for each major event is not required. However, there are established guidelines for officers to follow in determining the suitability of events (including the process for appropriate political oversight), enabling the provision of clear advice for organisers setting out the procedure for consents & approvals.

COVID 19 Impact

3. The COVID 19 pandemic has had a significant impact on events in 2020, with restrictions on mass gatherings resulting in the cancellation or postponement of all but one event. That event was the Virgin Money London Marathon which took place as an elite-only race on 4 October in a bio-secure bubble in St James Park. The London Marathon was the only Abbott World Marathon major to take place, with the New York, Chicago and Boston marathons all cancelled.
4. Regrettably, the Lord Mayor's Show was also cancelled as the increase in public health restrictions meant the event could not be held, even in a scaled back format. This was the first time the Show had been cancelled since 1852 when it would otherwise have clashed with the official period of mourning following the death of the Duke of Wellington.
5. The impact of these cancellations, in particular on the charity sector, has been considerable, with many charitable organisations reportedly losing millions of pounds in fund raising donations. As an example, the cancellation of the 2020 London Landmarks Half Marathon resulted in a loss of around £10m in donations and sunk costs for Tommy's and their 215 charitable partners.
6. Such amounts are unrecoverable as event organisers are unable to insure their events against eventualities like COVID 19, so they are now generally seeking local authority support for more flexible event planning, such as considering back up dates and allowing events to last longer so that participants can be more spread out for social distancing purposes.
7. For events due to take place early in 2021, the most obvious way to mitigate the risk of cancellation is to move their dates back in the year and hope that conditions at that point will more easily permit mass participation events &

spectators. As a result, the first half of 2021 is already relatively light (see Appendix 2), but whether these events can still take place later in 2021 will depend on the Government guidance in place at that time.

8. Since the first lockdown in March 2020, that guidance on elite sporting, mass participation & spectator events has varied considerably. However, it has been clear throughout that the event organiser retains the principal legal duty for ensuring public safety and for those participating in the event.
9. Event organisers have been required to liaise with local authorities as soon as possible to discuss their plans for outdoor events and how they can be managed safely. In turn, local authorities have had to exercise due diligence in ensuring those safety plans & risk assessments are robust, relevant and fit for purpose, including appropriate provision for specific COVID 19 measures such as hand washing, social distancing protocols and track & trace.
10. Of course, under the current lockdown arrangements, mass participation events have now been ruled out, but once the UK comes out of lockdown, a stepped return towards these guidelines is highly likely. As part of the safety assessment process, event organisers involve the City's Safety Advisory Group, which brings together representatives from the City Corporation, the emergency services, TfL and others to examine an event's safety plan, to provide a forum for discussion and to provide advice on how to deliver a safe and successful event.
11. As many event organisers attempt to plan COVID 19 compliant events in 2021, co-ordination in relation to cross-borough events is essential, particularly with some events looking to change dates. To manage this, the City Corporation is a member of an events coordination forum alongside representatives from Westminster City Council, TfL, the Royal Parks and the GLA, ensuring a consistent approach is taken to considering requests from organisers to change their dates or adapt their event's content.
12. Finally in terms of COVID 19 impact, Members may well be aware that the Mayor of London announced the cancellation of the traditional New Year's Eve fireworks display due to the pandemic back in September. At the time of writing, it is still to be determined whether an alternative way to mark the New Year is thought appropriate.
13. Note: Due to the mass cancellation of events due to COVID 19, no 'benefits in kind' were agreed in relation to events in 2020, so this aspect of the annual report is omitted this year.

Events Programme 2021

Core Events in 2021

14. Despite the effects of COVID 19, planning for events in 2021 is continuing, with some events rescheduled from their usual slot in the event calendar. As it stands overall there are slightly fewer event applications compared to previous years but

it is possible, as confidence grows within the events industry, that this position will change during the course of the year.

15. Typically, the major on-street events fall into three distinct categories, details of which can be found in Appendix 1: -

Sporting

- Winter Run
- London Landmarks Half Marathon (Tommy's)
- Adidas City Run
- Asics 10k (formally the British 10k)
- Prudential RideLondon
- London Marathon
- Vitality 10k Race
- Great City Race
- London Triathlon
- Bloomberg Square Mile Run
- Royal Parks Half Marathon

Ceremonial

- Cart Marking
- Lord Mayor's Show

Celebratory

- New Year's Eve

16. This core group are organised by experienced and professional event management companies with well-established routes, detailed communications plans and effective working relationships built up over time with the City Corporation, Transport for London and Westminster City Council.

17. Event organisers are aware that they do not have permanent agreement to hold their events on City streets, but permissions are typically granted on three-year cycles to allow event managers to plan ahead for publicity and commercial reasons. As can be seen in Appendix 3, these events are typically considered 'Green', delivering a positive balance between the benefits they bring versus the impact they cause.

18. In terms of the core events for 2021, as noted earlier, a number of events originally planned to take place in the first half of 2021 have been moved back in the calendar or postponed until 2022. These include:

- London Landmarks Half Marathon – new date 23 May 2021 (previously March)
- Adidas City Run – new date 18 July 2021 (previously April)
- Winter Run – new date 5 September 2021 (previously February)

- London Marathon – new date 3 October 2021 (previously April)
- Prudential RideLondon – postponed to 2022

Tokyo Summer Olympics & Paralympics 2021

19. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) remains committed to holding the Tokyo Summer Olympics & Paralympics next year following its postponement in 2020. The IOC are considering how this global event can still be staged safely, but London is currently expected to host the European 10,000m Cup as part of the Olympic trials on 5 June. For the Games themselves, the opening ceremony is due to take place on 23 July, with the Olympic Games lasting from 23 July to 8 August and the Paralympics from 24 August to 5 September.

Transport Strategy & Air Quality Events

20. As with the major events, the City's own on-street event activities were largely cancelled in 2020 due to COVID 19, but subject to conditions being appropriate, planning is underway for some events to return in 2021.
21. In terms of activities linked to the City's Transport Strategy objectives, the most significant addition to the 2019 calendar was Car Free Day which was delivered in conjunction with the GLA and TfL. The event sought to promote air quality and celebrate walking & cycling. Whilst not yet confirmed, it is likely the event will return in September 2021 but a final decision on the nature & scale of the event is likely to depend on funding as well as COVID 19 guidelines.
22. The smaller scale Lunchtime Streets initiative also proved popular last year, with St Mary Axe and Chancery Lane closed to provide a traffic free environment and to help promote air quality and road safety improvements. Deliveries to adjacent premises were successfully retimed to enable the event to take place, and although the 2021 programme is currently being scoped, the aim is to deliver at a number of Lunchtime Streets in the City.

Cultural & Community Events

23. The City's aspiration to draw its cultural offer out onto the streets of the Square Mile means that its public streets and spaces are likely to be utilised to host a series of cultural activities in 2021. Officers will seek a balance between cultural benefit and the need to minimise the impact to traffic and the local community, as well as ensuring events can be delivered in a COVID 19 secure format depending on restrictions at the time. At the time of writing, the cultural programme for 2021 is still in development, subject to funding and government guidelines, however activities are likely to include:

Mela in the City (April, Middlesex and Mansell St Housing Estate – Date TBC)

24. Celebrating the Bengali New Year, Mela will bring to life the rich cultural diversity of the Aldgate area and showcase local, national and international Bengali arts, music and culture. Due to the current circumstances, cultural officers are exploring the possibility of delivering Mela in the City in the heart of the residential

community in the housing estates in Aldgate (subject to permissions). This would bring the event to the community's doorsteps and to allow social distancing measures to be implemented in a controlled area.

Circus City, Upswing (May, Aldgate Square)

25. Upswing was awarded an Inspiring London Through Culture Grant to deliver a day of circus performances and workshops for young people and families. This event was postponed this year due to COVID 19 restrictions and is being reconsidered for May half term 2021.

Inside Out, JR Photography, Co-commission with the GLA for Euro 2020 (13 June or 4 July, Tower Bridge)

26. The UEFA European Football Championship is now scheduled to take place from 11 June to 11 July 2021 at various venues across Europe including Wembley Stadium. To coincide with this, a global participatory art project initiated by the French photographer JD is planned to take place on Tower Bridge.

27. The event will involve the installation of large-scale portraits of Londoners pasted on to Tower Bridge to transform the roadway into a live canvas. Participants will be invited to submit photos of themselves in advance online and in person on the day using JR's mobile photography truck. City Corporation cultural officers and the GLA are working closely with the City Highways team, Tower Bridge and TfL on traffic management & safety plans for the event.

Nocturnal Creatures (July Aldgate Square)

28. Following the postponement of the 2020 commission by Whitechapel Gallery, the Cultural and Visitor Development team will revisit the concept for an outdoor installation and animation of Aldgate Square, working in partnership with Sculpture in the City.

29. Nocturnal Creatures is the Whitechapel Gallery's annual free late-night contemporary art festival. Four night-time public spaces in the eastern end of the City are animated by a programme of artistic installations. For the past two years, Sculpture in the City has been a programme partner, collaborating with featured artists on performances and tours for the night. Although it is currently envisaged that Nocturnal Creatures could take place in Summer 2021, this event is not yet confirmed and will be subject to funding arrangements and health & safety guidelines at the time.

Black Victorians, Greenwich + Docklands International Festival Co-commission (late August to mid-September, locations tbc)

30. Black Victorians is a dance performance inspired by nineteenth century studio photographs of black men, women and children exploring a complex, but often forgotten lack presence in pre-Windrush Britain. The proposal is to create a mini tour of a variety of City locations over a 4 to 5 day period, performing to

multiple small-scale, socially distanced audiences in restricted access areas. Dates and locations to be confirmed subject to permissions.

Outdoor Exhibitions (year-round, Guildhall Yard and Aldgate Square)

31. Several outdoor exhibitions will be presented in the City including Ensemble by London Games Festival portraying diverse creatives in the world of gaming, London's footballing history by the LMA to celebrate the rescheduled Euro 2020 tournament and Sculpture in the City retrospective celebrating 10 years of the urban sculpture trail.

Sculpture in the City

32. Sculpture in the City is an annual urban sculpture park delivered by the City of London in partnership with local businesses, which showcases sculpture by both emerging and internationally acclaimed artists. The project's 10th edition is currently planned to launch in late May 2021, comprising up to 20 artworks in the public spaces of the City Cluster area. A public exhibition is expected in Summer 2021 in both Aldgate Square and Guildhall Yard to celebrate 10 years of the project.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

33. The events outlined in this report aligns with a number of corporate strategies including:

- Provide inclusive access to facilities for physical activity and recreation
- Cultivate excellence in sport and creative & performing arts
- Preserve and promote the City as the world-leading global centre for culture
- Protect, curate and promote world-class heritage assets, cultural experiences and events

34. In addition, enabling events to take place on the City's streets (when safe to do so) will drive visitors to, and animate, the City in a safe and managed way as part of long-term recovery plans.

Conclusion

35. This report summarises the impact COVID 19 has had on events in 2020, and the continuing impact on event planning going forward. Although plans are underway to safely deliver an effective event programme in 2021, uncertainty remains around the nature of Government guidelines that may be in place at that time, putting continuing risk on the ability of those events to be safely delivered.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Event Programme for 2021
- Appendix 2 – Core Event Timeline for 2021
- Appendix 3 – Summary Event Assessment Process

Ian Hughes
Deputy Director (Transportation & Public Realm)
Department of the Built Environment

T: 020 7332 1977

E: ian.hughes@cityoflondon.gov.uk