

Committee(s): Policy and Resources – For Decision Open Spaces & City Gardens – For Information	Date(s): 8 th July 2021 13 th July 2021
Subject: Establishment of London Location Library to Promote Filming	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	7, 9, 10 and 12
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?	No
Report of: Bob Roberts - Director of Communications	For Decision
Report author: Joanna Burnaby-Atkins, Film Liaison Manager: Town Clerks Department	

Summary

The role of the City of London Corporation Film Team includes promoting the City Corporation's assets, together with City sites more generally, as feature film locations. This is with the intention of generating income and promoting the Square Mile as a vibrant and thriving destination.

Following a decision by the Policy & Resources Committee in July 2019, work has been underway to appoint a film location agency which would be responsible for the marketing of 27 of the City of London Corporation's buildings and open spaces. This approach was envisaged to generate greater income and visibility for the sites in question.

However, an alternative proposal has recently emerged, concerning the establishment of a pan-London Location Library, which offers a significantly cheaper and potentially more effective way of promoting all our assets. The Library would see the City's filming location sites pooled with those of several central London boroughs by a filming service provider, utilising a visual search engine to display the said assets to film makers without the need for a specialist agency.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to approve the City Corporation joining the pan-London Location Library for the purposes of marketing its assets for filming purposes.

Main Report

Background

1. The UK film industry is booming and has been growing steadily over the last two decades. Inward investment films generated approximately £1.25bn in 2017, the highest figure since records began. The City of London Film Team was created in 1998 with the aim of providing a one-stop-shop to assist film makers to film in the City of London and on City of London Corporation land and properties.
2. It has been a long-term aspiration of the Film Team to increase the use of our assets as locations for feature films in order to increase income into our departments, to promote our sites as tourist destinations and to raise the profile of the services provided by the City Corporation.
3. In July 2019, your Committee considered and approved a report proposing the registration of some 27 sites with a film location agency, to assist with the marketing of these locations for filming purposes with a view to increased income generation. This proposal had an estimated average cost of between £145 - £194k p.a. The cost would have hoped to have been covered by an increase in the current level of income.

Current Position and Proposal

4. However, a separate proposal has recently emerged which proposes the establishment of a new-pan London Location Library. The proposal has been put to several London boroughs, as well as the City Corporation, by a filming service provider and would utilise a visual search engine to display sites and assets of London boroughs to film makers without the need for a specialist agency.
5. This London Location Library is due to launch later this year and, at an estimated cost of £2,500 p.a., its price is a fraction of the cost of engaging a film location agency.
6. Film demand and therefore demand for locations will continue to be high in the coming years, with Film London forecasting income from film and high-end television production in the UK will rise from £3.04 billion in 2019 to £6bn by 2024/5.
7. Therefore, it is believed that it is possible to utilise the Library proposal to generate significant extra revenue for the City's film location sites without the use of a specialist location agency and associated expenditure.
8. Extra revenue from location fees resulting from increased demand will go direct to the locations featured in the library raising welcome additional revenue to departments facing impending budget constraints. Those sites will be able to employ extra staff if they wish to meet demand.
9. Costs of the Film Team are drawn back from departments and institutions we help with filming. This will continue under the proposed new arrangements.

10. The London Location Library is a pan-London initiative which will enable the City Corporation to not only promote its own sites but to also collaborate with other central London boroughs to promote London as a whole to a global audience aiding its recovery from the impacts of COVID and promoting tourism.
11. Over the past difficult year the Film Team has also been approached by several private City buildings asking for our support to market their sites as filming locations. The London Location Library would allow these private sites to market their locations on our platform, enabling us to support our City businesses and residents and potentially allowing us to share the cost of the London Location Library with these sites.
12. It is, therefore, proposed we join the London Location Library to market our sites instead of procuring a filming agency.

Strategic implications

13. By marketing our sites on the pan-London Location Library, this supports the Corporate Plan showing we are digitally and physically well connected, we inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration. By engaging directly with the filming industry to market our sites and manage our filming we ensure our spaces are kept secure and resilient. The proposed strategy would be informed by and fully support the Filming Protocol Strategic Guidelines.

Financial implications

14. The cost to sign up to the London Location Library is estimated at a fixed cost of £2,500 per annum for the first five years. This would initially be funded from local risk and then be recovered pro rata from departments who make money from filming each year.

Resource implications

15. None

Legal implications

16. None

Risk implications

17. There is the possibility that, in some departments, the initial increase in demand for sites as filming locations might not be able to be met due to lack of sufficient staffing resource to accommodate the requests. This could in turn prevent income increasing at these sites. However as income will be retained by departments it is envisaged that they will have the flexibility to assess demand over time and allocate resources to support this income generating activity as and when they determine appropriate.

Equalities implications

18. None

Climate implications

19. None

Security implications

20. None

Conclusion

21. Members are asked to approve the recommendation that we market our sites through the London Location Library instead of procuring a filming location agency.

Appendices

22. None

Background Papers

- Report to P&R on 4th July 2019: New policy for commercial filming at City of London Corporation's buildings and open spaces

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