

Committee(s)	Dated:
Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee	13 December 2021
Subject: Promoting Outdoor Arts in the City: resident engagement opportunities	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 3 and 4
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: Damian Nussbaum, Director of Innovation and Growth	For information
Report author: Nick Bodger, Cultural and Visitor Development Director	

Summary

At your Committee's July meeting, Members expressed concerns about how the City's outdoor events programme is promoted to residents. Officers were asked to respond to these concerns, identifying the channels through which they currently communicate with residents about events, and to explore new opportunities to strengthen engagement.

This report summarises the findings of this exercise while identifying that digital channels replaced printed collateral over the pandemic (disabling, for example, door drops which would ordinarily target residents). This was because of the uncertainty about whether events could go ahead (due to changing legislation) and the ability to swiftly edit digital communications to reflect any change.

. Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. At your Committee's July meeting, Members expressed concerns about how the City's outdoor events programme is promoted to residents with a number of City-resident Members noting that they had received no notification of events described within the meeting.
2. Officers were asked to respond to these concerns, identifying the channels through which they currently promote to residential communities and identifying new opportunities, with Members citing Ward and estate newsletters, on-street advertising and the electoral roll as potential avenues for exploration.
3. In addition, the report identifies that the usual and most effective channels for communicating with residents were suspended during lockdown (eg leaflet drops through doors) likely resulting in the specific events identified in your July meeting as not having been communicated being the result of a "moment in time" when digital communications replaced traditional means of promotion.

Current position

4. The pandemic created an uncertain climate to plan and communicate events. In 2020, no significant outdoor events were programmed due to lockdown and the ban on congregational activity.
5. In 2021, marketing was centred around digital channels to accommodate unforeseen and last-minute changes to events, including possible cancellation as new rules were introduced (or old ones repealed). Because of this – and the shorter lead times necessitated by dynamic and rapidly changing advice from Government with regards congregational activity – no brochure was produced for the Outdoor Arts Programme (OAP). This ordinarily lists all events within the annual season being promoted and was the primary tool for engaging residents.
6. While 'going digital' minimised the risk of wasting resource and of miscommunication, using resident-targeted distribution channels (such as brochure door-drops and leaflet runs, as described in the list below) – was therefore not possible.
7. That said – historically – the OAP team has delivered a multifaceted communication strategy to inform City residents (and other City communities) about its programmes. This includes the following channels:
 - a. **Door drops:** pre-Covid, the Outdoor Arts Programme (OAP) produced a brochure of all events within its annual season of activities; these were door-dropped – at cost – to the City's estates (and sometimes to City Corporation estates beyond the City, dependent on available budget). In addition, dedicated leaflets for major one-off events were produced and distributed in this way.

- b. **Department for Children's and Community Services (DCCS):** communications officers within this department have – historically – been sent event information for inclusion in relevant (digital) mailings to residents. This includes event collateral being distributed by the department to networks within the **Aldgate and Middlesex Street communities** as well as through those networks developed by the OAP team in their delivery of community events within Aldgate Square. Clear evidence of the success of this engagement is the *Mela in the City* event in September this year which saw an audience of 1,228 from across the local community.
- c. **City Resident and Barbican residents' newsletter:** as above, the OAP has sent event information to these publications over time with inclusion subject to the editor's discretion. With *City Resident*, long lead times can sometimes preclude the inclusion of events that are awaiting full sign off (and hence cannot be advertised).
- d. **Visit the City:** this opt-in digital newsletter is open to all to sign-up and includes all events in the OAP, with printed and digital communications delivered by the wider team (for whatever purpose) including a prompt to sign up to receive it. The newsletter enjoyed significant traction across all audience groups over lockdown, including residents.
- e. **City of London libraries and City Information Centre:** historically, events brochures and flyers were distributed to the City's lending libraries, the City information Centre and all City attractions for display in racks. At the Centre, events are promoted on the outward facing screens.
- f. **London Calling:** similarly, historically, printed brochures and flyers containing events information were distributed through London Calling to City and local hotels, bars and other venues where communities congregate. These runs are costly and so depend on available marketing spend.
- g. **Contacts in neighbouring local authorities:** over lockdown, relationships with neighbouring boroughs were forged to drive residential traffic in, through and from the City using City Guides to lead walks from designated points in each of the seven Boroughs. These contacts have, since then, been sent pertinent events information on a regular basis for distribution to their residents.
- h. **One City, City of London Eshot and other digital newsletters:** all are targeted with events information that is delivered to a wide readership, predominantly made up of workers but which also includes residents. Inclusion is at the editor's discretion.
- i. **On-the-day leafleting:** the OAP employs casuals (and sometimes distribution firms such as London Calling) to distribute leaflets on-street on the day of, and – for major events – in the run up to, event activity. Indeed, pre-Covid, this was proven to be successful for the – now

suspended – Yard markets (which are not viable until greater footfall returns to the City).

8. The list above is not exhaustive. Residents may also learn of activities through City and partner social media channels and through partner-led websites.
9. Following your July meeting and the concerns raised by Members with regards resident communications about events, OAP officers engaged with departments and external stakeholders to identify what other marketing channels may be available in addition to the above and followed up on the suggestions made by Members at the meeting.
10. Specifically, two pertinent channels have been identified and OAP officers are now seeking to embed these within marketing processes.
 - j. **Golden Lane Estates website:** an independent channel run by Golden Lane Estate residents.
 - k. **Resident WhatsApp Groups:** officers were informed of WhatsApp groups managed by residents. These are used to share community updates. The 'group admins' (those running the groups) are currently being identified.
11. It should be noted that, although officers may send material to these channels as well as a number of those highlighted in item 7, inclusion is not automatic and will be at the discretion of the editor.
12. In addition to the above, Members asked that the following options be explored. This work has been done with the findings reported against each option.
 - a. **Electoral Register / Ward Lists:** Members suggested connecting with residents and promoting events through the Electoral Register and/or their Ward Lists. Potential use of these lists has been considered and it has been established that unfortunately the Register may only legally be used for specific electoral purposes. Attention is drawn to the relevant paragraphs in Appendices 1 and 2.
 - b. **Ward Noticeboards:** the use of Ward noticeboards was explored and considered not to be an effective or appropriate channel of communication for events when weighing resource to deliver content against potential effectiveness; however:
 - c. **On-street advertising:** Members requested that officers explore whether on-street advertising would be possible for the promotion of events. In this, the Comptroller has advised that "there is deemed advertisement consent for announcements for local events". Members are referred to the second item of Appendix 3 for a description and restrictions, noting the advertising would likely not require express consent and would be within planning controls as long as it was within the descriptions and restrictions set out. Funds to rent or furnish sites

with display facilities and to produce collateral would need to be identified to enable use.

- d. **Ward newsletters:** are sent up to three times a year. Not all Wards send them. Officers have been advised that they may include event listings for major events, but that inclusion cannot be guaranteed if there are other major corporate initiatives that take precedence.

Proposals

13. Printed collateral for outdoor arts activities was paused over the pandemic for the reasons discussed above. It is proposed that this be reintroduced as the City emerges from the pandemic to surer times when events may be planned well in advance and are not subject to changing restrictions and guidance. This will enable the previously successful methods of resident communications listed in item 7 to be re-established.
14. At your Committee today, Members will consider a Strategic Destination Review, compiled by independent consultants following extensive consultation, not least with residents through a series of resident meeting opportunities. The Review, if approved, will inform the TOM proposals of the wider Cultural and Visitor Services (CVS) team and provides the opportunity, at the right time, to embed stronger communications with residents about local events.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

- o **Strategic implications** include alignment with the [Corporate Plan](#) at outcomes 2 and 3 in that the proposals:
 - o Signpost activities and services to residents
 - o Support access to culture to people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds

The proposals also support the City's new Strategic Destination Review, driving recovery, should this be approved at your Committee today.

- o **Financial implications:** the promotion of the City's outdoor arts programmes and related events is funded by CVS local and central risk budgets. Advertising to residents and other groups must be managed within the funds available.
- o **Resource implications** include the provision of staffing and resourcing under the CVS's TOM to target and engage with residents, as informed by the Strategic Destination Review (subject to your Committee's approval today)
- o **Legal implications:** current guidance advises that any personal data as held on the Electoral Register should be used for strictly electoral purposes. Further UK GDPR guidance for Members is in Appendix 2. Actions contrary to this may result in legal action, and/or a breach of personal data.
- o **Risk implications:** none identified

- o **Equalities implications:** the CVS strives to ensure that all residents are informed about City cultural events. The re-introduction of printed collateral will support this ambition, noting some residents may not have access to the internet.
- o **Climate implications:** in line with Climate Action aims and principles, the CVS strives to minimise the carbon footprint of its services. All actions are intended to embed sustainability and minimise waste. As part of this, due consideration will be given to printed collateral and only requisite numbers of brochures and flyers will be produced using sustainable printing methods, paper sourcing and recycling.

Conclusion

15. The CVS and its Outdoor arts programme are committed to ensuring that all City residents have the opportunity to learn about and enjoy cultural events.
16. A hiatus in engagement with residents about events is likely the cause of the concerns raised by Members at your July Committee. It is thought that this was a “moment in time”, resulting from the suspension of printed collateral promoting the events programme (and thus the channels through which this may be distributed) brought about by the uncertainty of whether events could go ahead and late lead times.
17. Residents are a core target group of the new Strategic Destination Review presented to your Committee today for approval, a move that underlines their importance in the City’s ecology of communities and one that will underpin strong communications in the future.

Appendices:

- **Appendix 1:** Restrictions on the use of the full register - The Electoral Commission
- **Appendix 2:** UK GDPR guidance for Members
- **Appendix 3:** Event Related Branding Schedule

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