

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LIBRARIES COMMITTEE

Monday, 20 November 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee held at Committee Room 3 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 20 November 2023 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Munsur Ali (Chairman)	Eamonn Mullally
John Griffiths (Deputy Chairman)	Anett Rideg
John Foley	David Sales
Wendy Hyde	Ian Seaton
Antony Manchester	Dawn Wright
Alderman and Sheriff Broniek Masojada	Irem Yerdelen
Wendy Mead	Deputy Elizabeth King

In Attendance

Officers:

Elizabeth Scott	- Head of Guildhall Art Gallery
Steven Chandler	- City Surveyor's Department
Rob Shakespeare	- Environment
Jayne Moore	- Town Clerk's Department
Emma Markiewicz	- London Metropolitan Archives
Rachel Levy	- Community and Children's Services
Luciana Magliocco	- Innovation & Growth
Rob McNicol	- Environment
Simi Shah	- Innovation & Growth
Simon Glynn	- Environment
Andrew Buckingham	- Communications & External affairs
Kate Poulter	- Innovation & Growth
Omkar Chana	- Innovation & Growth

Also in attendance:

Ann Holmes	- Chief Commoner
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1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Frances Leach, Deborah Oliver, Jaspreet Hodgson Mark Wheatley and Alethea Silk.

The following Members observed the meeting online: James St John Davis, Caroline Haines, Jaspreet Hodgson, Alderman Jeanette Newman and Alpa Raja.

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations were made.

3. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR**

Being the only Member to express an interest, John Griffiths was duly elected Deputy Chair in accordance with standing order number 30 (following the resignation of John Foley from the position).

The Committee congratulated John Griffiths on his election, and thanked John Foley for his time and dedication.

4. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, That the public minutes of the meeting of 18 September 2023 be approved as an accurate record of the proceedings with one amendment: that Jaspreet Hodgson be listed as having observed the meeting.

5. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Committee received the report of the Clerk.

On action point 6: No paper by the former Head of Profession was circulated. A Member commented that a strategic vision outlined by the former Head of Profession appeared to feature among literature produced by the City Property Association that is publicised beyond the City boundaries (see action point 8).

6. **DRAFT MINUTES OF KEATS HOUSE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

The Committee received the minutes of the Committee meeting of 13 October 2023.

Members heard that a site visit is expected to be arranged during December 2023 with a view to submitting a report on the options available to the Committee's January 2024 meeting.

7. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee received the report of the Clerk.

Members noted that the Paul Martin review on Destination City would not be ready in time for the Committee's meeting of 29 January 2024 given the extended consultancy period, and that a further special meeting could be arranged to accommodate the timetable of the review.

8. **MID-YEAR UPDATE ON THE MONUMENT: APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2023**

The Committee noted the report of the Interim Executive Director of Environment.

Referencing paragraph 7 (days of opening), a Member asked for clarification on the process involved in deciding whether the Monument was open on certain days (taking into account the priority given to Tower Bridge as per paragraph 9 of the report) and asked how that information was communicated. The meeting heard that closures could be at short notice due to the small number of staff associated with the Monument, and that opening information was uploaded onto the website and on social media – noting also that further details on workforce resilience was expected to be submitted to the January meeting of the Committee.

Noting the historical significance of the Monument and its importance to London's history, Members asked whether any plans existed to develop the offering and whether the Monument offering could be used to entice more Tower Bridge visitors into the City. The meeting heard that the cultural partners network established within the Destination City governance framework was to be used to map out a calendar taking into account each venue's programme in such a way as to encourage footfall to other venues in the City as part of an umbrella package that could be promoted. Members also heard that a longer-term vision is being developed that is expected to be communicated to the Committee during 2024.

A Member asked whether lunchtime closures were a result of staff shortages and whether lunchtime opening would result in more visitors. The meeting heard that, like Keats House (which also closes at lunchtime) the Monument is a small attraction and that there appears to be little to no impact on visitor numbers provided the opening times are easily available – and that lunchtime opening would be resource-intensive.

In response to further clarification on short-notice closures and how that was communicated (and its impact on pre-booked tickets and school visits, for example) the meeting heard that Monument opening was prioritised when a school visit has been booked.

Noting the drop in visitor numbers during particular months, the meeting heard that visitor information was based on a single year's data and that data across a further year would yield more meaningful figures.

9. MID-YEAR UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES AT KEATS HOUSE: APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2023

The Committee received the report of the Interim Executive Director Environment and noted the activities at Keats House from April – September 2023.

10. KEATS HOUSE RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received the report of the Interim Executive Director Environment setting out the risk management procedures in place within the Environment Department and its Natural Environment Division (that includes Keats House), noting the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011 within the context of the Committee's responsibility for the Keats House Charity (registered charity number: 1053381).

RESOLVED, That (on behalf of the City Corporation as Trustee) Members agree that the register appended to the report satisfactorily sets out the key risks to the Keats House Charity (registered charity number: 1053381) and that appropriate systems are in place to identify and mitigate risks, in line with the requirements of the Charity Commission in accordance with the Charity Commission's Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).

11. DESTINATION CITY - BARTHOLOMEW FAIR EVENT EVALUATION

The Committee received the report of the Executive Director, Innovation and Growth, and noted the evaluation report for Bartholomew Fair measuring the impact of the event across each event Key Performance Indicator (KPI), as approved by the Committee on 20 April 2023.

The Committee congratulated the Bartholomew Fair team on delivering a successful event at short notice.

The Committee noted the learnings of the event including location choice, timeframe and event types, noting also the large amounts of data available to inform those learnings. A Member commented that the 900th anniversary element of the original Fair (focussing on the Church and the Hospital) appeared to have been less prominent than might have been expected, noting also the success of the Cloth Fair event. It was noted that the event was the first of its kind and was therefore less likely to generate TV coverage than might an established event such as the Lord Mayor's Show - noting also that there was TV interest in St Paul's-related events. The meeting heard that a partnership had been established with Greenwich+Docklands International Festival (GDIF) which had presented its own publicity challenges. The meeting also heard that publicity had been rolled out across 23 tube stations as well as on buses and on poster sites and cultural attractions.

A Member asked whether the annual Bartholomew Fair was the best way to generate footfall and whether the event generated value for money. The meeting heard that independently provided data indicated that the event generated £1.8M revenue, and that a range of options were being considered on the merits or otherwise of running a further event of that kind to include an analysis of spend, footfall and revenue.

Noting earlier commitments to generating additional funding to cover future events, the Committee heard that the intention is for funding of large-scale events to come from external partners in future, and that such funding would be required for future iterations of Bartholomew Fair, in response to a question on whether the Bartholomew Fair event would be held again. Members noted the need for certainty on the matter given the need to form partnerships, generate interest and properly publicise the event.

A Member noted that BIDs already had significant plans for the Christmas season and that there was merit in working with the BIDs to deliver seasonal events – noting, in response to a Member question, that the overspend on Bartholomew Fair would result in a lighter-touch Christmas programme on the part of the City of London Corporation. The meeting heard that the BIDs were separate to the Corporation and that any relationship with BIDs was based on goodwill, though I&G have been working closely with the BIDs. The Committee noted that there is currently no formal understanding between the City of London and its BIDs, despite the urgent need for such an understanding.

Members commented that there was room for improvement in City of London Corporation communications plan.

Referencing the overspend set out in paragraphs 12 and 13, a Member commented on an apparently excessive security presence at some events. The meeting heard that DC had agreed security levels with the City's security team, and additional counter-terrorism measures (that were partly responsible for the overspend) were introduced following direct recommendations from the City of London Police shortly before the event.

A Member asked for clarification on the budget allocated for cleaning, and whether additional public toilets were provided. The meeting heard that cleansing costs came directly from the event budget. Additional bins and waste collection services were provided at a cost of £6.2K. Additional toilet facilities were managed through local business partnerships, and portable toilets were provided by the City of London where necessary.

12. **CULTURAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

The Committee noted the report of the Executive Director, Innovation & Growth, and the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

The Committee noted that the Cultural Planning Framework (CPF) is a tool being developed as a cross-departmental project to enable the City Corporation to use its planning system to better orchestrate how culture is delivered across the Square Mile by developers of major schemes, creating an evidence base and set of recommendations to underpin the production of new planning guidance for culture that can be introduced to complement the City Plan 2040, and which has the potential to contribute data and content towards any future cultural strategy that the City Corporation may produce in the future. Members commented on the urgency of establishing a clear vision and strategy to utilise those tools, noting that paragraph 9 states that the CPF “is not of itself a cultural strategy”.

Members commented on the importance of encompassing a sports and learning provision into the CPF and overarching strategy.

In response to a question on the nature of the Committee’s involvement in the development of the CPF (and a request for ongoing transparency), the meeting heard that a more advanced CPF would be brought to the Committee (and other Committees) to help shape the CPF that will later be brought to wider public consultation, noting also that the Committee would be kept updated on the consultancy process.

A Member sought clarification that the cultural element of the CPF would be properly embedded within the Planning remit. The meeting noted that the planning system could not be utilised to secure a specific end-user operator for any cultural offering as such a move would generate legal obligations on a land developer, but that spaces would be secured for cultural offerings. Members heard that developers were being encouraged to give input at an early stage on potential occupiers of cultural spaces.

On paragraph 8 of the report, a Member commented that the Committee had not been consulted on the appointment of Publica Associates Ltd and TJ Culture Ltd. The meeting noted that future relevant commissions would be signalled to the Committee.

Members noted that the first line of paragraph 13 should read “spring 2024” not “spring 2023”.

13. **DESTINATION CITY REVIEW**

The Committee received the report of Executive Director Innovation & Growth ‘Destination City Review 2023-24’ circulated on Friday 17 November 2023 that

set out the background, terms of reference and timetable for the Destination City Review.

The following points were made by Members:

- There is no obvious reference to direct comprehensive resident engagement and voluntary groups
- Local entities such as the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Barbican Centre did not appear to have been involved
- The role of Chief Commoner should be explicitly included in senior leadership involvement to ensure governance issues are managed upstream in a cross-cutting manner via a dedicated governance entity
- The annual Lord Mayor's show should be explicitly referenced, particularly around seating provision
- Further information on the budget for the Review and the appointment process of Paul Martin, would be welcome
- The Destination City brand is powerful and has a lot of potential

The Committee noted that the Resident Envoy position was designed to engage residents, some commenting that the Resident Envoy position was still ambiguous and that more comprehensive resident engagement would be beneficial as part of the Destination City strategy, including around St Bartholomew's Hospital. The meeting noted that the engagement strategy would run to late January 2024 so that more time could be dedicated to resident engagement to include online tools, among them a Member survey (see action point 9).

A Member commented on an apparent lack of clarity on leadership and ownership, as well as aims and objectives, and asked that clear measurable objectives be set out. The meeting heard that the Destination City Review would encompass consideration of leadership and ownership, noting the Corporation's ending about five years ago of a cross-cutting cultural policy leadership and oversight role at senior officer level that encompassed other City focus areas (including Environment, Planning and Finance) as well as libraries and other cultural activities. A number of Members commented that a senior-level cultural policy and vision officer role would be welcome, commenting also on the need for the Destination City review outcomes to result in a transformational programme over and above the aim of generating footfall.

The meeting noted that the appointment of Paul Martin was made by the Town Clerk & Chief Executive (taking into account the background and expertise of Paul Martin) and that the budget information (though not necessarily details of any contract) may not yet be in the public domain.

The Committee endorsed (with no Members expressing dissent) the broad aims, context and timetable of the Destination City review as set out in the paper submitted that included strategies, objectives and Terms of Reference noting also the reservations, comments and concerns expressed above (particularly around consultation, leadership and governance) and noting the need for a transformational programme beyond generating additional footfall,

and for the implementation of a permanent senior officer role in the CoLC in the domain of establishing and co-ordinating a wide-ranging cultural policy and vision.

14. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no other business.

16. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED, that – under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

The meeting ended at 1.15pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Jayne Moore
jayne.moore@cityoflondon.gov.uk