

Committee: Police Authority Board	Date: 3 October 2024
Subject: Report of Action Taken	Non-Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	See background papers
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: Town Clerk	For Information
Report author: Kezia Barrass, Governance & Member Services	

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

This report is exempt by virtue of the paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. All sections of the report contain sensitive information which may be exempted under the Act, and as this cannot be presented to Members as a separate appendix this report needs to be considered in closed session. It is considered that information falling under the following paragraphs outweighs the public interest in disclosing information:

3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person or body (including the authority holding that information).
---	--

Summary:

This report provides details of delegated decisions taken under urgency between Committee meetings.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

PROPOSED RELOCATION OF BANKSY ARTWORK (CITY OF LONDON POLICE SENTRY BOX)

1. In August 2024, the graffiti artist Banksy produced nine new artworks in nine days. On 11 August 2024 an artwork depicting fish underwater spray painted onto the glazing of a City of London Police box on Ludgate Hill was confirmed by the artist Banksy as one of his, the seventh Banksy artwork that had been revealed across London that week. On 12 August the three Grand Committees referenced above agreed to the artwork being moved urgently to Guildhall Yard, where it has been since that date. The piece was moved due to serious concerns for public health and safety, and the Yard was considered an appropriate short-term solution in the circumstances. Since removal to the Guildhall Yard, the artwork has attracted significant interest and attention (around 1500 visitors per weekend).

2. Of the nine new artworks, two were vandalised within days of their installation. Colleagues at the London Museum have examined the piece in situ in relation to the conservation requirements, and perspex panels had been placed over the box to protect it from any attempts at vandalism. Despite these measures, there were wider concerns over attempted theft or vandalism together with any accompanying bad PR should that happen.

3. The Guildhall Security Team had, therefore, currently funded 24-hour security at an additional cost to their usual operations, which was not sustainable long term.

4. The City Corporation Strategic Security Director had advised that it would not be appropriate to leave the artwork without this security provision but agrees that the current position and ongoing costs were unsustainable and that the mitigations in place were not sufficient. Officers therefore believed that a more appropriate short-term solution was found to limit the ongoing costs, whilst ensuring the safety of the artwork whilst maximising on the positive public interest.

Officers therefore identified three viable options for the future display of the artwork.

- 1) The work could be moved as soon as possible to the South Ambulatory for temporary display of up to 6 months (subject to review). This would give time to evaluate the security implications of moving the work to another City location where it can be viewed, and where there is more of a security presence and safe viewing areas for the public well away from traffic. The work could then potentially be managed as part of the Sculpture in the City monthly conservation rota (risks, costs and budget for conservation and maintenance would need to be established and would be subject to a further report to be submitted before February 2025.) **This was the recommended option.**
- 2) The Guildhall Art Gallery could be considered as a temporary home for the work. The Gallery holds one of the world's largest collections of paintings about London and in the Undercroft space there is a permanent display of

some of our London works dating from 1670 through to the present day. This would be the most appropriate space for the work should it be housed at the Gallery, although logistically this was the less preferred option following advice from both the Gallery Director and Remembrancer's representatives, due to the disruption it could cause to the flow of members and the public in the space during certain corporate events. **This was not recommended.**

- 3) The work would be moved as soon as possible by the London Museum which had confirmed it could organise collection and cover the associated costs of removal and storage. The artwork would then be held in the Museum's storage facility and out of public display until such time as it went on display in their new permanent galleries, ideally as part of its outdoor public realm area where it would sit along the collection of street art already managed by the museum and be looked after by specialist curators and conservators. As the London Museum is not due to open until c.2026, this would mean the artwork would be kept out of public view for two+ years. To place the work in storage would deny the City a big opportunity for footfall; there was a definite opportunity to capitalise on the artwork to attract more visitors to the City and also make a statement about how City Corporation values culture. **This was not recommended.**

5. Despite these recommendations, it is notable that the Ambulatory and the Gallery were not considered suitable medium-term homes for the work as importantly, street art of this nature should not be behind glass. Taking the artwork away from public view for a substantial amount of time would deny access to the people of London that it was put there for and could create reputational risk for both the City Corporation. There were moral and ethical reasons the artwork should not be removed from the street. These works were not meant to be housed away in galleries or museums or in storage (even if it is to 'preserve' them), they were there to be fully accessible to all; viewed by passersby as well as those specifically coming to see the work. They were also meant to be in a 'live' environment, to respond to what is happening around them and become part of the fabric of that environment.

6. The first principle should be that the work is displayed outside if at all possible, but the benefits of the artwork being kept outside (for general accessibility purposes) needed to be balanced against the significant security risk to its integrity for the immediate term, to buy time to develop fully risk-assessed and costed proposals.

7. **Strategic implications** – the short-term storage of the artwork would support the City Corporation's commitment to ensure our open spaces and historic sites are thriving, accessible and enrich people's lives.

8. **Financial implications** – as the artwork was relocated to the South Ambulatory at the Guildhall, that there was a small cost associated with moving the artwork. Subject to further advice from conservators at the London Museum, there may also be a

requirement to install a temporary window filter, to protect the piece from sun damage. It was anticipated that both these costs will be considerably less than the ongoing costs per day on security provision under the Aldermen's Court Room.

9. Resource implications – limited staff resource be required to oversee the moving of the artwork – this was less than one day's work (noting how quickly it was relocated from Ludgate Hill). After this, fewer agency security workers would be required going forward. In terms of space, the Remembrancer's Department had been consulted and confirmed the artwork could be housed in the ambulatory without impacting the general through-route for or formal/ceremonial processions (e.g. Common Hall).

10. Legal implications – there were none of which the Corporation were aware.

11. Risk implications – There were risks with leaving the artwork where it is, even with the security measures in place. There was a risk that the artwork could have been damaged whilst being moved. Measures, akin to those adopted when the piece was relocated to the Guildhall, were taken. It was also a much shorter distance, so it was believed this risk is minimal. On advice of both the Destination City team and the Museum, it was not proposed to seek insurance for the artwork unless it stayed in the Guildhall or another outdoor location for the longer term. Priceless artworks of this nature were not generally insured as is standard across museum, gallery and archival collections, however the City Corporation had an existing relationship with Hiscox who insure SITS artworks and could seek guidance on insurance if required. Given the high level of public interest, there was a chance of reputational risk. By way of mitigation, the Destination City team working with the Corporate Communications team had done some great work in telling the story of the initial move to Guildhall Yard for public audiences. It was proposed to continue this approach at each point in the journey of the artwork, ensuring communications at each decision point to the public and to members.

12. Equalities implications – Whilst the artwork was not a service provision per se, it was not considered that these proposals impinge on the City Corporation's Public Sector Equality Duty 2010, so no Impact Assessment was undertaken. The move will somewhat limit visibility to public viewers but there will be no disproportionate impact on those protected by existing equality legislation (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation marriage/civil partnership and pregnancy/maternity).

13. Climate implications – There were none.

14. Security implications – As set out within the report, there were considerable security concerns if no action was taken.

15. Policy and Resources Committee was consulted as the relevant service committee for use of the Guildhall Complex (including the Yard). Culture Heritage and Libraries Committee was consulted given its responsibility for the Guildhall Art Gallery and all the

works of art belonging to the City of London Corporation / and the Guildhall Yard Public Programme and Aldgate Square Public Programme. City of London Police Authority Board was consulted to provide assurance on any implications to City of London Police operations, as the Sentry Box is to be relocated entirely. The Chief Commoner was also consulted given the role's involvement with ceremonial usage of the Guildhall.

16. The nature of Banky's artwork was such that no prior notice of its installation was given. A request for delegated authority on this matter could not, therefore, have been sought before summer recess. Due to ongoing costs, and concerns over security in the Yard, it was not considered advantageous to wait for the three Committees to have met, as this would take a further month.

17. It was proposed that the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen Policy and Resources Committee; Culture Heritage and Libraries Committee; City of London Police Authority Board and the Chief Commoner approved option 1 as set out above on 5 September 2024.

Kezia Barrass

Governance and Member Services