

City of London Corporation Committee Report

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| Committee(s): Culture, Heritage and Libraries | Dated: 10 February 2025 |
| Subject: Update report for The Monument, 2024/25 | Public report: For Decision |
| This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diverse Engaged Communities Vibrant Thriving Destination Flourishing Public Spaces Providing Excellent Services. |
| 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: | Katie Stewart, Executive Director of Environment |
| Report author: | Rob Shakespeare, Head of Heritage & Museums, Natural Environment & Emma Markiewicz, Head of Profession for Culture |

Summary

Your Committee last received a report on achievements at The Monument on 20/05/24 for the period April 2023 – March 2024.

This report outlines achievements at The Monument to the Great Fire of London between April and December 2024, including information on visitor numbers.

It also outlines the proposal to move responsibility for The Monument from the Environment Department (supported by the City Bridge Foundation) to the new

Culture Team under the Head of Profession for Culture and requests approval to delegate authority to them to progress this.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of the report.
- Delegate authority to the Head of Profession for Culture to progress a transition plan for The Monument to move the responsibilities, leadership and workflows from the Environment Department to a new and enlarged team under the Head of Profession for Culture.
- Delegate authority to the Head of Profession for Culture to progress the proposed meanwhile use of The Monument 'Pavilion' building.
- Delegate authority to the Head of Profession for Culture to progress the proposal for a new visitor centre for The Monument.

Main Report

Background

1. The Monument to the Great Fire of London (The Monument) is a Grade I listed building (1950) and scheduled monument (1951), the governance, asset management and operation of which is the responsibility of the City of London Corporation.
2. Prior to 2016, The Monument was managed, alongside Tower Bridge, within the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Department, with funding from City's Cash (now City Estates). Following the restructuring of that Department, operational management of both The Monument and Tower Bridge was transferred to the Open Spaces Department, now known as the Natural Environment Division (NED), although Member oversight continued to be provided by the Culture, Heritage & Libraries (CHL) Committee.
3. Following the implementation of the City Corporation's Target Operating Model (TOM) Phase 1 from April 2021, Tower Bridge's governance transferred to the Bridge House Estates Board – now City Bridge Foundation (CBF) Board – while The Monument remained under the governance of the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee.
4. Pending a decision about its medium to long-term future, staffing for The Monument has continued to be provided by the Tower Bridge team. In 2024/25, the staffing budget of £265k is being met by a City Estates budget held by the Environment Department. This is apportioned in part across 93 posts at Tower Bridge (equivalent to 5.7 FTE posts), including management, security, learning,

technical and welcome host staff.

5. At their meeting on 27 March 2023, the CBF Board resolved, in their capacity as Trustee of Bridge House Estates (registered charity number 1035628), that continued responsibility for the day-to-day operation of The Monument was not aligned with Bridge House Estates, as it is not an asset of the Charity and does not contribute to its charitable purposes. It also resolved that CBF officers should work with City Corporation colleagues to identify a suitable future operating model for The Monument.
6. NED, part of the Environment Department, currently acts as the client team for The Monument and operational oversight of The Monument currently sits with the Heritage & Museums Manager. Responsibility for strategic planning for The Monument previously lay with the Natural Environment Director and is now being co-led by the Head of Profession for Culture. City Surveyor's Department (CSD) is responsible for building conservation and maintenance.
7. On 16 October 2023, the Natural Environment Board (NEB) determined that managing The Monument did not align with their remit because it is solely a cultural heritage asset (it doesn't have any green space) and because it is located in the Square Mile (the NEB only manages green spaces outside the Square Mile). NEB therefore made a resolution to the Policy & Resources and Finances Committees that an alternative corporate home be found for The Monument in relation to its operations and budgetary oversight.

Current Position

8. There has been a delay in implementing these resolutions, primarily due to the need to wait until the new CoLC Culture Team had been established. CBF & CoLC officers across different departments have continued to work together to find a permanent solution for the future governance, operation and financing of The Monument. It is currently still operated on a day-to-day basis by CBF officers, with the Natural Environment Division acting as the client team, supported by City Surveyor's Department (CSD) in maintaining the asset.
9. Between April and December 2024, The Monument was advertised as open to the public daily, 9.30am – 1pm and 2 – 6pm, with the usual exception of three days over Christmas. During that time a total of 78,181 people visited The Monument, generating income of £252k from admissions and sales.
10. This represents a 6% increase on the number of visitors in the same period in 2023/24 (up from 73,864, during the period when many people were visiting London around the time of the King's Coronation
11. Following concerns raised by Members about the number of days in 2023/24 on which The Monument was forced to close to the public due to shortages of staff, Tower Bridge, in consultation with the NED client team, have taken steps to ensure a more resilient staffing model for The Monument. As a result, the number of full days on which The Monument has had to close due to staffing shortages

has reduced from 71 to 35 days (including three scheduled days) in the first nine-months of the year.

12. The Heritage Estate Section within City Surveyor's has recently appointed a team of consultants lead by Julian Harrap Architects to review and prepare a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for The Monument. A first workshop was held on 21/10/24, with a second scheduled for February, attended by officers from CBF/TB, Environment Department and City Surveyor's to review documents to date. The new CMP is due for completion by March 2025 and will be reported to this Committee for approval.
13. To meet Chamberlain's deadlines for 2025/26 budget setting, officers have modelled an operational budget for The Monument within the existing local risk resource base of £216k net income. However, to achieve this an 'unidentified savings' line of £195k has been reintroduced to the local risk budget for The Monument for 2025/26, representing the current budgetary shortfall with The Monument's local risk resource base for 2025/26. If this is not met by an increase in the resource base or savings elsewhere in the department, there will be a shortfall overall on the Executive Director Environment's City Estates local risk budgets for 2025/26.
14. As approved by your Committee on 04/11/2024, officers are producing specifications and negotiating with a potential developer to provide a dedicated visitor centre for The Monument and associated public facilities adjacent to the site. This is with the aim of providing an enhanced visitor offer and sustainable operation of The Monument in three to five years' time.

Eastern City Bid meanwhile proposal

15. Officers have been approached by the Eastern City Bid, which is proposing the meanwhile use of The Monument 'Pavillion' building. To note, Riverside Partnership is the prospective BID covering The Monument's actual footprint in future and the initial meanwhile use is proposed for 18 months, subject to extension. EC Bid would pay a small rent to the Corporation for a period of 18 months.
16. The meanwhile use proposal is for an unstaffed 'micro-museum' with lightboxes, screens and potentially a secure object display case to animate the space and tell the story of The Monument. Though unstaffed, BID ambassadors would visit on rotation and would be responsible for opening and locking up the facility at dusk (7am - early evening).
17. We are working with the City Solicitors team to agree terms for this use and seek permission for delegated authority to progress the plans over the coming months.

Transition Plan

18. The Monument can be a key asset in the delivery of our new Culture strategy, and its use as a visitor and schools' destination can be maximised through a move into the Culture team. Our education programme can be developed to deliver a consistent and high-quality offer across all cultural assets, linking it to The London Archives and Guildhall Art Gallery. As well as this, we can bring it into the development of our family programme, critical for delivering on weekend visitor growth and helping to cement the square mile as a visitor destination Friday to Monday. It can also be linked to the visitor support teams that will operate across the rest of the Culture offer, ensuring that closure due to lack of staffing will no longer be a risk.
19. Officers are commencing discussions to create a transition plan for The Monument to move the responsibilities, leadership and workflows from the Environment Department and Tower Bridge to a new team under the Head of Profession for Culture, whose structure would be proposed as part of a transition plan
20. The next steps for the creation of a transition plan would be to:
- a. Develop organisational change proposal and identify resource requirements which must include financing for the unidentified savings as well as an improvement budget.
 - b. Present options to your Committee in May 2025. Please note this would be done in conjunction with the development of the new Culture strategy and team.
 - c. If approved, consult with affected staff, services and unions, consider feedback, make amendments where necessary and confirm final proposal
 - d. Led by the Culture team liaising with the Environment Department, Tower Bridge team and City Bridge Foundation to complete the transfer of operations and agree timing with Chamberlain.
 - e. Report through relevant Committees as appropriate.
21. The suggested aim is to have enacted the transfer of The Monument into the remit of the Culture team by the end of the financial year 2025/26.

Options

22. Options for the future governance and operations of The Monument will be presented to this Committee in May 2025.

Proposals

23. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

Key Data

24. Please see Appendix 1 and 2.

Corporate & Strategic Implications – [*Please state ‘none’ if not applicable instead of deleting any of the sub-headings below*]

[Sub-headings]

Strategic implications – A transition plan for The Monument and subsequent move to Culture, Heritage and Libraries will support delivery of the Corporate Plan in enabling a stronger programme for Culture and the new Culture Strategy. This connects back to the Destination City priority to grow visitor footfall and diversify audiences, and to the Corporate Plan with regard to ‘vibrant thriving destination; and flourishing public spaces.

Financial implications The transition plan would need to confirm the budget for the unidentified savings as it would not be possible for this to be absorbed by the Culture team’s budget. Additionally, the transition plan would explore options for improvement.

Resource implication The transition plan would need to confirm staffing or posts available to support the day-to-day running of The Monument as it would not be possible for this to be absorbed by the Culture team’s budget.

Legal implications- n/a at this stage

Risk implications - The risk management processes in place in the Environment Department support the delivery of the Corporate Plan, our Departmental and Divisional Business Plans and relevant Corporate Strategies.

Risks which could have a serious impact on the achievement of business and strategic objectives are proactively identified, assessed and managed to minimise their likelihood and/or impact. These have been recently reviewed for the current operation and will be reviewed, revised and presented to Members as part of any transition plan.

Equalities implications – There are no negative impacts on people protected by existing equality legislation arising from this report.

Climate implications- There are no implications for Climate arising from this report

Security implications- There are no implications for Security arising from this report

Conclusion

The Monument is open to the public and continues to be a popular visitor attraction and a focus for school visits. It has yet to recover to pre-pandemic levels of visitors or income and is not currently able to meet its income and any ‘unidentified savings’ targets associated with it.

The Monument is projecting an overspend on its local risk budget for 2024/25, which currently is a pressure on the Natural Environment Division’s local risk budgets. The Monument’s ability to meet its strategic outcomes are contingent on resolving its future governance, operations and resource base.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Comparison of visitors to The Monument, 2023/24 & 2024/25.
- Appendix 2: Key financial data for the Monument 2018/19 – 2025/26 (to follow)

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