

Committee(s): Culture, Heritage & Libraries	Date(s): 27 January 2014
Subject: City of London Festival Funding	Public
Report of: Director of Culture, Heritage & Libraries	For Decision
<p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>The City of London Festival, which organises a diverse range of performances and events across the Square Mile every summer, has become an established and valued part of the City's cultural provision. It is supported by a yearly grant from the Corporation, which covers approximately 30% of its annual income. Its new Director is seeking both confirmation of the grant settlement for 2015, and a one-off loan to meet the costs of an exciting new temporary performance space which will increase the Festival's visibility and commercial opportunities.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee is recommended to support the request for a loan of £150K to the City Arts Trust, to be paid back over a maximum of five years, to pay the costs of a temporary pop-up venue. • It is further recommended to confirm the City's ongoing financial support of the City of London Festival at the current level, a core grant of £297K p.a. with a further £87,676 p.a. for outdoor events, for the year 2015. 	

Main Report

Background

1. Following the successful presentation on the forward work of the City of London Festival made to the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee in October by the new Director, Paul Gudgin, he is now seeking renewal of the COLF funding settlement for 2015. He is also requesting a one-off loan of £150K, to be repaid over five years, to build a new pop-up venue which will both increase the profile of the Festival and save running costs for venue hire. The detailed case for both the settlement and the loan is contained in the attached papers.

Current Position

2. The City of London Festival was established in 1962 and has run every year since then for a few weeks in the summer. It uses a wide range of venues, both indoor and outdoor, and of activities, to enliven the Square Mile with cultural events of all kinds. It has always been underpinned by financial support from the Corporation and its last funding settlement, agreed in 2012 for the years 2013 and 2014, set the core grant at £297,000 p.a., augmented by a further £87,676 p.a. for its outdoor events programme. The CoL grant provides about 30% of the total annual income of the Festival, the rest being made up of sponsorship from a range of public and private donors, and ticket sales.
3. The City Arts Trust Limited, responsible for running the City of London Festival, is a company limited by guarantee, and a registered charity. Its President (ex-

officio) is the Lord Mayor of the City of London, and the Board of Directors (who are also Trustees of the charity) is made up of representatives from the City of London Corporation, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, St Paul's Cathedral and the City's business community. Its Chairman is currently Lady Brewer.

4. The Trust works in close partnership with a wide range of City institutions and organisations, including (but by no means limited to) the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, the London Symphony Orchestra, LSO Discovery, The Barbican, Barbican Box Office, Gresham College, Bishopsgate Institute, Guildhall Art Gallery, Barbican Children's Library and many more. This approach, which has been developed consistently over the last 52 years, is especially important in the current climate and the context of cuts in public sector funding.

Options

5. The new Director has developed a programme with a range of new ideas around increasing the impact and accessibility of the Festival, in line with a strategic direction which has been endorsed by the Corporation. He has identified the opportunity to significantly advance these agendas by creating a new temporary pop-up venue which would increase recognition, save venue hire costs and create income generation possibilities. The proposal is to create such a venue in the shape of a bowler hat, with room to seat an audience of 200; details of the idea, design, business benefits and costings are set out in the attached documents. The hat will cost £150K to build and the Director is seeking a one-off loan from the Corporation for this amount, to be repaid over a maximum of five years from Festival revenues, as set out in the appendices. Initial discussion with the City Planning team within the Department of Built Environment has suggested that the necessary permissions will be forthcoming if the funding is achieved.
6. The loan would be met from Finance Committee contingency funds and subject to the support of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee a report will be presented there on 18 February 2014 seeking their approval.
7. At the same time, the Committee is asked to confirm the City's ongoing grant to the Festival for 2015 at the existing level. This will give the Festival the stability it needs for onward planning and (equally importantly) help to lever ongoing corporate and private sponsorship. The Festival's grant is a Central Risk budget separate from the Local Risk budgets of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Department and can be approved by the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee provided no increase is sought. Grants for subsequent years will be considered in the light of any wider strategic review of Corporate spending which may be necessary, and confirming the grant for 2015 does not preclude such review.

Proposals

8. The Committee is recommended to support the request for a loan of £150K, to be paid back over a maximum of five years, to pay the costs of the temporary pop-up venue. It is further recommended to confirm the City's ongoing financial support of the Festival for 2015 at the current level.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

9. The Festival has become an important element in the Corporation's overall cultural provision and is recognised as such in the 2012 Cultural Strategy. Its unique selling point lies in its reach across the whole of the Square Mile, bringing the City alive during the summer with a diverse and wide-ranging set of activities from world-class concerts to street art. Maintaining the Festival is therefore strategically and reputationally desirable. It is directly supportive of key policy priority 5 in the Corporate Plan, to "increase the impact of the City's cultural and heritage offer on the life of London and the nation".

Background Papers:

City of London Festival Funding 2013-14, Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee, 12 March 2012

Appendices

Appendix 1 - The City of London Festival/City Arts Trust Ltd bid for a loan to create a pop-up venue, and for a 2015 funding settlement

Appendix 2 - City Arts Trust Ltd. Budgets 14/15

Appendix 3 - City Of London Festival 2014 Artistic Outline

Appendix 4 - The City Arts Trust Limited delivering City of London strategic priorities

Appendix 5 - The City Arts Trust Limited - governance, leadership and management

Appendix 6 - Bowler Hat Design and Cost Breakdown

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