

Committee(s):		Date(s):	
Hospitality Working Party	-	Approved	21 October 2014
Corporate Asset Sub (Finance) Committee	-	For decision	21 November 2014
Culture, Heritage and Libraries	-	For decision	24 November 2014
Policy & Resources	-	For decision	11 December 2014
Subject:	Animating Guildhall Yard: a proposal for enhanced public use		Public
Report of:	Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries		For Decision
Summary			
<p>As part of the Guildhall Area Strategy (developed in May 2011), enhancements to encourage greater public use of Guildhall Yard were proposed. A significant programme of research has since taken place and this report outlines proposals that are the starting blocks for achieving a space better enjoyed by the City's communities.</p> <p>Given the need to avoid disturbance to residents and workers in close proximity of the Yard, to minimise the impact on the non-commercial use of the Guildhall, including by Members, and on those hiring Guildhall for events, and to align with the aspirations of the service-based review, this report seeks approval for a programme of low-level, cost-neutral activity only (covering all overhead costs from the Guildhall Function Team and others), with the potential for profits in future years once greater footfall is achieved.</p> <p>These activities include a market on Court of Common Council days and a temporary bar serving food and drink at occasional special events and throughout August when – with Guildhall closed for maintenance and no bookings being sought – if the maintenance works allow, a fuller programme of activity may be realised. This programme may include open-air art and/or sculpture exhibitions, craft demonstrations, pop-up libraries, concessions for vendors (such as artisan ice-cream makers), and/or small scale performance activity with little or no noise impact.</p> <p>In addition, it is proposed that the specification for Yard usage in appendix 1 be widely promoted to potential activity providers to enhance the quality of our offer in August; that more chairs and tables are put out over the summer months to cater for growing audiences; and that use of the Yard is more vigorously promoted as part of one-off City or London-wide exhibitions, events and celebrations, especially events that can take place at weekends without interfering with the commercial use of the buildings at that time.</p>			

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Endorse the proposition to animate Guildhall Yard in order to encourage greater public use while observing necessary sensitivities, and avoiding any prejudice to commercial lettings.
- Approve the proposal for a market to take place in the Yard on Court of Common Council days (usually nine a year), more regularly in August (when Guildhall is unavailable for private hire, subject to maintenance needs) and on special occasions, delegating authority to the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries (CHL) to agree specific dates aligned with the restrictions outlined in this report.
- Approve the proposal for a bar to serve food and drink in the Yard for three weeks in August (lunchtimes and early evenings), on condition that relevant licensing legislation and the restrictions outlined in items 8 to 14 are observed (with delegated authority granted to the Director of CHL to review continuance in light of any public order or other issues).
- Delegate authority to the Director of CHL to programme the Yard for three weeks in August aligned with the type of activity outlined in item 20 and the restrictions necessitated by consideration of nearby resident and worker communities, as well as any access or other requirements derived from the August maintenance programmes for Guildhall and Guildhall Yard.
- Approve the promotion and distribution of the technical specification for the Yard (appendix 1), noting the need to include access and egress to the church of St Lawrence Jewry as discussed in item 8, so that a wider range of potential activities may be identified and the quality of these is enhanced beyond the limited pool of those who approach us currently.
- Delegate authority to the City Surveyor, Director of the Built Environment, Remembrancer and Director of CHL to identify and agree on an area within the Yard where public art and sculpture installations may be hosted throughout the year.
- Note and agree that any proposals for new activities in the Yard will be planned in consultation and with the agreement of the Remembrancer, the City Surveyor and the Chief Commoner as appropriate, to ensure that priority is given to commercial hospitality and other lettings of Guildhall space, and to ceremonial or official City functions, and that the needs of the annual maintenance programme are respected.

Main Report

Background

1. As part of the Guildhall Area Strategy 2011, enhancements to encourage greater public use of Guildhall Yard were proposed and an options paper was commissioned from consultants Lacuna PR in March 2014.
2. This report is available on request from CHL and outlines a range of ideas. However, these would require significant funding at a time when local risk budgets are being heavily tested by the service-based review.
3. Officers therefore agreed to undertake further research to determine if any of the ideas proposed could be run at a profit or, at least, delivered with a cost neutral outcome. Drawing parallels with similar, mixed-use spaces (such as Somerset House) and talking to them and their suppliers to gauge the level of commercial interest and potential for a profitable return has informed the proposals in this report.
4. The Lacuna paper (para 1) had already captured the views and ideas of many officers with an interest in the Yard. From these, it was established that any activity would need to ensure that there is no negative impact on general use of the Guildhall for ceremonial or other non-commercial use, revenues derived from the hire of Guildhall or on the lives of residents and workers occupying buildings in close proximity to the Yard (these are listed in paras 8 and 9).
5. Whatever is done, the message from most of those consulted is “start small and build”. Premium hire rates cannot be charged to markets, exhibitors or producers unless a guaranteed and strong footfall can be evidenced and this will grow gradually.
6. Such an approach fits well within the restrictions discussed in items 8 to 14 and it is for this reason that a programme of low-level activity with a minimal return is proposed. In later years, providers may pay increased dividends for higher footfall and the Yard may be more able to market itself as a venue in its own right, growing this programme and developing a robust charging strategy for new and current users, if it is seen as workable and appropriate to the Guildhall venue hire business model.

Current Position

7. Guildhall Yard is currently used for a wide range of activities. Throughout the summer months, tables and chairs are put out on weekday lunchtimes to encourage City workers to come and enjoy the space and a series of events is permitted to take place year-on-year. These include a week of concerts from the City of London Festival, race starts such as the Bloomberg Square Mile Relay and public ceremonial events such as the Lord Mayor’s Show and Cart-Marking. The Yard is also a popular site for public art (sculpture and other installations) and hosted the Wenlock and Mandeville statues during the 2012 Games and – more recently – *Books About Town*. No charge is made to the providers of these activities and no charging scale to hire the Yard only (without hiring Guildhall) is currently established.

8. The Yard, however, is an integral element of the public and private/corporate event offer at Guildhall. It can play a role in events, such as for State Visits, or as part of a commercial event, and, vitally, is the access route to Guildhall, used for loading and unloading at events, and for deliveries and collections, including those for the Gallery. Any activity must therefore accommodate access and egress routes and emergency exits as specified on the map in appendix 1 which will, in addition, need to consider access routes to the church of St Lawrence Jewry as well.
9. The Yard is surrounded by offices that are occupied by workers Monday to Friday. It is also the backyard to accommodation above St Lawrence Jewry where the vicar and his family reside. Any programming must therefore avoid disturbing these communities and it has been suggested that no noisy activity is permitted to take place at the following times:

Mon-Fri	10:00 to 15:30
All days	Before 09:00 and after 21:00

*all times to include load in/out times

10. It is also suggested that at least four weeks' notice is given to residents ahead of any activity and that this is a mandatory requirement for an event to take place. In addition, the church must be consulted before any activity is formally confirmed, noting that weekend weddings and bell-ringing may have a significant impact on any event held (or vice versa).
11. The Yard is included in the Premises License held by the Guildhall which permits the sale of alcohol, exhibition of film and live performance. The weight bearing limit for infrastructure is 30 tonnes and the maximum capacity for any event is suggested to be up to 1000, although this varies in parts and will need to be considered with the Guildhall Function Team. Degradation to the paving of the Yard will also need to be factored into any activity and preventative measures taken or the application declined.
12. Regardless of access and egress issues, it has been established that those who hire Guildhall may well expect the Yard to be free of activity and that this can influence their decision when making a booking. In order to avoid detriment to the Guildhall's letting capacity, it is agreed that weekday activity should be limited to Court of Common Council days, when it is known that no Great Hall booking will be taken, and for up to three weeks in August when Guildhall is closed for maintenance.
13. This works well in that dates are known in advance and so activity may be advertised. However, for Court of Common Council days, there is an issue in that they do not consistently fall on a particular day each month and that this irregularity may impede the growth of football with workers not knowing which day to expect something to be happening. It is also necessary to bear in mind that use of the Yard may need to be cancelled

with little warning if, for example, an event (such as a speech by a foreign leader) is organised at short notice and security considerations require the Yard to be kept clear.

14. Chairs and tables are currently put out by Guildhall Function Team during the summer months and it is noted that these are fully utilised when the weather is good. While there is plenty of capacity within the Yard to offer more furniture for use by the public on weekday lunchtimes, storage of increased stock will be an issue as current stock is already causing problems. This would need to be resolved prior to increasing seating opportunities.
15. With the launch of the Heritage Gallery in September 2014, a new campaign to promote all Guildhall cultural/heritage elements under the collective banner of "Guildhall Galleries" has been instigated. A leaflet distributed across London, a guidebook to all areas of the complex and an app that helps drive footfall between constituent parts are part of this. The time is therefore right for a more dynamic and exciting offer within Guildhall Yard that can exist within the parameters discussed above.

Options

16. A series of options fit these parameters and Members are asked to consider and approve these (noting that no one option excludes or is reliant on another).
17. **OPTION 1: increase the number of tables and chairs on weekday lunchtimes over the summer months to further encourage the working community to enjoy the Yard**
 - a. A ball park cost of £2,000 to be met from the local risk budget of CHL is suggested, with this recouped from any small profit made on hiring the Yard for the other activities described
 - b. Chairs and tables will remain around the periphery of the Yard as this is the preferred position for users)
 - c. Options for storage would need to be investigated and a solution to this identified before new stock is ordered
 - d. The chairs and tables would continue to be set up and taken in by the Guildhall Function Team but there is a capacity issue; increased resource would need to be identified, especially in August when the team take leave as the Guildhall has no events
18. **OPTION 2: a market is established in the Yard on Court of Common Council days, for special one-off City events where there is no conflict with existing or potential Guildhall bookings or other uses of Guildhall, and once a week or more regularly during August**
 - a. Court takes place on nine dates throughout the year; these are known and can be advertised in advance to City workers

- b. Initial investigations indicate that a few market providers are interested in exploring the opportunity but without guaranteed footfall and given the irregularity of the dates is likely to impede growth (item 13), most are unwilling to offer more than £250 per market
- c. It is suggested a food market will have most appeal with City workers and, as this is not a day (Thursdays) when One New Change offer the same, competition should be less intense
- d. Speciality markets such as craft, art or Christmas offerings may be used to complement the food offer or replace it for special events
- e. Market providers would be required to manage logistics, and any environmental health requirements, submitting all relevant health and safety documentation, risk assessments, traffic management schemes and other relevant details well in advance of each market; approvals would be co-ordinated by CHL
- f. The income would be accrued in a central pot to fund other activity but would first need to cover any costs related to cleansing, power supply or additional staffing, including the overheads incurred by the Guildhall Function Team; if any profits are left, these would be set against the cost of the chairs described in item 17a

19. OPTION 3: a temporary bar serving food and drink within the Yard is provided at special one-off events where there is no conflict with existing or potential Guildhall bookings or with ceremonial or other non-commercial use of Guildhall and throughout August when Guildhall is closed for maintenance

- a. The bar would operate over lunchtimes (12:00 to 14:30 is suggested) and in the early evening (17:00 to 19:00)
- b. Get-in and out is estimated at two to three hours and should not impact on the activity parameters described earlier
- c. The provider supplies all infrastructure (bar, marquee if required, chairs and tables etc (although these may be those discussed under item 17, saving overhead costs)), manages logistics, and any environmental health requirements, submitting all relevant health and safety documentation, risk assessments, traffic management schemes and other relevant details well in advance of the tenure
- d. It is initially suggested that a straight split of profit is the financial model used after overheads for set-up, staffing and cleansing have been taken away (return is likely to be minimal but there is no financial risk to the City Corporation); without a guaranteed footfall, we are in a weak bargaining position
- e. Delivery of this option will be subject to the agreement of the City Police, licensing, environmental health and security and contingency planning; its continuance in light of any public order or other issues would be determined, it is suggested, by the Remembrancer and Director of CHL under delegated authority

- 20. OPTION 4: a fuller programme of activity throughout the three weeks in August, the make-up of which will be determined by the Director of CHL under delegated authority, and which will be organised so as not to prevent or delay any maintenance works**
- a. The programme will observe the noise and other restrictions discussed earlier and may include an open-air art exhibition, craft demonstrations, pop-up libraries, concessions such as artisan ice-cream sellers and/or small scale performance activity with little or no noise impact
 - b. In all cases, activity will be delivered on a cost neutral or nominal hire fee basis (it is suggested that in year one, any fees are kept to a minimum in order to attract contributions of merit)
 - c. To ensure the highest quality provision of activity, it is suggested that the technical specification provided in appendix 1 is amended to include access and egress routes to the church and then vigorously promoted to the industry soliciting proposals for these three weeks; similarly, aligned with consultation feedback for the City's new cultural strategy, the specification should target cultural entrepreneurs in a bid to attract innovative and unique draws
- 21. OPTION 5: a small, pre-selected area is identified within the Yard where sculptures and art installations may appear throughout the year (as approved by the City Arts Initiative and the CHL Committee) to drive footfall as part of an art trail or as an iconic draw in their own right**
- a. The area will be identified in consultation with the City Surveyor, Director of the Built Environment, Remembrancer and Director of CHL under delegated authority
 - b. It will be a discreet area to ensure minimum impact on event bookings and the ceremonial or other non-commercial use of Guildhall, but as prominent as possible for the public to see and access
 - c. All installations would need to meet weight bearing requirements and be befitting of the location and profile of Guildhall as the seat of City government, as determined by the Remembrancer and Director of CHL and the church of St Lawrence Jewry, as determined by its vicar
22. The increased activity in the Yard should not displace vehicles onto the highway given the times and dates proposed; if this should happen then providers and your officers in CHL would be required to seek the appropriate highway approvals.

Proposals

23. Members are recommended to endorse all or any one of the options listed in the previous section noting that, through delegated authority, the Remembrancer and/or Director of CHL will ensure that:

- a. All elements of the programming are befitting to the Yard, Guildhall and the City Corporation
 - b. All activity is undertaken on a cost neutral or profit basis with no financial risk to the City Corporation
 - c. Activity will be adapted in response to public reception and the bar element suspended in the event of public order issues or interference with other Guildhall activities
 - d. The Yard's residents will be fully consulted before activity is confirmed (especially with regard evening and weekend events), and their views will inform timings, noise levels and other relevant factors
 - e. Activity will be permitted only if it does not prejudice the other uses of the Guildhall including the Guildhall's ceremonial, policy-related and commercial use, and that any activity will be suspended if it is identified to be detrimental in any way to the public or private functions of Guildhall
 - f. Advice will be sought from the Director of the Built Environment for all activities where planning permission may be required
24. It is proposed that any income derived from the hosting of the programming described is held by CHL with charges for cleansing, power and/or additional staffing (as appropriate) being set against this. The remainder (if any) should be invested into delivering the summer programme and put towards the purchase of new chairs and tables.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

25. The proposals are aligned with the City Corporation's Corporate Plan KPP5 ("increasing the impact of the City's cultural and heritage offer on the life of London and the nation") in that they support our objectives to implement the cultural and visitor strategies for the City and to develop and improve the physical environment around our key cultural attractions.
26. The animation of the Guildhall Yard is specifically referenced and supported in both the City's Visitor Strategy 2013/17 (action A1.3) and its Cultural Strategy 2012/17 (under the *Breaking down Barriers* theme).
27. It is also supported within the Guildhall Area Strategy 2011 under the theme of *Identity and welcome: informal activity*.

Conclusion

28. Guildhall Yard is an architecturally magnificent space that invites exploration and enjoyment. It is surrounded by an enviable cultural offer, the components of which include the Guildhall Art Gallery and Roman Amphitheatre. Historically, it has been a high profile public space, at the heart of the City, with the kind of popular recognition and placemaking that is commonly found in similar key municipal squares in other European cities.

29. The Yard however is underutilised today by the City's publics and, to some, can seem sterile and foreboding without visual draws and event-based activity to welcome them in.
30. Some excellent work has already taken place with the introduction of chairs and tables in the summer months and a slow build of one-off special events such as the 2014 City Life Community Fair and the City of London Festival. However, more needs to be done if this is to truly be a "space for the people" and way of raising the City Corporation's profile as a provider of valued services within the Square Mile.
31. With a new campaign to launch Guildhall Galleries underway, the time is right to investigate options but these must be balanced with the needs of local resident and worker communities and the service-based review which – more than ever – emphasises our need to deliver activity that does not prejudice the growing commercial income derived from Guildhall lettings and is itself risk-free financially by ensuring that the activity we deliver is cost neutral at the least.
32. The proposals in this report do just that. With a programme of low-level, low-impact, cost-neutral activity, the appetite for a more animated space can be tested amongst the City's communities and with activity suppliers, while the City Corporation can gauge the benefits and drawbacks without detriment to its income potential.
33. The approach set out here will bring greater footfall at Guildhall attractions, and enhanced profile for the City Corporation, while enabling us to realise the value of the Yard as a hireable space for commercial lets. At the same time, it helps to bring the City's communities into one of London's best built spaces and to enhance their enjoyment of working, living, visiting or just being in the City.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Guildhall Yard Technical Specification

Background Papers:

"Guildhall Area Strategy – update report", presented to the Corporate Asset Sub-Committee on 30 April 2013 and Policy and Resources Committee on 2 May 2013

Nick Bodger

Head of Cultural and Visitor Development

T: 020 7332 3263

E: nick.bodger@cityoflondon.gov.uk