

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Culture, Heritage & Libraries	02 July 2012
Subject: Proposed Visitor Trail	Public
Report of: Director of Culture, Heritage & Libraries	For Decision

Summary

This Report recommends the creation and launch of a visitor trail in the City which would provide a half day or whole day dwell time opportunity and clearly signify that the City positively welcomes visitors.

The trail proposed would link the main visitor assets within the remit of your Committee through commencing at the City Information Centre and travelling via the Guildhall Art Gallery, Roman Amphitheatre and other attractions at Guildhall progressing to the Monument and on to Tower Bridge.

The Museum of London and the Barbican Cultural Quarter as high profile City Corporation visitor assets would be highlighted and recommended as potential visits and St Paul's Cathedral and the Tower of London would also be referenced.

The rationale is to capitalise on the potential visitor footfall legacy arising from the success of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, Celebrate the City and the Olympics and Paralympics in 2012. These events will attract an enormous number of people to the City, many for the first time.

There are two phases of a City Visitor Trail being proposed, with the first phase to be launched on 1 April 2013. The annual costs of maintaining the Trail will be funded from local risk budgets of the CHL attractions which it is hoped will be the main beneficiaries.

An internal officer team comprising Visitor Development and Built Environment Officers augmented by an IS officer will be established to take the project forward.

Recommendations

I recommend that you agree the following:

- The creation of a Phase 1 City Visitor Trail extending from the City Information Centre to Tower Bridge for launch on 1 April 2013; and
- To receive further reports on the Phase 2 development proposals for the City Visitor Trail.

Main Report

Background

1. Visitor Development and Services (VDS) became part of the Department of Culture Heritage and Libraries in October 2011 following a Corporate wide departmental restructure. This transferred the management of City Corporation visitor attractions and responsibility for the organisation's visitor strategy to the Department of Culture, Heritage and Libraries.
2. Since this change the City Visitor Development Team has been fully occupied in putting a range of measures in place to ensure that the City Corporation plays a significant and noticeable role in facilitating the London Olympics and Paralympics. These efforts will place emphasis on enhancing the experience of visitors to London and in particular those who visit the Square Mile. VDS was actively involved in supporting the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations within the City and in facilitating and marketing the four day Celebrate the City event, to ensure that they were a great success.
3. There is no doubt that 2012 will prove to be a momentous year for London and the City and the challenge this presents for the VDS Team is to ensure that the large footfall of visitors to the City is welcomed and that they leave with good impressions and great memories, so generating positive PR and word-of-mouth recommendations.
4. The challenge beyond the Olympics and in future years for VDS is to create a legacy where going forward domestic and foreign visitors to London will want to visit the Square Mile and will come to regard it as one of the top London experiences. It is hoped that the feel-good factor from the Olympics and the whole 2012 programme of events will have benefits in terms of improved appeal and increased visitor footfall in future years.
5. To achieve this offer to visitors will need to be attractive, interesting and easily accessed, and the City will need to be perceived as welcoming. In this respect for the development and implementation of the Square Mile visitor strategy would be enhanced by the creation of a visitor trail for tourists visiting the City. The absence of a joined up experience affects the way visitors compile their itineraries and results in spot visits to single attractions such as St Paul's Cathedral or the Museum of London, creating shorter dwell times and lower per capita spend in the City. It also inhibits marketing and is a barrier to achieving e.g. London Village Status (as defined by London & Partners) which could be the platform for inclusion in London Travel Guides and visitor websites.
6. A Report of December 2011 by Quiller Consultants who assisted the Director of Public Relations on the communications implications arising from activities of the protesters at St Paul's Cathedral stated:

“If the City Corporation wishes to be known for a specific area of activity or contribution to public life, simply telling people (especially the media) what it is already doing is unlikely to break through the din of day to day news. Members may wish to consider what new initiative could be launched that both shows its commitment to a specific field, and is of a size and magnitude to register in the minds of decision makers and opinion formers. “Business as usual” is not going to generate headlines or interest.”

7. In response to this the Town Clerk asked for potential projects which would create impact and show commitment by the Corporation to positively welcoming visitors to the City to be suggested and considered. The following criteria were identified to guide project proposals in this respect:
 - Creating some distinctive momentum around how the new Visitor Development & Services operation is going to have impact on the tourism agenda, both for the Square Mile generally and for the City’s own attractions/areas (e.g. Guildhall complex).
 - Harnessing the opportunity created by the corporate wish to make more of its cultural activity, and raise its profile.
 - Creating a more joined-up/centralised focus for marketing and promotion for CHL Department activities and positive public relations for culture generally.
 - Making effective use of Tower Bridge and Monument income surpluses to further promote tourism footfall to these attractions and within the City generally.

Current Position

8. The suggestion which resonated most effectively in meeting the criteria and which would create half day or whole day dwell time opportunity for visitors was the establishment of a City Visitor Trail (CVT) linking as many of the main City Corporation’s visitor attractions and City highlights as possible.
9. A CVT could operate by encouraging visitors who commence their visit by calling at the City Information Centre to embark on the Trail. This would be routed via St Paul’s Cathedral and Temple Bar to the Guildhall Area with its various attractions including the Guildhall Art Gallery and Roman Amphitheatre, on to the Monument and finally via the Tower of London to Tower Bridge. This Trail would operate in both directions with Visitors exiting the Tower Bridge Exhibition and the tourist footfall on the Bridge being encouraged by Footfall Enticement Staff to follow the Trail to the Guildhall area attractions via The Tower and the Monument.
10. High profile City Corporation attractions such as the Barbican Cultural Quarter and the Museum of London would be highlighted and recommended as interesting visits in the literature and map produced to

support the CVT, in order to give the greatest degree of choice to visitors and to maximise the benefit to City Corporation assets. St Paul's Cathedral and the Tower of London would also be referenced.

11. This is not a novel idea in the Tourism business as there are visitor trails in many major cities around the world and there are themed guided and self-guided walks around parts of the City which have been developed in previous years. Some are no longer actively promoted and there are none which are targeted particularly at the Corporation's own visitor attractions. This is an omission in the City and is something which needs to be addressed to offer a welcome to tourists and provide a focus for their visit to the City. It would also provide a strong marketing hook and has the potential to put the Square Mile on the London tourism map and increase footfall to all of the Corporation's attractions.

Options

12. The following options should be considered in the context of the suggested development and implementation of a CVT:
 - a) Create a comprehensive CVT covering everything in the Square Mile which may be attractive or interesting to visitors; or
 - b) Create a simplified trail actively directing visitors to CHL attractions as the main route but also highlighting other City and City Corporation visitor and cultural assets.
13. It would be a missed opportunity for the City Corporation not to attempt to achieve a positive visitor legacy following the excitement of the major events taking place this year. This would reinforce the view that there is no enthusiasm for attracting visitors to the City and it would ignore the recommendations of the Quiller Report.
14. The creation of an all encompassing "Trail of Trails" which attempts to include everything of interest to visitors would be a major and time consuming exercise. It is likely that the time taken to consult all interests and to produce this would cause us to miss the immediate post 2012 opportunity. It may also lack a sharp focus and direction for visitors through the volume and range of information which would need to be included. However, this could possibly become a longer term development project if a simpler CVT can first be successfully established.
15. Producing a simplified Trail creating a main route joining CHL Committee visitor attractions but also highlighting and recommending other City visitor and cultural assets could be achieved within a shorter timescale. This could capture and maintain the enthusiasm of 2012 and potentially create a visitor legacy for the Square Mile as a world class destination. It would also be affordable and cost effective.

Proposals

16. The proposals described below will create a realistically deliverable scheme commencing with a simplified model which will be capable of further development dependent on the availability of funding.

Phase 1

17. A first phase CVT could be launched with only the following resources being committed:
 - A guide/map clearly describing the attractions and the visitor trail to be followed.
 - A part time operational marketing post (60% FTE).
 - A modest marketing budget to promote the CVT, liaise with attractions and complement current marketing activities for the attractions.

Phase 2

18. The basic scheme proposed and described above will provide the basis to launch the scheme and will potentially generate interest and momentum. However, the lack of physical visibility would become inhibiting and may not meet the objective of overtly demonstrating the City Corporation's commitment to welcoming visitors to the Square Mile.
19. It is therefore proposed that second phase enhancements are planned at the outset to heighten the profile of the Trail and improve the chance of successfully directing and informing visitor footfall. These could potentially comprise inter- alia the following:
 - Pavement Markings - painted indicators or metal plaques
 - Signage –added to existing signage, or newly designed wall mounted or freestanding.
 - Digital media - modern, flexible, instantly updatable and offering a range of communication options such as linking to iPhones, utilising information nodes or digital waste bins.
20. There is no doubt that the physical presence of street signage for the CVT will have impact and will demonstrate the City Corporation's commitment to visitors.
21. Digital media however offers the greatest communication potential and would enhance the City Corporation's twenty-first century image and its commitment to a technologically driven future. It is clearly the way ahead and will be given priority in the phase 2 development programme.

Further Possibilities to Enhance the CVT

22. The following list of features/facilities which is by no means exhaustive could offer potential to further develop the appeal of the proposed Trail in the future. This would progressively enhance the offering to visitors increase the profile of the CVT.
- Create a Passport of Children's collectable stickers - (e.g. dragons)
 - Linkage with Boris Bikes scheme.
 - Link with tourist bus routes.
 - Street Guides deployed on the route on special occasions.
 - Transport for visitors on special occasions – rickshaws, people carriers etc.
 - Produce saleable guide book
 - Develop an animated character e.g. a dragon to be synonymous with the City tourism offer.
23. The addition of any new facility could be used to maintain awareness and profile by attracting positive PR and press coverage.
24. The above are listed in bullet form to give members an indication of the type and range of facilities which could potentially be developed or integrated with the proposed CVT. These will be assessed in detail as part of the future development of the CVT.
25. An initial discussion has been held with the Director of the Built Environment on the potential of the CVT and subject to careful consideration of any physical impact on the street scene, he is broadly supportive of the proposal. The professional input of planning and highways professionals will be essential to the success of the scheme which it is hoped will be eligible for support from Section 106 funding, although this will be subject to interpretation.

Implications

Funding Proposal

26. For reasons already discussed, the timing for launching a Phase 1 scheme needs to be after the Olympics and Paralympics, probably from the beginning of the tourist season on 1 April 2013. It could be started from January 2013 but the first three months of the year are traditionally slow in terms of inbound and domestic tourism and the lead- in period would be very short.
27. Phase 1 will incur start- up costs of £40,000 in 2012/13 to cover design and printing, staffing and marketing. Annual funding of £70,000, will be required in 2013/14 and annually thereafter to maintain and support the recurring annual costs of the CVT comprising the following:

- Design and production of a leaflet and guide (£15k),
- 60% (3 days per week) grade D Marketing Executive post (£25k)
- Marketing and promotional budget (£30k).

28. It is anticipated that there will be scope for the marketing post to promote the individual CHL attractions and to take on marketing/promotion for the department more broadly. The placement of the post in the VDS Team will afford the Attractions the benefit of the full range of marketing and communication skills which are available in this highly skilled Team.

29. In discussion with the Chamberlain it has been agreed that the most appropriate and transparent way to fund phase 1 of the proposed project will be to apportion the costs between Guildhall Art Gallery, the Monument and Tower Bridge local risk budgets based on to the number of visitors currently attracted. This would meet the criteria for use of Bridge House Estates and City's Cash trust funds. The actual breakdown under this formula would be as follows:

	Annual Funding Apportionment	TOTAL	
a).	Guildhall Art Gallery and Amphitheatre (65,000 visitors)	£6,067	
b).	Monument (185,000 visitors)	£17,267	
c).	Tower Bridge (500,000 visitors)	£46,666	£70,000

30. Although there is a risk that we may not immediately receive full return on this marketing investment in a CVT, every effort will be made to achieve this primary objective. The CVT will prove positive for each of the three attractions in terms of increased footfall and visitor income and it will enhance the image of the City Corporation. This performance can be evaluated against agreed criteria.

31. The costs of developing the phase 2 scheme could be met from the visitor development budget with any physical works involved being subject to an application for Section 106 funds.

32. An internal officer team comprising Visitor Development and Built Environment Officers augmented by an IS officer will be established to take the scheme forward. I would also anticipate making some use of the expertise of an external tourism and planning consultant who has worked

successfully with the City Corporation on other Section 106 street scene projects, in the Phase 2 development work.

33. This team will undertake consultation with other Corporation and City attractions to ensure that the CVT is formed and promoted in a balanced and inclusive way and will therefore offer the best of the Square Mile to visitors.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

34. The City Visitor Trail fits with key policy priorities, objectives and goals within the Corporate Plan 2012-16, the City Together Strategy 2008-14 and the City of London's 2012 Strategy ("to recognise and enhance the cultural facilities in the City and across the nation"), as well as actions listed within Visit the City – the City's visitor destination strategy (2010-13) and the Cultural Strategy.

35. It does this by helping to:

- Promote a clear identity for the City that distinguishes it from other parts of London and other world cities;
- Develop a "sense of place" by celebrating and emphasising the distinctiveness of the City's heritage;
- Promote the close proximity of major City attractions and identify the best walking routes between them;
- Improve the pedestrian environment, so encouraging visitors to walk and aligning with our healthy-living and sustainable tourism priorities;
- Promote the role of the City Corporation through its buildings and assets, aligning with recommendations in the Quiller Report (received by PRO in the wake of the St Paul's encampment crisis);
- Increase the profile of the City's arts institutions and heritage sites through better signage and clearer advertisement;
- Promote the entirety of the City's cultural offer in a homogenous, harmonised and distinctive way, thus creating a sense of overall cohesion;
- Foster greater co-ordination/joint working between arts and cultural providers, while providing support for venues and maximising exposure for the City's own assets; and
- Support the implementation of the cultural and visitor destination strategies for the City of London.

Conclusion

36. There is undoubtedly a desire for the City to show that it welcomes visitors and to create an enjoyable experience for domestic and foreign tourists who visit the Square Mile. It would be unfortunate in this context not to

capitalise on the legacy opportunity arising from the momentous events of 2012 to put the Square Mile securely on the London visitor landscape.

37. Although there are no guaranteed outcomes, the creation of a CVT along the lines described in this report would seem to have compelling appeal at this time and should be positively supported as a tangible way to generate positive PR for the City Corporation for driving footfall and financial return for attractions.

Consultees

38. The Chamberlain and the Built Environment have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Background Papers:

39. Report of Quiller Consultants on The “Occupy” Protests of November 2011 submitted to the Public Relations Sub-Committee meeting of 8 December 2011

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