

Committees:	Date:	Item no.
Culture, Heritage and Libraries Education Board (for information) Projects Sub	23/05/2016 21/07/2016 Sept/Oct 2016	
Subject: New Fully Accessible Learning and Community Engagement Centre at Tower Bridge - Installation of New Floor in the North Tower		Public
Report of: Director of Culture Heritage and Libraries		For Decision

Project Summary

1. Context	<p>Education provision at Tower Bridge Exhibition has received acclaim since launch in 2014. Tower Bridge has seen growth in demand for both its formal and informal learning provision: 35 learning sessions were facilitated in 2014/15, with growth to 95 sessions in 2015/16 (170%) and engagement with 1,322 pupils with growth to 2,843 (115%).</p> <p>A significant proportion of schools make repeat visits and the feedback collated emphasises just how improved the experience has become since the launch of the program.</p> <p>The current learning centre however, is inaccessible for certain groups. Its accommodation is limited and access restricted, meaning that education groups with specific needs e.g. wheelchair users cannot be accommodated. The learning centre, in one of the bridge's small stone abutments, can only comfortably accommodate half a standard school class at one time. Where schools want to bring more students, they need to split visits across several days, increasing costs for these organisations, and reducing the total number of students and schools with which the learning programme can engage. In its second year of operation, the learning programme has reached the point at which some schools are sadly being turned away due to the limits of the learning centre. A new fully accessible centre will enable the City to engage meaningfully with more groups in London and the neighbouring boroughs, and generate further income.</p> <p>The Tower Bridge Learning team is also responsible for Community Engagement, delivering activities locally at the learning centre, as well as in the local communities of Tower Hamlets, Southwark and the City. Unfortunately, due to the limited accessibility of the learning centre, there have been occasions in which it has not been possible to accommodate the needs of community partner organisations.</p> <p>The learning centre is also required for family learning activities and to accommodate the ambition to host adult learning in future. An improved facility would enable Tower Bridge meet and exceed the provision of peers in the sector.</p>
-------------------	---

	<p>Education and community engagement are priorities both at Tower Bridge and the wider City of London Corporation, the Corporation's 2016 – 2019 Education Strategy aims to, '<i>ensure that the City Corporation's outstanding cultural and historical resources enrich the creative experience of London's learners</i>' and within this objective specifically '<i>Provide further opportunities for the City Corporation's cultural venues to work together to offer innovative learning programmes and resources that benefit learners across London and beyond</i>'. This project therefore seeks to establish a fully accessible, high quality learning space which conforms to best practice, including accessibility and catering to the requirements of all sectors of society.</p> <p>An additional benefit of the proposed project is the partial provision of suitable office accommodation for 2 of the 5 person Exhibition management team which currently operates from a small office (8.9m²) in the north tower with only 2 work stations and very limited space. The provision of new space for the Exhibition management team was discussed at the Project Sub Committee in 2015; advice was given that alternative space arrangements should be considered. This assessment has been carried out and there is no alternative space at Tower Bridge as office space is currently at capacity. The operational nature of the Exhibition management team roles also make alternate location offsite e.g. Guildhall, unsuitable.</p>
<p>2. Brief description of project</p>	<p>To install a new mezzanine floor between Levels 2 & 3, North Tower; to create a fully functional and accessible Learning and Community Engagement Centre.</p> <p>An identical project in the South Tower was completed in June 2013 measuring 55m². This project went through all necessary approvals with external/local bodies and English Heritage. This project saw the effective creation of space within an historic structure which is otherwise naturally limited: it works well operationally and is of significant use to the event management contractor in relation to the growing and successful events business at Tower Bridge.</p> <p>The current learning centre would be used as a secondary space for community group events where possible according to the growing demand at Tower Bridge: the Learning team quite regularly receive requests for multiple events/sessions to take place simultaneously which is currently not possible. It would also serve as additional training space/meeting room for Tower Bridge staff to help cope with limited meeting space at the permanent office facility on the south side of the Bridge.</p>
<p>3. Consequences if project not approved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential reputational issue for the organisation in not providing a fully accessible facility for Learning and Community Engagement which aligns with the growing tourism business at Tower Bridge and the modern expectations of school groups, visitors and community

	<p>partner organisations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not meeting current demands for educational content and not positioning ourselves for growth in the future. • Increased operational risk where the ability Exhibition Management Team to effectively undertake administration/ management duties is hindered though lack of appropriate facilities.
4. Success criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of a high quality, fully accessible, functional Learning and Community Engagement Centre. • The creation of additional usable accommodation to service the needs of Exhibition Management Team.
5. Notable exclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
6. Governance arrangements	<p>Spending Committee: Culture, Heritage and Libraries</p> <p>Senior Responsible Officer: Chris Earlie, Head of Tower Bridge</p> <p>Project Board: Yes</p>

Prioritisation

7. Link to Strategic Aims	3. To provide valued services to London and the nation
8. Links to existing strategies, programmes and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic priority 1 within City of London Corporation's 2016-19 Education Strategy; <i>'We will ensure that the City Corporation's outstanding cultural and historical resources enrich the creative experience of London's learners'</i> and within this objective specifically <i>'Provide further opportunities for the City Corporation's cultural venues to work together to offer innovative learning programmes and resources that benefit learners across London and beyond'</i>. • City of London Core Value - The right services at the right price. <i>Providing services in an efficient and sustainable manner that meet the needs of our varied communities, as established through dialogue and consultation</i> • The City of London Strategic Plan KPP4 - Maximising the opportunities and benefits afforded by our role in supporting London's communities. <i>'Promote high quality education by working collaboratively across City of London departments and with external partners to deliver the City Corporation's Education Strategy'</i> • Tower Bridge learning strategy; <i>'To enthuse, inform and inspire learners through the exploration of Tower Bridge's history, purpose, engineering, architecture and people'</i> • The City Bridge Trust's <i>Investing in Londoners Programmes'</i>
9. Project category	6. Improvements in productivity/efficiency

10. Project priority	B. Advisable
-----------------------------	--------------

Options Appraisal

11. Overview of options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install a new mezzanine floor between Levels 3 & 4, North Tower for fully accessible Learning and Community Engagement; create additional office space for the Exhibition/Event Management Team (5 work stations). • Continue with the existing arrangements with limited facilities/accessibility for Learning and Community Engagement, and Exhibition/Event Management.
--------------------------------	---

Project Planning

12. Programme and key dates	<p>Overall programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2016 – Culture Heritage and Libraries CHL Committee, resources allocation and decision, • August/September 2016 – Projects Sub Committee, • November 2016 – Appoint structural engineer, detailed design consultant and quantity surveyor, • February 2017 – Gateway 3/4, • March 2017 – Procurement exercise and appoint contractor, • May 2017 – Gateway 5 (Chief Officer), • June 2017 – Commence works, • August 2017 – Complete works
13. Risk implications	Overall project risk: Green
14. Stakeholders and consultees	<p>Internal: City Surveyor and the Chamberlain have been consulted.</p> <p>The proposal was approved by CHL ctte on 23/05/2016.</p> <p>The Chief Grants Officer of the City Bridge Trust provided the following comment: 'City Bridge Trust is privileged to benefit from some of the proceeds of Tower Bridge ticket sales: enabling the trust to distribute more grants to charities tackling disadvantage throughout greater London. The Trust has always been committed to a more inclusive London and as part of its work has a long history of funding better access to buildings for Londoners with disabilities. The Trust is therefore very supportive of Tower Bridge's proposal for a 'new fully accessible learning and community engagement centre at Tower Bridge'. Whilst benefiting more Londoners, there are also reputational benefits: when the history of the Trust and the bridge are so intertwined, it is important to ensure that both are seen to be supportive and 'walk the talk' in relation to an accessible London. Further it is an opportunity through the community engagement programme to increase the opportunities for the Trust's grantees to benefit from this extraordinary asset, and for the bridge to demonstrate its</p>

	<p>commitment to all Londoners’.</p> <p>External: visiting school groups (London and nation-wide) and community engagement partners. One such community-facing organisation is Variety at Work, which regularly brings groups of children with emotional and learning difficulties to Tower Bridge. On this proposed project Variety requested the following be communicated: “The children have positive stories and these experiences such as Tower Bridge Exhibition are vital for children, so that they can learn directly from the source and to have use of a fully accessible learning space with lunch room facilities would open up the opportunity to a lot more children who travel from outside of London as well. The visit to Tower Bridge is a very popular request under our Educational visits and we are extremely grateful to the staff who are welcoming, friendly and above all knowledgeable, making an interesting visit for the children. We would welcome any plans to extend and enhance these visits.”</p>
--	--

Resource Implications

<p>15. Total estimated cost</p>	<p>2. £250k to £5m</p> <p>Likely cost range: Up to £350k</p>
<p>16. Funding strategy</p>	<p>The ring fenced Tower Bridge Tourism Revenue Budget 2016/17 which is dedicated to delivering continued improvements at the Bridge. Funds for this project have been provisionally earmarked and no further funding would be required in addition to this. There is a realistic idea of the cost from the outset as this project for the North Tower is identical to that completed in the South Tower in 2013.</p>
<p>17. On-going revenue implications</p>	<p>With the provision of additional facilities, the continued growth and demand for Learning and Community Engagement will be catered to which will result in increased revenue. The current learning centre is at capacity, and schools are being turned away.</p> <p>The new space will also increase the Tower Bridge engagement reach, and its range of learning delivery. It will have multi-functionality at the heart of its design, enabling creative, innovative learning sessions, will be suitable for families, and will open up new opportunities to engage with adult learners.</p>
<p>18. Investment appraisal</p>	<p>Although the new learning centre would be likely to result in additional income indirectly (the Schools Learning Programme and use of the space for community engagement activities are offered at no charge but any group participating and then also entering the Bridge as a visitor attraction will naturally pay admission) the main objective here is to achieve the City’s aims and objectives relating to Education as specified in Section 8 rather than income generation, and in this regard a financial ‘payback period’ would not apply. The payback is</p>

	therefore qualitative as it relates to improving accessibility and education.
19. Procurement strategy	<p>The project will be progressed with the City Surveyor's Department in liaison with City Procurement and be considered by the Tower Bridge Steering Group to procure Tower Bridge projects in an efficient and effective manner and ensure they are co-ordinated and delivered successfully.</p> <p>It would be advantageous to include the contractor who carried out the works to the south tower in the procurement process as they have the necessary experience and knowledge which may realise a saving.</p>
20. Legal implications	None
21. Corporate property implications	The provision of the learning space at Tower Bridge will remove the requirement for additional space to be provided elsewhere.
22. Traffic implications	None
23. Sustainability and energy implications	None
24. IT implications	There will be additional IT infrastructure to service the new floor and the IT Division will be consulted on our requirements.
25. Equality Impact Assessment	An equality impact assessment will be undertaken

Recommended Course of Action

26. Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint structural engineers to confirm feasibility of providing a new floor in the north tower and develop the design, • Appoint Quantity Surveyor to undertake a cost appraisal, • Obtain listed building consent from London Borough of Tower Hamlets, • Prepare tender documentation and seek advice from City Surveyor and City Procurement on procurement route. 			
27. Approval track and next Gateway	<p>Approval track: 2. Regular</p> <p>Next Gateway: Gateway 3/4 - Options Appraisal (Regular)</p>			
28. Resource requirements to reach next Gateway	Item	Reason	Cost (£)	Funding Source
	Consultant Structural	To carry out feasibility	5,000	Tower Bridge

	Engineer	study and structural design		Tourism Revenue Budget
	Tower Bridge Consultant Engineer (Aecom)	To provide the necessary reassurance with regards to the proposals	3,000	Tower Bridge Tourism Revenue Budget
	Quantity Surveyor	To undertake a cost appraisal of the agreed design	5,000	Tower Bridge Tourism Revenue Budget

Contact

Report Author	Anthonia Ifeanyi-Okoro
Email Address	anthonia.ifeanyi-okoro@cityoflondon.gov.uk
Telephone Number	020 7332 3741