

<b>Committee:</b> Education Board	<b>Date:</b> 15 September 2016
<b>Subject:</b> Great Fire Website Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Chair of Learning & Engagement Forum	<b>For Information</b>

### **Summary**

This report provides Members of the Education Board with a summary of progress on the Great Fire of London website project which is part-funded by the City. The site was launched on 2 September as planned and is receiving very positive feedback from users. A marketing campaign is about to begin.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Members are asked to note the report.

### **Main Report**

1. To mark the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the Great Fire of London, the Museum of London together with London Metropolitan Archives, Guildhall Art Gallery and the Monument have developed a new website drawing on the City's remarkable fire-related collections. The site was made possible by funding from the City, which also enabled us to secure financial support from Arts Council England. The site, which aims to be a one-stop resource for anyone interested in the Great Fire, successfully went live on 2 September.
  
2. The site, [www.fireoflondon.org.uk](http://www.fireoflondon.org.uk) builds on the huge success of a previous existing schools website at [the same URL. However, the new site is designed to cater for adults and families as well as schools, and](#) uses the combined expertise and collections of the partners to tell the authoritative story of this unique City event. The Explore section cleverly combines a timeline, three historic maps and four 'strands' of the story of the fire to create an immersive and interactive experience which users can explore in as little or as much depth as they want.

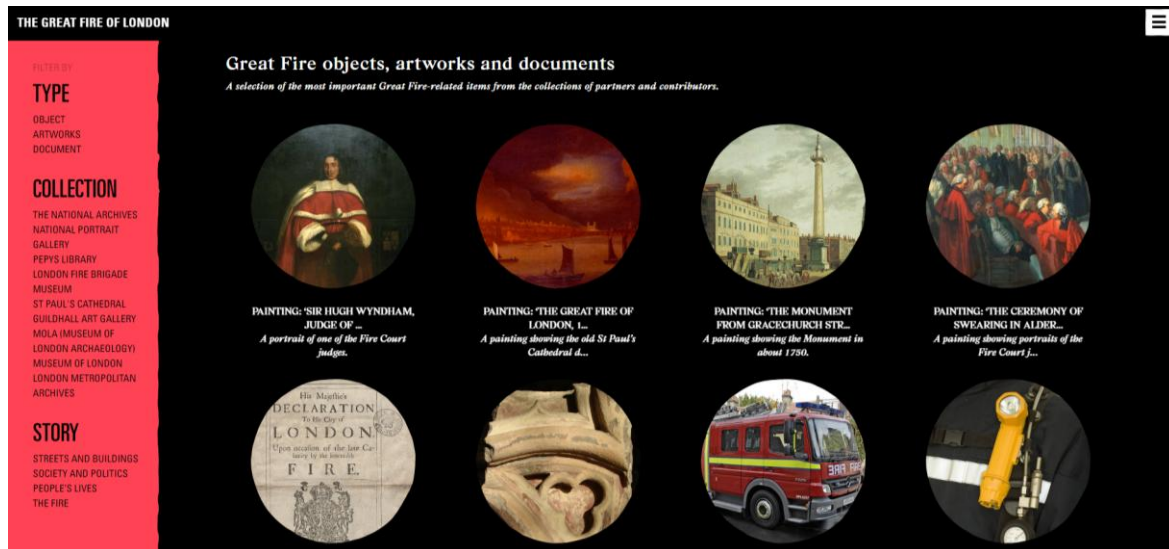


3. The main map and timeline interface of the Explore section.
4. The overall website was designed and built by Fabrique, a Netherlands-based company known for their work on the Rijksmuseum website, the Design Museum website and the Van Gogh Museum website. Fabrique worked with illustrator Levi Jacobs to create the striking illustrations that characterise the site's design. The interactive maps were geo-located and adjusted to sit on top of present-day Google maps by MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology).



An example of the site's distinctive illustrations

- A 'Browse artefacts' section (see below) allows people to also see 100 of the most important fire-related objects, artworks and documents from the collections of the partner and contributor organisations in one place.



- The site also provides access to the Museum of London's new Great Fire 1666 Minecraft experience which is already proving very popular with players of this worldwide online game that attracts millions of users of all ages.
- The new website aims to become the leading resource nationally for 5-7 year old school children throughout England as the Great Fire is part of the National Curriculum at key stage 1. The site features is an exciting, new and improved version of the children's game from the previous website which now works on tablets and smartphones as well as desktop computers and interactive whiteboards. This part of the site was built by London-based company Fish in a Bottle who have experience of producing online games for clients such as the BBC, Disney and Viacom.



### The start page of the children's game

8. Press coverage has included a major article in the Guardian online on 2 September:

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/sep/02/great-fire-of-london-website-350th-anniversary-museum-of-london>

9. The site also received a very positive review on teachers' blog Topmarks:

*The site has a brilliant interactive, animated game for children which challenges their knowledge of how we know what happened all those years ago...The whole website has been created with simplicity in mind. You can find out information about the fire either through coloured boxes on the map or through the Minecraft Experience where Great Fire 1666 uses the power of Minecraft to tell the story of the fire. You can harness the popularity of the game to help to teach the topic. All in all a great resource!*

10. Reaction on social media has also been very positive, for example:



**Karin Wulf**  
@kawulf



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But this website for the Great Fire of London 350th is really fantastic...



**The fire - The Great Fire of London**

How the Great Fire started, spread and was fought in 1666.

[fireoflondon.org.uk](http://fireoflondon.org.uk)



**MMU Library**  
@MMULibrary



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The Great Fire of London was at its peak #otd 350 years ago. Want to find out more? Check out this wonderful website



**The Great Fire Of London - The Great Fire of London**

Everything you need to know about the Great Fire of London from the Museum of London, London Metropolitan Archives, the Monument and Guildhall Art Gallery.

[fireoflondon.org.uk](http://fireoflondon.org.uk)



**Philippa Smith**  
@PhilippaJSmith



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11. In the four days since its launch on 2 September the site has performed admirably, achieving 20,452 visits from 18,101 users, comfortably exceeding the performance of the previous site. The average session duration and low bounce rates suggest that users are exploring the site. Visitors are primarily, but not exclusively, based in the UK and about 50% of UK users are in London. A digital and print marketing campaign is about to begin.