

## REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD1387

### Title: New Year's Eve Fireworks 2014 - 2016

#### Executive Summary:

The New Year's Eve Fireworks provide a fantastic showcase of London nationally and internationally; in 2013 the fireworks were viewed by 13.7 million on BBC television. However attendance at the event has grown to an unsustainable level. In 2013 circa 500,000 people came to central London, a 25% increase on 2012, and as a result of this the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) were only able to maintain public order through emergency cordons and unplanned closures.

Various agencies have advised the GLA that the event format needs to be reconsidered in order to prevent the issues faced by the MPS and other emergency services in 2013. Other than cancelling the event, introducing paid-for- ticketing has been identified by the GLA and partner agencies as the only viable option to ensure the future and safe delivery of this event.

#### Decision:

That the Mayor:

1. Approves the new event format of paid-for ticketing for New Year's Eve for three years (2014 – 2016), and the proposed ticket price of £10 in 2014.
2. Approves the GLA's underwriting of the financial risk associated with uncertain revenue from ticket sales and sponsorship for New Year's Eve for 2014.

#### Mayor of London

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision, and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

24th July 2014

## **PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE MAYOR**

### **Decision required – supporting report**

#### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1. Previous MD1277 regarding NYE 2014 – 2016 approved the following:
  - Allocation of annual funding towards the implementation of 2014 – 2016 (3 year) New Year's Eve events.
- 1.2. Following the 2013 event debrief it was recognised that the prime operational objective for NYE in 2014 and onwards should be to work to reduce the numbers of visitors to central London, given the challenges faced by the operational services in 2013. Other than cancelling the event, introducing paid-for-ticketing is the only viable option to address this objective in 2014. Options for moving the location of the event have also been discounted for 2014.
- 1.3. In coming to this recommendation, the GLA has consulted with a number of key decision-making groups including the NYE Licensing Operational Safety Planning Group and its sub-group the Crowd Control Planning Group, and the Major Events Oversight Board.
- 1.4. The Mayor and a number of his advisers have also been consulted.
- 1.5. A ticket price of £10 has been determined for 2014. In the new event model of paid-for-tickets, viewing areas will have a capacity of 100,000. Based on the previous ten years attendance and the growing popularity of the event it is expected all 100,000 tickets will be sold. However should ticket sales fall short of 100,000 tickets the GLA will underwrite any ticket income shortfall (as outlined in part 2 decision) to ensure the full required event budget.
- 1.6. Following consultation with the above groups and operational scoping for the paid-for-ticket model the process to seek sponsorship is beginning later than previously. Due to this it is recognised it will be challenging to secure a significant sponsor for the 2014 event. There is a risk that only limited levels of sponsorship will be attained for 2014. In this case the GLA will underwrite any sponsorship shortfall (as outlined in part 2 decision) to ensure the full required event budget.

#### **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

##### **2.1. Objectives:**

- To continue to deliver the New Year's Eve Fireworks event in Central London.
- To deliver a paid-for-ticket event in order to manage and reduce attendance thereby decreasing overcrowding and improving public safety.
- To maintain widest possible public accessibility to the event through affordable ticket pricing.
- To reduce as far as possible unplanned impacts on statutory and other agencies.

##### **2.2. Expected Outcomes:**

- Over the three year period (2014 – 2016) the paid for ticket model is expected to deliver a marked reduction in non-ticket holder attendance, as London, national and international audiences recognise the event has moved from a free to ticketed event.
- Audiences will have a better event experience.
- Statutory and other agencies will be able to deliver planned services with minimal impact from unplanned resource requirements

### **3. Equality comments**

- 3.1. Tickets have been set at the lowest possible price point in order to maintain affordability and accessibility for public attendance at the event whilst covering the cost of ticket implementation.
- 3.2. The event will be accessible to all via national media coverage and live broadcast on national and international television.

### **4. Other considerations**

- 4.1. Communications Campaign - If the communications campaign for the new ticketing format is not sufficiently effective there is a risk that a high volume of non-ticket holders could still come to central London and will not be permitted to access the viewing areas. To address this and in conjunction with the communications campaign we will maintain the 2013 infrastructure and overspill areas.
- 4.2. Commercial Charges - There is a risk that the event once ticketed could be perceived as a commercial event, The GLA will need to mitigate against this by explaining that ticket income only pays for ticketing implementation and communicating the necessity of ticketing.
- 4.3. Cancellation of Event - If a paid-for-ticket event format is not approved then the only remaining option is to cancel the event. If the GLA does not deliver the New Year's Eve event there is a reputation risk to the GLA/ London – both in terms of visitors coming to London in the expectation of it happening; tourism business selling on the back of it happening; and any negative media arising from London not being able to compete with other global cities. Additionally this would put increased pressure on local authorities and other GLA bodies including MPS and TfL based on the large crowds that would still come to London to celebrate the New Year.
- 4.4. Ticket Income Risk – The event budget is reliant on the sale of all 100,000 tickets and therefore any sales under this level will require the GLA to cover the financial shortfall (as outlined in part 2 decision).
- 4.5. Sponsorship Income Risk - There is a risk that only limited levels of sponsorship will be attained for 2014. The event budget is reliant on the GLA achieving a certain level of sponsorship and any shortfall will require GLA funds to cover it (as outlined in part 2 decision).
- 4.6. Reputational Risks: Introducing paid-for-ticketing for an event that has previously been free could result in negative public and media reaction.
- 4.7. Relevant Mayoral objectives and Priorities include:
  - Cultural Metropolis Policy 5.6. The Mayor will continue to directly support a number of festivals and cultural events in London, working with a range of partners, to ensure that both well-established but also new events take place across London with activities intended to appeal to as many Londoners as possible.
  - Cultural Metropolis Policy 3.2. In partnership with local authorities and sector bodies, the Mayor's Events Team at the GLA is supporting high-quality festivals, campaigns and cultural events across London, both existing and new, developing and widening audiences and participation in the capital
  - GLA Business Plan. Promote London as a vibrant city and tourist destination maximising the economic benefits to the city.
- 4.8. Consultations that have taken place include:
  - Internal consultation with the Mayor's Events Oversight Board (MEOB) and the Investment and Performance Board (IPB) and all Mayoral advisers.

- Extensive consultation with all operational agencies including but not limited to Metropolitan Police, TfL, British Transport Police, London Ambulance Service, London Fire Brigade, Westminster City Council, City of London, Borough of Lambeth and the Borough of Southwark
- Consultation will also be carried out by the event production company as part of their delivery role with all residents and business affected by the event and the outcome of all such consultation will be factored into the delivery of the event as appropriate.

## **5. Financial comments**

- 5.1. Expenditure related to implementation of the New Year's Eve ticketing format will be met by funding from the GLA, ticket revenue, sponsorship, concessions and other income.
- 5.2. GLA will underwrite sponsorship and ticket sales revenue for the 2014 New Year's Eve event. Funds will be earmarked from the 2014-15 Executive Director of Resources Contingency Reserve, held within the Resources Directorate, with funds drawn as required.
- 5.3. All appropriate budget adjustments will be made.

## **6. Legal comments**

- 6.1. Extensive consideration has been given to the legal issues relating to the proposed closure of certain roads, and the making of a charge for access to those roads, for the purposes of the New Year's Eve Fireworks.
- 6.2. Highways have been closed to traffic in previous years, for the purposes of the New Year's Eve Fireworks, under Traffic Regulation Orders made under section 16A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. It is planned again to use that power to restrict or prohibit temporarily, by order, vehicular and pedestrian traffic on roads, before, during and after the New Year's Eve Fireworks for 2014/15.
- 6.3. The proposal to charge pedestrians for access to a highway is novel, at least in England. However, section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 empowers the GLA to charge for the provision of discretionary (as opposed to required) services, to those agreeing to the provision of such services (subject to a restriction – of which it is understood that there is no prospect of breach – that the income from charges should not exceed the costs of provision). Each person's agreement to the provision of the service (access to the best viewing areas for the fireworks, on a restricted highway) is inherent in the purchase of a ticket.
- 6.4. The GLA is not the highway or traffic authority for the highways in question. It is understood that the GLA has been in discussion with the relevant local authorities. The GLA should seek formal consent of TfL and the highway authorities for the roads in question to charge for this event. It is understood that this could be done as an amendment to the previous Memorandum of Understanding, and that it is not envisaged that consent will not be forthcoming.

## **7. Investment & Performance Board**

- 7.1. The NYE fireworks event was discussed at IPB on 24 April and a follow-up briefing was provided to IPB members on 8 May following consultation with licensing, operations, safety and planning agencies (LOSPG<sup>1</sup>), Major Events Oversight Board<sup>2</sup>, and GLA's legal advisers.

<sup>1</sup> Licensing Operational Safety Planning Group (LOSPG) is made up of all of agencies including the Metropolitan Police, TfL, British Transport Police, London Ambulance Service, London Fire Brigade, Westminster City Council, City of London, Borough of

7.2. A final NYE fireworks paper was sent to IPB on 18 July 2014 which was subsequently approved through the urgency procedure.

## 8. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Announcement of sponsorship opportunities	18/07/2014
Appointment of ticket agency by event production company	04/08/2014
Announcement to general public of new event format (ticketing)	Sept/ Oct 2014
Delivery of event	31/12/2014

**Public access to information**

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after approval or on the defer date.

**Part 1 Deferral:****Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? YES**

If YES, for what reason: This paper contains sensitive information regarding the new format of the event and may have a detrimental effect on the procurement of services provided by third party contractors and on the potential sponsorship secured.

Until what date: 7 January 2015

**Part 2 Confidentiality:** Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

**Is there a part 2 form – YES**

**ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:**

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

**Drafting officer:**

David Holley has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following have been consulted on the final decision.

(✓)

**Assistant Director of External Relations**

Emma Strain has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Sponsoring Director for approval.

(✓)

**Sponsoring Director:**

Will Walden has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

(✓)

**Mayoral Adviser:**

Will Walden has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.

(✓)

**Advice:**

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

(✓)

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:**

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature



Date

23.7.14

**CHIEF OF STAFF:**

I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor

Signature



Date

24.07.2014