

Subject: The Garden Bridge Design Procurement

Report to: GLA Oversight Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 17 September 2015

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides information to the Committee as background to putting questions to invited guests on Transport for London's (TfL) management of the Garden Bridge design procurement contract.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes the report, puts questions to invited guests on Transport for London's management of the Garden Bridge design procurement contract, and notes the discussion.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Garden Bridge is a proposed 366 metre pedestrian bridge between the areas of Temple Underground Station on the north bank of the Thames and the South Bank. The Bridge's final cost is estimated at £175 million. The construction and future maintenance of the Bridge is the responsibility of a charity, the Garden Bridge Trust. The Trust will receive £60 million in public funding (£30 million from TfL and £30 million from the Treasury), and is aiming to raise the rest through private donations.
- 3.2 In July 2012, the Mayor formally directed TfL to begin planning and feasibility studies for a new pedestrian bridge to be built across the Thames between South Bank and Temple. It was envisioned that TfL would manage much of the initial work to procure design expertise, manage public consultation and prepare planning applications. By 2 July 2015, over £9 million had been spent on these preparatory activities.
- 3.3 As part of these preparatory activities, TfL managed the procurement for a company to design the proposed pedestrian bridge. In February 2013, TfL released an Invitation to Tender for "bridge design consultancy services" to three firms: Heatherwick Studios, Wilkinson Eyre and Marks Barfield. In April 2013, TfL announced that Heatherwick Studios had been awarded the contract.
- 3.4 How Heatherwick Studios were awarded the contract has since become a matter of controversy. Issues were first raised by Will Hurst of *Architect's Journal* as a result of a series of Freedom of

Information requests to TfL in late 2014, and subsequently picked up by mainstream media in March this year. This meeting provides Members with an opportunity to discuss the process followed by TfL in awarding the design contract with representatives from TfL itself, as well as external experts.

4. Issues for Consideration

- 4.1 The main topic for discussion is the fairness of the procurement process managed by TfL. Critics have claimed that the process was designed to award Heatherwick Studios the contract from the outset. Issues raised by these critics have included the selection of the three studios invited to tender, the amount of information given to those to complete submissions, the scoring of the submitted bids and the influence of pre-tender lobbying of the Mayor by Heatherwick Studios and its supporters.
- 4.2 Expert guests invited to discuss these issues with the Committee include:
- Richard De Cani, Director of Strategy and Policy, TfL;
 - Will Hurst, Deputy Editor, *Architect's Journal*; and
 - Walter Menteth, former head of the Procurement Best Practice Sub-Committee, Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications for the GLA arising from this report

List of appendices to this report: None

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers: None
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