

Committee(s): Culture, Heritage and Libraries – For Information Operational Property and Projects Sub Committee	Dated: 18 th March 2024
Subject: London Metropolitan Archives Update Report	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2,3,4,8,9,10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Town Clerk	For Information
Report author: Emma Markiewicz, London Metropolitan Archives	

Summary

This report provides an update on the activities of the London Metropolitan Archives and various reviews across all its areas of work, building on the September 2023 update report received by your Committee, attached at Appendix 1.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- To note the report for information

Main Report

Background

1. At London Metropolitan Archives we have undergone a wide ranging and deep review across all areas of our work, as updated in previous papers and detailed in our Business Plan 2024/25. We are seeking to position the organisation for an ambitious strategy of growth and modernisation in the coming years, to inform the accommodation strategy for the lease event in 2035, and to ensure we are delivering a relevant, modern service to serve and inspire all our audiences.

Current Position

2. As set out in our Business Plan 2024/25, we have developed a new set of strategic priorities to guide and focus the transformation process:

(a) Our building and spaces

We will reimagine the public spaces, creating a welcoming and inspiring environment to open the archive to more people, and encourage new ways of using our collections

(b) Our audiences

We will develop innovative events, learning programs and exhibitions to engage existing, new and bigger audiences; We will expand our digital offer to open up our collections to a wider audience

(c) Promoting LMA

We will develop better and more coherent strategies for promoting LMA to significantly raise our profile and increase engagement with our services, and create a clear and engaging brand and identity

(d) Our Collections

We will diversify and expand collections, building an archive which reflects London today, rethinking how we catalogue and modernising our systems for digital and analogue collections

(e) Our Colleagues

We will embrace cross team working to enhance skills development, grow our services collaboratively and encourage knowledge sharing

A New Website and a new brand

3. As part of this transformation piece, we have now commenced the work to develop our new website and brand, and aim to launch this in July as The London Archives.
4. Our ambition is to create a brand which will become recognisable and synonymous with the history of London, to be adopted by people who use and love our service, who love research, history, discover and exploring the past, and are proud to associate with us.

5. The results of our Opinium future audience survey (2022), previously shared with this Committee, showed that the word 'metropolitan' in our current name is unnecessary and confusing. Many respondents assumed that it meant that we only had police or transport archives.
6. We hope that removing the 'metropolitan' and adding 'The' at the beginning (which is usually appended to our current name, even though we are officially just 'London Metropolitan Archives at the moment) will be a significant step for us in developing clear and understandable branding.
7. We have commissioned a media agency called Cog who have a lot of experience working in the cultural heritage sector to transform brands and who will do the following:
 - Create a new logo set for our new brand 'The London Archives', based on existing fonts (Belizio and Dinot) and colour palette. This may be one logo, or a set of versions. We'd like guidance on the versions that we'll need, to fit different contexts (web, socials, print) effectively.
 - Undertake a review and update of our in-house style guide, providing guidance on how to apply the new branding and logo.
 - Create new guidance on marketing our new brand, raising awareness of the new name and attracting new audiences.

This will be done alongside the development of our new standalone website which will be created by Agilysys, the City Corporation's existing web provider.

Accommodation Project

8. We continue to work on the options appraisal for the Accommodation Project. As well as opening channels of communication with the landlord of our existing site at 40 Northampton Road, I am working with City Surveyors to identify the relevant source of funding to enable us to begin the options appraisal work. City Surveyors are also supporting in identifying existing or future capital redevelopment projects which may serve as suitable sites for LMA in future.

Guildhall Library Strategic Review

9. Members have been invited to participate in a consultation on the transformation of Guildhall Library.
10. Guildhall Library is owned and funded by the City of London Corporation, and managed through LMA. Through the Guildhall Library and LMA, the Corporation provides a core archival and reference library service. The Corporation also runs a public library service, including the Barbican Library, Shoe Lane and Artizan Street, which is managed through the Children's and Community Services directorate.
11. Guildhall Library holds over 200,000 titles dating from the 15th to the 21st centuries and is an incredible resource of books, pamphlets, periodicals, trade directories, poll books, manuscripts and archives, telling the remarkable story of more than

2000 years of life in London. Through its Guildhall site it supports the local community offering free computer access, study space, and free talks.

12. In the past year the London Centre has opened in the space next to the library, bringing a new lease of life to that part of Guildhall. In light of this and the transformation piece taking place at LMA, the consultation will enable us to ensure Guildhall Library forms a critical part of overall picture for the strategic redevelopment programme; to ensure the programme encompasses all users of the Corporation's archives and reference library services. The consultation will:

13. Review staffing, locations and opening hours

- Recommend appropriate income generating opportunities, based on good practice elsewhere, external funding opportunities, and evidence of viability
- Recommend new ways of working that will better meet community needs, within current financial restrictions and maximise alternative funding sources
- Model a budget and staff structure, with venues, processes and equipment to deliver this new approach, in line with wider department redesign proposals and Guildhall Library key outcomes.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – the redevelopment of LMA, encompassing our current work to expand and grow our audiences through the development of a new public programme and the work on our requirements for future accommodation will support Destination City and the CoL Climate Action Strategy.

Financial implications – none at this stage. Commissions are covered through LMA Local Risk budget

Resource implications- none

Legal implications -none

Risk implications – none at this stage

Equalities implications – An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the restructure

Climate implications – none at this stage

Security implications – none

Conclusion

14. This report has provided an update on the critical programmes currently underway in support of transformation at London Metropolitan Archives and Guildhall Library.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – September 2018 Update Report

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