

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Culture, Heritage and Libraries	27 May 2014
Subject: Cultural Strategy	Public
Report of: Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries	For Decision

Summary

The Cultural Strategy has been an integral part of the Corporation's corporate plans since 2010. The second (and active) iteration of this was published in 2012 and covers a five year period, running until 2017. The strategy considers City Corporation-funded assets and outputs only (each of which has their own strategy or business plan), and seeks to develop and promote the offer of these assets collectively, securing recognition for the City Corporation as one of the UK's largest sponsors of arts and culture and, by doing so, delivering reputational gains for the organisation on a national scale.

In light of a number of recent developments, it is proposed that the Cultural Strategy is updated. These include the findings of Appendix 1 which tracks progress against the actions listed in the current strategy and shows that the majority of these are now complete, in train or that they have been superseded by events subsequent to the strategy's publication. In addition, local issues and initiatives such as those posed by the service-based review, the development of proposals for a new Cultural Hub, our renewed focus on education and the corporate objective 'to embed communications in all that we do' further accentuate the need to update the strategy so that it is aligned with contemporary thinking.

A shifting landscape in the external cultural context also necessitates change. Cuts in Government funding and the debate over London's share of the national pie, the revision of the Mayor's culture strategy *Cultural Metropolis* and shifts in the way we access and consume culture all need to be considered.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Members:

- Receive the report in Appendix 1 which charts progress against actions for the City of London Cultural Strategy 2012/17; for information
- Approve the proposal for the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries to begin work on a revised Cultural Strategy for 2015/20 and the process outlined in Appendix 2 for achieving this; the new strategy being presented to your Committee in winter 2014/15.

Main Report

Background

1. The City's Cultural Strategy 2010/14 was published in June 2010. This was followed by the current 2012/17 iteration in October 2012 – the first to be owned by your Committee.
2. Drawn up in consultation with officers representing the City Corporation's cultural assets and outputs and those that it funds, the strategy was overseen by the Cultural Strategy Working Party – a group comprising the Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee, the Boards of Governors for Museum of London and Guildhall School of Music & Drama and the Barbican Centre Board.
3. The strategy was approved by each of the above committees before it was heard by the Court of Common Council in October 2012.
4. Lessons learnt from the 2010 strategy – which saw few of its actions realised because there was no dedicated resource attached to it (including staff to realise its aims and objectives) – resulted in the current strategy (2012/17) being a bringing together of projects and activities already planned by City Corporation owned or funded providers under a series of common strands and shared themes.
5. The results of this approach have paid dividends and Appendix 1 (Cultural strategy 2012/17: Progress Against Actions) shows that most actions are complete, in progress or superseded only 18 months since the strategy was published.
6. The overarching aim of the current strategy and of those going forward has, and will continue be, to deliver equal recognition and prestige for the City's cultural offer as that achieved for its position at the heart of global finance and business.

Current Position

7. Appendix 1 summarises progress to date against actions from the current strategy. With the majority of these complete or in progress, and with a new part-time but dedicated staff resource now assigned to culture residing in the Culture Heritage and Libraries Department, there is a need to identify a new set of actions that build on the current strategy's achievements and a capacity to coordinate and/or deliver them (hitherto not possible). This will allow us, with a new strategy, to focus more effectively on communicating the collective endeavour of the City Corporation's cultural providers and so deliver reputational gains for the organisation.
8. The on-going Service Based Review Programme has emphasised the need to review our ways of working, and to adapt according to the current financial climate. So too has it highlighted the need – like never before – for the City Corporation to promote the services it provides for London and the nation, demonstrating our value and difference. Revenue generation, partnership and

PR therefore need to be at the heart of our thinking and it is proposed that the new cultural strategy reflects this.

9. On local level, a number of significant developments have taken place since the last strategy was published that will heavily impact on and influence our ideas going forward. Headlines to be reflected in a new cultural strategy include:
 - a. **A new City of London Visitor Strategy** (approved by CoCo in December 2013); both the visitor and cultural strategies must continue to support one another's themes and objectives
 - b. **The advancement of plans towards a new cultural hub** across the Barbican, Guildhall School, Museum of London and Guildhall areas; partnership working between these organisations as well as across the wider City will be key to realising the aims of the hub
 - c. **A renewed focus on education and the City Corporation's role in supporting London's communities**; newly-founded initiatives such as the *Engage Every Schoolchild* forum comprising the City Corporation's cultural education providers and led by the Museum of London, and the outreach work that we do (especially through the Barbican) are key to realising our corporate aims in this area
 - d. **The development and inception of working groups, policies and procedures across our cultural responsibilities and related fields**; the hearing of our Various Powers Bill and the subsequent policies this engenders (eg street trading), a new Local Plan (adopted in 2015) and the extended and/or revised remits of our City Arts Initiative (CAI), Significant External Events Group (SEEG) and City Culture Network will help us to establish develop our cultural offer with greater cohesion and improved efficiency
 - e. **The delivery of enhancements to existing cultural assets and the opening of new ones**; the forthcoming Heritage Gallery and glass walkways at Tower Bridge, the proposal for Guildhall School and Barbican Libraries to move Barbican Exhibition Hall 2, the arrival of the London Film School on the Barbican Campus in 2016 and the public opening of Charterhouse amongst other developments all serve to strengthen the City's cultural offer and opportunities for driving footfall through them must be maximised
 - f. **The corporate proposition to embed communications in all that we do** will play a key role in us achieving a co-ordinated offer that is promoted to the widest possible audience of cultural consumers, influencers and enablers

10. Externally, some of the headlines to be considered within a new strategy include:
 - a. The publication of the Mayor's revised Culture Strategy – ***Cultural Metropolis*** in April 2014
 - b. The **debate surrounding the concentration of national funding for the arts being in London** and the impact of funding reductions for the capital

- c. **The national, London and City anniversaries and celebrations** in which the City may have a role to play and through which we can drive footfall to our assets – including the outbreak of WW1 (100 years, 2014), MC800 (800 years, Magna Carta, 2015), the Great Fire of London (350 years, 2016), and Shakespeare’s death (400 years, 2016)
- d. The **rapid development of smartphones, handheld devices** and technology in general, changing the way in which we access and consume culture and, conversely, the way in which we can provide it

Proposals

11. In consideration of the points made above, it is proposed that the Cultural Strategy should be revised by the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries according to the timetable in Appendix 2 and under the direction of the Cultural Strategy Working Party.
12. This process will include a consultation phase with key stakeholders from the City Corporation’s own assets as well as those it funds, and the new draft strategy being taken through a comprehensive committee path (outlined in appendix 2), prior to it being received by your Committee in winter 2014/15.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

13. The City Corporation is an important sponsor of culture and the arts. The work that it supports cuts across all three of its strategic aims as stated in its Corporate Plan 2013-17. Primarily, culture is a major component of the third of these aims (to provide valued services for London and the nation) but it also underpins the first and second by enhancing the City’s attractiveness as a place to be for business, for visitors and for all City communities.
14. Within the Corporate Plan, Key Policy Priority (KPP) 5 seeks to increase the impact of the City’s cultural and heritage offer on the life of London and the nation by committing to implement the Cultural and Visitor Strategies for the City; furthermore, the development of the Cultural Hub around and the creation of the Heritage Gallery are mentioned as devices through which to do this.
15. An up-to-date Cultural Strategy will not only help the City Corporation to realise these aims, it will also support *The City Together’s* theme of promoting a City that is “vibrant and culturally rich”, aims and objectives under section 3 “City Culture and Heritage” in the Draft Local Plan and a number of key priorities in the recently approved City Visitor Strategy 2013/17, particularly those within SA1 (Product Development) and SA2 (Marketing).

Implications

16. This proposal is predicated on the assumption that revision of the strategy can be delivered through existing resources within CHL. There are therefore no significant financial implications.

17. The new strategy itself will be mindful of the current financial climate and will seek to ensure actions assume no new money, with costs being met from local risk budgets of City-funded departments and organisations or delivered through partnership. However, some large-scale projects will need to be cited within the new strategy that will be funding dependent (eg the cultural hub proposal). In these cases, the strategy will clearly communicate that the project is supported by the strategy but that its delivery is subject to resources being identified outside of the strategy's scope.
18. The risks of not updating the strategy are that:
 - a. momentum to develop the City as a leading cultural centre is lost;
 - b. the focus for our cultural activities is not unaligned to current thinking and the various shifts in the landscape in which we are working; and
 - c. opportunities to promote the City Corporation's contribution to London and the nation in the field and maximise reputational gains for this work are not fully realised

Conclusion

19. Significant progress has been made against the targets of the City's Cultural Strategy 2012/17. This, in combination with shifts in the financial, corporate and political landscape, means that the time is right to develop a new version of the City Cultural Strategy for your Committee's consideration.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Cultural Strategy 2012-17: progress to date
- Appendix 2 – Revision timeline and committee pathway

Background Papers:

City of London Cultural Strategy 2012-17

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