

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee Board of Governors of the Museum of London Barbican Centre Board Policy & Resources Committee Board of Governors of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama	2 July 2012 4 July 2012  25 July 2012 6 September 2012 10 September 2012	
Subject: Cultural Strategy	Public	
Report of: Director of Culture, Heritage & Libraries	For Decision	
<p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>A new version of the City’s Cultural Strategy, to take effect from the end of the Olympic/Paralympic Games period, has been compiled following consultation with officers and Members. It aims to present a coherent overview of the City’s hugely important contributions to the life of London and the nation around culture and heritage, with development plans that can be monitored. As such it will provide a positive framework within which individual activities can operate, and it will help to promote awareness of the Corporation’s role on the national stage.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members are asked to endorse the Strategy, subject to any comments they would wish to see incorporated.</li> </ul>		

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. The first City of London Cultural Strategy was approved by the Court and issued in summer 2010. The time is now ripe for a new version and the attached draft, which has been compiled following extensive consultation, is now presented for approval.

### **Current Position**

2. The 2010-14 Cultural Strategy was co-ordinated by the Arts & Culture Forum, an officer group chaired by the Director of Culture, Heritage & Libraries, representing the main stakeholders in this field who are wholly or partly funded by the City. The Forum reported to the Arts & Culture Working Party, a Member subgroup of the Policy & Resources Committee. That Working Party was abolished during the governance review and its functions absorbed by the new Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee.
3. The 2010 Strategy presented the strength of the City’s cultural offerings in the context of The City Together, and set out an ambitious programme of

recommendations and actions embracing marketing, education, digitisation, partnerships, volunteering, spatial enhancements and more. Some of these things have since been delivered but the Strategy suffered from issues of ownership of the various activities, most of which were not rooted in the business plans of the areas through which they would be delivered.

4. The new Strategy seeks to remedy this by building more upon plans which are known to be in place. At the same time, it seeks to present a higher-level and co-ordinated vision of a City which is a cultural hub in its own right and which in that sense makes a major contribution to national life.
5. This draft is the result of a series of consultations and discussions including several meetings of the Arts & Culture Forum, the Chief Officers' Group and two meetings of the Members' Cultural Strategy Group, comprising the Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of the Committees to whom this is now being presented. It takes cognisance of a number of points which were made about the 2010 Strategy:
  - A clearer definition of culture, and what it means in the City context, would be useful
  - The strong focus on the performing arts should be balanced by ensuring proper representation of the other cultural and heritage offerings of the City
  - There should be a stronger and better-defined sense of the links between the Cultural Strategy and other corporate strategies (including the Visitor and Communications Strategies).
6. External consultation has also taken place and the draft has been sent to the cultural officers of other London boroughs, to the GLA, to the Arts Council England, and others. At the time of writing this report only one response has been received, from Arts Council England, who said "The three key strands and five key themes are appropriate, timely, and also align well with Arts Council England's own plans going forward. The strands are well developed throughout the document and most have clear programmes of work". This positive endorsement is welcome. Verbal updates will be given to Committees as more external comments are received.
7. The City is unusual in this area (as in so many others) in the range, depth and variety of its cultural offerings. They are delivered by many departments and agencies who work together by collaboration rather than control. It is not the job of any one Department or Committee to dictate the overall agenda and the document must be owned as a genuinely corporate strategy. It should be taken into account when constructing local plans and it will be monitored via ongoing meetings of this Members' Cultural Strategy Group.

8. The Strategy is focused primarily around the activities which are wholly or partly funded by the Corporation, but recognises that culture is manifested or delivered across the Square Mile by numerous other agencies. Its existence should encourage greater collaboration and co-ordination within the City-funded family but it also includes plans to develop more networking groups with external bodies.

### **Proposals**

9. Members are asked to endorse the current version, subject to any comments and suggestions. Before being finalised, its visual presentation will be improved and made more professional, with the help of images. The intention is that the Strategy is an immediately post-Olympic document, building on the legacy of the summer of 2012.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

10. At a time of significant corporate change, it is vital to maintain a strong and confident message about the outstanding contribution which the Corporation makes to the cultural life of London. This is important for the activities themselves but also for the Corporation as a whole, particularly in the context of the current strategic emphasis on raising the profile of the City's role in this field. The new Strategy is built around three key strands – Sustaining Excellence in the Arts, Displaying the Heritage, and Breaking down Barriers – all of which are entirely in harmony with the corporate policy priority around our role as a good neighbour and major sponsor of culture and the arts, and the focus in the Communications Strategy on helping to look after London's heritage.
11. An important point made in the new Strategy is that the City recognises culture as a primary good, worth investing in because culture is important to people's lives; it is not merely an enhancement to the infrastructure of a financial services district. This emphasis helps to strengthen that message about the City's contribution to the life of London as a whole in this arena.

### **Implications**

12. The Strategy is built around assumptions of ongoing funding across the various activities and does not call for, or assume, additional corporate funds. The point is explicitly made that cultural activity must be underpinned by good management and value for money, and that corporate budgetary approvals must be obtained as appropriate.

### **Conclusion**

13. The City Corporation delivers an outstanding range and variety of cultural activities which collectively help to make the Square Mile an internationally important hub for culture and heritage. Each of them has its own planning and marketing mechanisms but their presentation as a whole is beneficial in demonstrating and encouraging more opportunities for join-up, and in strengthening the City's profile to the wider world. The Cultural

Strategy is a mechanism for doing those things and for creating a high-level plan which can be monitored. It needs to be owned corporately and referenced in business planning processes, and it is therefore important that all departments are both aware of and supportive of its contents. Members are therefore asked to make any comments they would wish to see incorporated and endorse the Strategy for final approval.

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