

Appendix 1 – Visitors and Culture

1. This paper summarises the potential policy approaches which could be taken in relation to visitors, arts and culture.

Context

2. Cultural facilities and events in the City attract millions of visitors each year, complementing the City's business role and contributing to its vibrancy. The City's historic environment and its cluster of tall buildings also attracts many visitors who come to enjoy the historic urban form, heritage assets and innovative modern architecture. There are now approximately 30 hotels in the City, with a cluster emerging near the Tower of London in recent years.
3. The context within which the City's cultural infrastructure operates has changed in recent years. There has been a growing recognition of the role that culture can play in creating an attractive and vibrant environment that will attract businesses and workers to the City. Cultural activities are increasingly seen as an important part of the City's world class offer to business and workers. Transport infrastructure such as Crossrail will bring increasing numbers of people into the City, as will the steady rise in visitor numbers both internationally and from the U.K.
4. Culture Mile aims to create a vibrant area which will capitalise on the existing cultural offer in the Barbican and surrounding area, with the relocation of the Museum of London to Smithfield and the proposed development of a Centre for Music on the Museum's current site being the key projects. The Beech Street/Long Lane axis is seen as instrumental to the creation of a more welcoming environment with a mix of supporting uses, including shops, restaurants and pop-up installations.

Current policy position

5. The current Local Plan seeks to maintain and enhance the City's contribution to London's world-class cultural status and to enable the City's communities to access a range of arts, heritage and cultural experiences. Policy DM 11.3 allows hotel development where it would not prejudice the business function of the City. The London Plan identifies the Barbican area as a strategic cultural area within London.
6. The City of London Cultural Strategy is being refreshed, with a more outward looking stance and recognition of the pivotal role culture can play in the life of the City. The City's current Corporate Plan and the draft Corporate Plan for 2018-23 highlight the importance of culture and visitors in the City. The draft Corporate Plan recognises the Square Mile as a focal point for world-class creativity and culture under the theme of shaping the City of the future.

Culture Mile

7. Culture Mile is an ambitious initiative to create an internationally distinctive cultural and creative destination in the north west of the City. This raises issues for the new Local Plan, most notably the extent to which unique planning arrangements will be necessary and desirable to facilitate a distinctive look and feel. The draft Cultural Strategy refers to the potential need to develop a wider spatial masterplan for the area.
8. Although the draft Cultural Strategy refers to unique planning arrangements in the area of Culture Mile, the consequences of such an approach need to be carefully considered as it could create a precedent for similar policy changes in other parts of the City. There is also a need to ensure that the City's cultural offer is not confined to Culture Mile and is accessible to workers, residents and visitors across the City.
9. **The Sub-Committee is asked to comment on the extent to which the Local Plan should consider a specific policy approach within Culture Mile which would be different to other parts of the City.**

Hotel Development

10. The London Plan encourages the provision of hotel bedrooms to meet demands from international and national visitors, with a target of 40,000 to be achieved by 2036. Earlier this year the GLA published projections of demand and supply for visitor accommodation in London, which indicated that there is a need for an additional 4,000 hotel bedrooms in the City between 2015 and 2041. Given that there are approximately 3,000 hotel bedrooms in the development pipeline, this level of provision is considered to be achievable.
11. Hotels provide benefits to City businesses as well as the visitor economy, and they can represent a suitable alternative use particularly of historic buildings. However, there has been concern that hotel development in the City has the potential to displace office floorspace needed for providing an adequate range and type of accommodation to enable the business City to successfully operate. In the period between April 2011 and March 2017 the largest losses of office stock in the City were to hotel use, although proportionally this amounted to less than 1% of the City's total office stock.
12. The Sub-Committee is asked to comment on:
 - a. **whether the Local Plan should seek to restrict hotel development to the minimum necessary to meet GLA projections/targets, or whether it should adopt a more supportive policy approach; and**
 - b. **whether hotel development should be encouraged/restricted in certain areas of the City or whether this should be left to market demand.**

Cultural and Community Facilities

13. The current Local Plan seeks to protect visitor, arts and cultural facilities but does not specifically identify uses or facilities worthy of protection. There have been comments in response to consultation on the Local Plan and some recent development proposals to the effect that greater policy protection should be given to cultural and community uses that are valued by local people and/or have historic significance within the City. Examples cited include the Silver Vaults in Chancery Lane and historic public houses, but other City-related uses such as Livery Halls could be argued to be equally worthy of protection. The introduction of specific policy protection for such uses could limit the ability of landowners to bring forward redevelopment proposals.
14. **The Sub-Committee is asked to comment on whether it considers that the Local Plan should provide stronger policy protection for existing cultural and community facilities, and whether the policy should address the protection of uses which have a historic or cultural association with the City, such as Livery Halls or the Silver Vaults.**