

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LIBRARIES COMMITTEE

Monday, 3 November 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee held at
Committee Room 3 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 3 November 2025
at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Brendan Barns (Chairman)
Suzanne Ornsby KC (Deputy Chair)
Leyla Boulton
Melissa Collett
Elizabeth Corrin
Karina Dostalova
Alderman Professor Emma Edhem
Deputy Helen Fentimen OBE JP
John Foley
Jason Groves
Deputy Caroline Haines
Stephen Hodgson
Adam Hogg
Tessa Marchington

Vasiliki Manta
Alderman Bronek Masojada
Wendy Mead OBE
Sophia Mooney
Anett Rideg
Robertshaw
David Sales
Alethea Silk
James St John Davis
Stephanie Steeden
Deputy Dawn Wright
Matthew Waters
Irem Yerdelen

In Attendance

Officers:

Rob Shakespeare	- Keats House, Environment
Jayne Moore	- Town Clerk's Department
Emma Markiewicz	- London Metropolitan Archives, Head of Profession (Culture)
Rachel Levy	- Community and Children's Services
Omkar Chana	- Interim Culture Director
Andrew Buckingham	- Town Clerk's, Media Officer
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Kevin Colville	- Comptroller and City Solicitors
Jack Joslin	- City Bridge Foundation

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Munsur Ali and Mark Wheatley.

Also present: Sheena Etches, Ruby Baker

Anne Torreggiani, Chief Executive, the audience agency

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED, That the minutes of the meeting of 22 September 2025 be approved as an accurate record of the proceedings.

Actions 01/25 and 02/25 are completed, updates were given on the remaining actions that are reflected in the actions list for the December 2025 meeting.

4. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee noted the forward plan.

Members agreed that a timeline of some matters be included for reference.

5. **INSPIRING LONDON THROUGH CULTURE FUND - ANNUAL UPDATE 2024/25 & FUNDING PROGRAMME ANALYSIS 2020/21 TO 2024/25**

The Committee received the report of the Interim Managing Director of the City Bridge Foundation that provided an overview of projects funded through the Inspiring London Through Culture funding programme (ILTC) in the 2024/25 financial year alongside a comprehensive analysis of the grants awarded by the ILTC over the last five years, illustrating the contribution of the ILTC to delivering both Destination City and City of London's Corporate Plan strategic outcomes.

Members noted the following in particular:

1. The criteria for the Inspiring London Through Culture Fund set out in appendix 1;
2. The recent grants awarded from the Inspiring London Through Culture Fund 2024/25 set out in appendix 2; and
3. The analysis of the Inspiring London Through Culture Fund over the last five years, 2020/21 to 2024/25 inclusive, and its impact, set out in appendix 3.

Referencing the core criteria set out in section 3 of the main report, a Member sought clarification on whether the reference to the enhancement of "London's future" referred to the City or to Greater London. The meeting noted that the reference was primarily to the City of London but contributed also to the creativity of the Greater London area.

Referencing the focus on value for money set out in section 7, Members asked for more information on how value for money is or has been assessed. The

meeting noted that the central funding team assesses value for money at the assessment and approval stage to include scrutiny of budgets, salary benchmarking and ongoing monitoring, noting that in some cases the organisations are small-scale with applications for small amounts of money - and that ongoing value assessments would not necessarily be proportionate. A member asked for feedback on the ongoing monitoring process, noting that such feedback will be included in future reports on the grants to include, for example, further information on the outcome of any grant to be added to the kind of information set out in appendix 2 on p.23 of the agenda. Members noted that due diligence on all organisations is undertaken on an ongoing basis.

Referencing section 26 of appendix 2, a Member asked why more money is not being spent on some projects. The Committee noted that less has been spent compared to other cultural funding schemes, and that further research suggests that applications are not being received from the heritage and visual arts sectors in particular, and that all relevant sectors will be encouraged to apply to the fund.

A Member asked for more information on the alignment of the new culture strategy with any grant-making strategy. The meeting heard that all grants will be captured within the new strategy.

6. SCULPTURE IN THE CITY - 14TH EDITION AND PROPOSAL FOR FUTURE DELIVERY

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk updating Members on the Sculpture in the City (SITC) programme and the successful delivery of the 14th edition (2025-26). The Committee also noted the proposed outline for a change in ownership and delivery model for the SITC programme to transition from the City Corporation to a new Community Interest Company.

Noting section 14 of the main report in particular, Members commented that more detail would be welcome on any transfer and on the mechanics of how any CIC would work further to any final move as well as any financial implications – noting also that an in-principle decision is being sought. The meeting noted that the details are being carefully explored and that there are expected to be resource savings in any such transfer, noting in particular section 36 of the main report. The meeting heard that staff costs currently amount to c. £150K pa, and that the programme enjoys the contribution of partners (who are broadly in favour of a CIC model).

Members commended the SITC programme and its position within the cultural strategy and noted the expenditure involved in the programme. Members commented on the potential drawbacks of loss of control on the part of the CoLC in the event that the programme is transferred to a CIC model, particularly in view of the potential for the quality of the pieces and/or the artists to deteriorate, noting also that CoLC planning discretion would remain. The Committee emphasised the importance of ensuring that the governance and

oversight of any new CIC is appropriate and suitable, and asked that further information be brought to the Committee that explains whether the CoLC could retain a degree of control of the quality of the pieces if the programme moves to a CIC model without negatively impacting the flexibility. The meeting heard that external partners make a significant contribution to the programme and would reasonably expect to influence the programme to a proportionate extent.

In response to a question on funding and feasibility, the meeting noted that the figures set out in appendix 2 are proposals for future expanded SITC programmes, and that responses from future new partners have been favourable.

The Committee agreed to defer any in-principle decision until more clarity is available on option 3 as set out in the main report, to include in particular clarity on the governance and Board composition of any final transfer to a CIC model and any agreement to an in-principle transfer of the SITC programme to a CIC.

7. ACHIEVEMENTS AT KEATS HOUSE APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2025, INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director, Environment updating Members of Keats on achievements at Keats House for the period April - September 2025, noting that Keats House has been delivering the objectives identified in its annual Activities Plan set out in appendix 1, which in turn contribute to the achievement of Departmental, Corporate and wider cultural sector outcomes and initiatives.

Members agreed that risk management procedures in place for Keats House are satisfactory and meet the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011, noting the detailed risk register set out in appendix 2.

The Committee noted in particular this risk: ENV-NE-KH 007 'Tree event or failure' noting also that the House is working closely with the Open Spaces team to assess all trees, noting also that work on a specific tree is expected to begin imminently to reduce the risk to a tolerable level – noting also that the risk was discussed at the meeting of the Keats House Consultative Committee on 31 October 2025, during which the Committee expressed its concern in strong terms about that risk being classed as a red risk. A Member asked when the work would be carried out on the relevant tree, and the Committee heard that the work was escalated soon after the Consultative Committee meeting and will be undertaken shortly.

Referencing section 15, the Committee congratulated Keats House on winning the Sandford Award.

RESOLVED, That the Committee confirm, on behalf of the City Corporation as Trustee, that the register appended to the report satisfactorily sets out the key risks to the Keats House charity and that appropriate systems are in place to

identify and mitigate risks.

8. NATIONAL YEAR OF READING

Members heard an update from the Director of Barbican and Community Libraries on the National Year of Reading that has the theme 'Go all in', focussing on in-depth reading.

Members noted these points:

- City of London libraries are compiling an activity programme around the initiative;
- As one of the sponsors of National Year of Reading, KPMG are exploring support mechanisms around the initiative within the City of London including via the City's Read to Succeed scheme and the Read On app; and
- Opportunities to be a Community reading champion are likely to be available during 2026.

9. CULTURE STRATEGY

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk updating Members on the development of the Cultural Strategy including the founding commitments and priorities that have emerged from the extensive stakeholder consultation undertaken. Members noted that the proposal for the next phase of development is to further share these priorities in engagement sessions with corporates, SMEs and other relevant stakeholders, particularly the cultural institutions and the BIDs, in the Square Mile to further test the commitments and priorities in order to support their planning and implement their delivery.

Referencing section 19 of the report in particular, a Member asked for a timeframe of the next steps especially around stakeholder engagement and the sharing of the draft cultural strategy. The meeting noted that a detailed action and implementation plan is to be included within the strategy that is expected to be drafted by February 2026, and that the CoLC is expecting to further explore corporate involvement in the strategy with the support of the Committee's Chair and Deputy Chair, and that context and narrative is expected to flesh out the strategy's foundations with a full draft strategy available by April 2026.

Members commended the focus on a forward-looking vision and scope, noting the potential for over-consultation to dilute the ambition and optimism of an effective strategy.

Members noted that no further work will be undertaken with Things Made Public.

RESOLVED, That Members

1. Approve the foundational commitments and priorities one to eleven (detailed in paragraph **Error! Reference source not found.** of the report);
2. Approve the hierarchy of priorities as: foundational commitments and priorities (paragraph **Error! Reference source not found.**); opportunities (paragraph **Error! Reference source not found.**); and

additional considerations (paragraph **Error! Reference source not found.**); and

3. Approve the next stage of development of the Cultural Strategy: the implementation plan based on the foundational commitments and priorities.

10. **AUDIENCE AGENCY - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Committee heard an update from The Audience Agency, noting the following points:

- Significant amounts of data have been analysed from a range of data sources including panel surveys;
- 10% of visitors to the City come specifically for the cultural offer;
- 12% of visitors to the City are international visitors;
- A large-scale panel survey revealed differences between different audiences seeking 'hidden gem' offers and those seeking high-profile offers;
- Indicative findings on City workers' responses to the cultural offer are valuable;
- A large proportion of City residents (over 80%) are highly engaged in the City's cultural offer;
- Stage 3 and 4 of the research are in progress that will result in a final report that matches findings with priorities together with a top-line audience strategy; and
- Audience segmentation data suggests that there are nine different people groupings covering various levels of engagement.

A Member asked for an assessment of the appeal of a programme like Sculpture in the City to specific audiences. The meeting heard that the programme is likely to appeal to several audience segments, and that communication could be differentially targeted to those groups.

Commenting on the 'metro-cultural' element of City residents, a Member commented that many residents on the City's periphery do not have the spending power of those highly engaged residents. The meeting heard that less wealthy and less engaged residents are more receptive to community-driven initiatives and outdoor arts events, and these residents were involved in the research.

A Member asked for more information on the international visitors. The Committee heard that research undertaken by the London Museum and Destination City is available on those visitors, and that indicative information on those visitors using existing data will be encompassed in any final report.

A Member asked for clarity on how any specific group could be targeted. The meeting noted that information on target audiences is expected to support communication strategies.

11. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

The Committee congratulated Elizabeth Scott, Head of Guildhall Art Gallery and Amphitheatre, on being awarded the Changemaker Award.

Members were asked to forward potential guest names to the executive in respect of the Committee's evening event in February 2026.

13. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED, that – under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Item	Paragraph

14. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The Committee considered the non-public minutes of the meeting of 22 September 2025.

15. **THE MONUMENT 2025-26 MID-YEAR UPDATE**

The Committee received the report of the Executive Director, Environment.

16. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

17. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

The meeting ended at time not specified

Chairman

Contact Officer: Jayne Moore
jayne.moore@cityoflondon.gov.uk