

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LIBRARIES COMMITTEE

Monday, 8 December 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee held at
Committee Room 2 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 8 December 2025
at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Brendan Barns (Chairman)
Suzanne Ornsby KC (Deputy Chair)
Munsur Ali
Jamel Banda
Leyla Boulton
Melissa Collett
Elizabeth Corrin
Deputy Helen Fentimen OBE JP
John Foley
Stephen Hodgson
Adam Hogg

Tessa Marchington
Vasiliki Manta
Alderman Bronek Masojada
Sophia Mooney
Anett Rideg
Robertshaw
David Sales
Stephanie Steeden
Mark Wheatley
Deputy Dawn Wright
Matthew Bell

In Attendance

Officers:

Elizabeth Scott	- Head of Guildhall Art Gallery, Town Clerks
Jayne Moore	- Town Clerk's Department
Emma Markiewicz	- London Metropolitan Archives, Head of Profession (Culture)
Omkar Chana	- Interim Culture Director
Kevin Colville	- Comptroller and City Solicitors
Joanna Parker	- Environment, Principal Planning Officer
Gregory Moore	- Deputy Town Clerk

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Karina Dostolova, Caroline Haines, Wendy Mead, Alethea Silk, and James St John Davis.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES AND ACTIONS

RESOLVED, That the minutes of the meeting of 03 November 2025 be approved as an accurate record.

4. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee noted the forward plan.

The Committee asked that updates on the Billingsgate Baths be submitted to the Committee (see action point).

On the event scheduled to take place on 05 February 2026, Members asked what communication plan is in place to share ahead of the event. The meeting noted that a narrative will be drafted for the event, though the final strategy has not yet been approved by the Committee – noting also that a range of proposed strategies are already in the public domain and could be communicated, with the fundamentals of the strategy having been agreed and in the public domain. Members agreed that a briefing will be provided ahead of the 05 February event.

In response to a question on the timeframe for the cultural strategy launch, Members heard that the strategy is expected to be launched in May 2026 subject to any amendments.

Noting the recent state visit by the President of the Federal Republic of Germany in early December 2025, a Member asked that closer engagement with Remembrancer's take place on similar events to ensure that the cultural impact be exploited, and asked whether the Committee is expecting to be engaged with events around the 250th anniversary of American independence in 2026. The meeting noted that discussions are ongoing with the SLT to ensure that culture is an integral part of proceedings and speeches and that work is ongoing with Remembrancer's to ensure that American independence events are foregrounded.

In response to question on the nature of the February 2026 event, the meeting heard that the event replaces the Committee's annual dinner and is focussed on inviting as many external stakeholders as possible.

A Member asked for more detail on the Forward Plan on some procedural elements.

5. **CITY ARTS INITIATIVE - RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

RESOLVED, That the Committee:

1. Approve the Francis Barber Blue Plaque Proposal
2. Approve the George Sandeman & Co Blue Plaque Proposal
3. Reject the John Amos Comenius Blue Plaque Proposal

Members noted that any approval is also subject to any additional necessary permissions gained from environmental health, planning and highways.

In response to a Member query on the apparent shape of the Sandeman plaque, the Committee noted that the plaque's shape will be confirmed (see action point).

On the Comenius plaque, a Member pointed out that there is merit in further exploration of the determination of the house's location and the period during which Comenius was at the location, noting the significance of Comenius in a range of historical events. Members also noted that discussions had taken place on the under-representation of women in blue plaque decisions.

A Member raised the matter of Benjamin Franklin, and asked whether a plaque could be expedited in time for the 250th anniversary of American independence. The meeting heard that a Franklin proposal for the City could be incorporated into a new blue plaque process to be presented to the Committee in early 2026.

Members congratulated the executive on clearing the backlog of blue plaque applications.

6. SCULPTURE IN THE CITY – PROPOSED DELIVERY MODEL AND GOVERNANCE

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

Referencing section 28 of the report, Members commented that it would be beneficial for elected Members to be on any CIC Board for reputational risk reasons among others (as discussed at previous meetings), noting also that quality control would be dealt with via the planning process and the City Arts Initiative (CAI). The Committee noted that the matter of CoL Member representation would be clearly and explicitly presented to the Policy & Resources Committee.

Referencing section 26 of the report (CAI panel) the meeting noted that the governance structure of the CAI will remain unchanged, and any new process will ensure that the Committee's requirements are met.

A Member sought further clarification on the establishment, finances, process, risk management and timescale of a CIC. The meeting noted the following:

- There is no recent example of a CIC being established (noting the example set out in sections 33 and 34);
- The timescale will be a factor in the planning stage;
- Partners are supportive of the model set out in the report, with fundraising frameworks set out in section 31 of the report;
- The move from the in-principle approval to the operational detail is to take place via the Delegated Authority process (as per point 2 below);
- Actual approval to establish a CIC (or other entity) will need to take place at the level of the Corporation's Policy & Resources Committee

RESOLVED, That the Committee approve Option 3 as set out in the report: transfer SITC ownership, management and operational delivery to an external entity in the form of a Community Interest Company (or other legal structure). In doing so, Members agreed to:

1. Approve the *in-principle* transfer of the SITC project to a new Community Interest Company (CIC) limited by guarantee or other legal structure which is considered most suitable following legal advice and consultation with stakeholders for future management and delivery noting that all SITC works will be presented to the Committee for approval;
2. Delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chairs of Policy & Resources and Culture Heritage and Libraries Committees, to advance from *in-principle* to *completing* the operational details of any CIC establishment (or other legal structure) and any transfer; and
3. Approve that the governance of any CIC (or other legal structure) be taken through the appropriate City Corporation Committee process, specifically (i) composition and the establishment of any Board of Directors; and, (ii) how the City Corporation would be represented on the Board of Directors of any outside body to maintain oversight of the project (in line with the 'Protocol for Members, Officers and Individuals appointed or nominated by the City Corporation to Outside Bodies') with clear elected CoLC Member representation.

7. **REVENUE OUTTURN FORECAST AS AT QUARTER 2 2025/26**

The Committee received the report of The Chamberlain, Deputy Town Clerk, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services, City Surveyors, and Executive Director of Environment setting out the Quarter 2 estimated outturn for the Committee, noting in particular these two points:

- The total local risk is projected to overspend by £143k, this is attributed to unidentified savings coupled with lower than targeted income levels (highlighted in paragraph 3 of the report); and
- The total central risk budget is projected to overspend by £110k, related to an increase in rents and rates upon The London Archives (highlighted in paragraph 4 of the report).

8. **CITY ARTS INITIATIVE - BARBICAN SCULPTURE COURT INSTALLATION**

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

RESOLVED, That the Committee approve the Barbican Sculpture Court Installation – Delcy Morelos.

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

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

The Committee noted that Rebecca Salter, the first female President of the Royal Academy of Arts, will be awarded the Freedom of the City of London on 05 February 2026.

A Member commented on an apparently inappropriate installation close to the Keats statue at Moorgate and asked whether planning permission from the BID was obtained. The meeting heard that clarification would be sought.

On the foundational commitments and priorities agreed on 11 November 2025, a Member suggested the establishment of a Culture Fund as a further 12th priority, separate to commitment 9.

Members supported the proposal, and suggested that it should be referred to the Education Board to explore complementarity in delivering cultural priorities – noting in particular commitment number 10 (‘Open the City’s culture to London’s classrooms’).

RESOLVED, That an additional commitment be agreed, whose wording is as follows:

FUNDING: IMPLEMENTING AND DELIVERING THE CULTURAL STRATEGY

Establishment of a cultural fund to assist with the facilitation and implementation of these foundational commitments and priorities.

11. 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.

12. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

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

14. 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

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