

# Discover the City

The City of London Visitor Destination Strategy (2019-2023)

## Covid-19 Supplement

### Introduction

The City of London published its Visitor Destination Strategy, *Discover the City*, in 2019. This had the overarching aim 'to develop the City as a vibrant, attractive, welcoming destination for all, leveraging these attributes to showcase London as a world-leading place to visit and do business'.

Globally, tourism has been severely impacted by Covid-19. The City of London, with its strong international and business markets, faces particularly major challenges. In April 2020, during the early phases of lockdown, the City Corporation began to plan its approach to Covid-19 recovery via industry consultations and gathering international insights.

### Strategic Approach

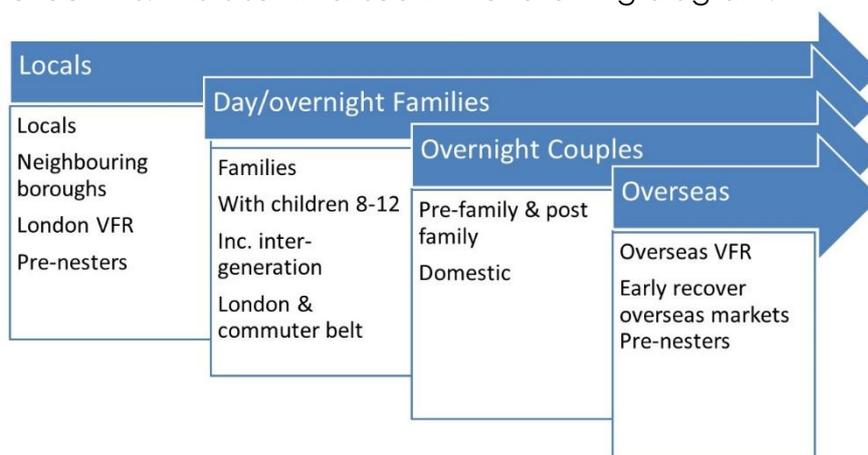
*Discover the City* outlines four pillars and ten objectives to meet the overall aim (above). These all remain valid in a Covid-19 environment but with an increased priority and accelerated emphasis in some areas. This is illustrated in the table below with higher priorities shaded green:

Strategic Objective	Covid-19 Priority
<b>Pillar 1: Brand positioning and promotion</b>	
Refine and build our brand identity	<b>High</b> – increased emphasis on the 'welcome back to the City' message
Exploit our capacity	<b>High</b> - particularly utilising under-occupancy in hotels to reach different markets and provide added value
Grow business visits	Steady – remains a medium-term priority as the market recovers
<b>Pillar 2: Develop and share our offer</b>	
Share the City's great story	<b>High</b> - through combining stories and experiences that bring the City to life for visitors
Create and curate portfolio of new experiences	Medium - recognising that the City is greater than the sum of its parts and the combination of potential experiences makes for a compelling offering
Develop Culture Mile	Steady- remains a continued opportunity with particular focus on neighbouring boroughs
<b>Pillar 3: Build a Quality Welcome</b>	
Make our welcome world-class	<b>High</b> - increased emphasis on reassuring visitors pre-visit and while they are in the City, with excellently trained staff

Strategic Objective	Covid-19 Priority
<b>Pillar 4: Support and expertise</b>	
Grow our knowledge base	<b>High</b> – understanding our visitors' changing needs and motivations is vital
Develop our assets and stakeholders	<b>High</b> – the City Corporation acts as a conduit for market intelligence and national advice and provides support to tourism businesses via the City Information Centre and its networks
Support the capital and country	Medium – the City has a key role in London's recovery and vice-versa – both domestically and internationally

## Recovery Plan - Priority Phases

Across these ten objectives, a new recovery plan developed in consultation with City stakeholders bases its approach on a recognition that markets will recover from the impacts of Covid-19 at different rates and that interventions need to reflect this. This is summarised in the following diagram:



Four phases are envisaged:

### Phase 1

Markets: locals and neighbouring boroughs, London Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR), pre-nesters

- **Develop, create and curate content** on seamless City experiences, to include day trip itineraries
- **Incorporate** travel to and around the City by boat, bicycle and walking, as well as special deals for limited periods, roof top bars and on-street dining (noting safety angle)
- **Distribute content** via third party outlets and amplify the City presence through the strategic campaigns of London and Partners, VisitEngland, VisitBritain and other national and local bodies and consortiums; as well as through London press and social media, coordinated with partners.

## Phase 2

Markets: families with children aged 8-12, inter-generational, London and commuter belt. As Phase 1, but also

- **Develop, create and curate content** with stakeholders for the family market
- **Incorporate** rail travel and links with boat trips, cycling and walking opportunities and fun educational trails and visits. Hotels offering afternoon tea, family rooms and apartments for short breaks may also have currency.
- **Distribute** content as above also with rail companies, regional press, joint advertising, Online Travel Agents (OTAs) and tour operators, press and media, social media,

## Phase 3

Markets: couples pre-family and post family (domestic):

- **Develop, create and curate content** for romantic weekend and winter breaks with City hotels subject to restrictions
- **Incorporate** special themes, once-in-a-lifetime opportunities, rooftop bars and restaurants, architecture, street art and sculptures
- **Distribute** content via third party outlets including the strategic campaigns of London and Partners, VisitEngland, VisitBritain and other national and local bodies and consortiums, social media, OTAs, regional and national press, City hotel marketing programmes and through joint advertising with relevant partners

## Phase 4

Markets: continue with a focus on the London and domestic market, but also target overseas and VFR markets predicted to recover first:

- **Develop** content and stories around 'welcome back', and highlight that this is a special year to visit with attractions offering quiet and uninterrupted experiences
- **Incorporate** itineraries that combine iconic attractions with 'undiscovered' treasures for incoming operator programmes (eg UKInbound etc)
- **Distribute** via carriers (Eurostar, Ferries, Airlines) and London and Partners, VisitBritain, OTAs and Influencer platforms. Support media familiarisation visits and digital campaigns with London and Partners, VisitBritain and other consortia.

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