

Report – Policy & Resources Committee, Culture Heritage & Libraries Committee

Destination City: Strategic Review

To be presented on Thursday, 7th October 2021

*To the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons
of the City of London in Common Council assembled.*

SUMMARY

Destination City - Strategic Review is a proposed programme of work setting out a renewed vision for the Square Mile to become the world's most attractive destination for workers, residents and visitors.

Your Policy and Resources Committee and Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committees consider that delivery of this renewed vision is vital for stimulating the City's post-Covid recovery. In order to achieve this expeditiously, your Committees presents proposals for streamlined governance of the work programme, identifying the primary Committees with responsibility for overseeing the review and suggestions for wider engagement. The governance proposal aims to facilitate a fast-paced and agile project that can best equip the City Corporation to swiftly develop an ambitious and long-term plan.

RECOMMENDATION

The Court of Common Council is **recommended** to endorse the proposed strategic review and, in particular, the streamlined governance proposals outlined at paragraphs 11-15.

MAIN REPORT

Background

1. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to create a rapidly changing socioeconomic and cultural landscape. Over the coming years, destinations will need to be even more compelling places to visit, work and invest. The City therefore needs to build on its strengths, but also challenge itself to be more innovative, inclusive and sustainable.
2. The Recovery Taskforce was commissioned in April 2021 by your Policy & Resources and Planning & Transportation Committees to identify objectives actions to ensure the Square Mile remains internationally competitive and locally vibrant. Its report, *Square Mile: Future City*, published in April 2021, provided a blueprint for medium-term recovery from COVID-19. One particular focus of the report was on creating a vibrant offer and included a commitment to a strategic review of the City's offer.

3. This will build on key existing strategies including the Visitor Strategy 2019-23 and Cultural Strategy 2018-22, as well as the Transport Strategy and the Climate Action Plan.

Current Position

4. The proposed strategic review, labelled *Destination City*, aims to assess and benchmark the City's current offer as a destination for workers, visitors and residents. Setting out the vision for the City's future offer, the key output from this work will be a set of specific, detailed and evidence-based recommendations to deliver this. A summary overview document is provided at Appendix 1.
5. The review will provide findings and conclusions for Members to consider, focusing on three key deliverables:
 - a. **A new vision for the City as a destination:** ambitious and wide-ranging, this will provide a touchstone for prioritising activities and embedding a shared vision for growth, covering both internal stakeholders and external partners.
 - b. **Recommendations for developing the City's offer as a destination:** improving the City's offer and appeal, this will identify specific activities and actions that will boost the City's draw as a destination with a range of audiences, immediately and over the next five years.
 - c. **Recommendations for promoting the City's offer as a destination:** this will set out recommendations and strategies for showcasing the City's appeal to a range of new and existing target groups.
6. The review will span all the elements that make for an attractive destination, engaging with numerous sectors including retail, hospitality, culture and heritage, and the night-time economy.
7. Numerous business areas across the City Corporation will be consulted to gather evidence and co-create a shared vision, while testing the feasibility and implications of proposed activities.
8. External engagement and relationship building will also be an integral pillar of the programme. Interviews and workshops with stakeholders will identify the City's strengths, as well as new activities for development. This work will be underpinned by research exploring innovations in other global destinations.
9. The review will be led by Danny Lopez, founding head of London & Partners and former Consul General in New York. Danny will be working on a pro bono basis. A summary CV is provided in Appendix 2. He will be supported by Kate Keating, an external advisor with extensive experience in marketing.
10. The report will go to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee, then Policy & Resources Committee in the winter months. It is hoped that this will then be submitted to Court early next year.

Governance Arrangements

11. At this preliminary stage of the strategic review, it is difficult to say with certainty which committees' remits will be impacted by proposals and to what extent; however, it is known that the primary Committees with whom responsibility rests are the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee (given its responsibility for the City Corporation's current culture and visitor strategies) and the Policy & Resources Committee (with its responsibility for the City Corporation's overall policies, strategic priorities, and resource allocation).
12. The review will establish short and medium term actions intended to be deployed from early 2022. By delivering the project at pace, it will equip the City with an offer that reflects the evolving needs of City businesses and their consumers in a radically changed economic and social landscape.
13. Given the importance of the recovery, pace is vital in delivering this workstream. It is, therefore, proposed that the two aforementioned committees be entrusted to consider emerging proposals and present them to the Court. Where there are implications for other Committees, it is suggested that their perspectives are reflected by their Chairs serving in an ex-officio capacity on Policy & Resources and Culture Heritage & Libraries, or (where not already Members) their being invited to attend and contribute for discussion of the item at the relevant meeting. Wider engagement with other relevant Chairs will be provided during the programme to ensure that their Committees' interests are considered against the emerging proposals. In addition, the final recommendations will be taken to the Court of Common Council for approval.
14. The Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Policy & Resources and Culture Heritage and Libraries will also ensure there is oversight as the Review progresses.
15. It is hoped that proposed governance arrangements will provide the maximum opportunity to facilitate Member engagement, whilst also enabling swift and impactful project delivery.
16. Your Policy & Resources and Culture Heritage & Libraries Committees have endorsed the above proposed streamlined governance arrangements.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

- **Strategic implications:** This goes to the heart of the Corporate Plan in underpinning the aim of having a vibrant and thriving City. The outputs are also likely to provide an update and assess the existing 2018-22 Cultural Strategy and 2019-23 Visitor Strategy which were both created prior to the pandemic.
- **Resource and financial implications:** Funding has already been agreed for the delivery of the project. The outcomes of the project will inform a subsequent review of resources across Cultural and Visitor Development. This will be sent to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee at a later stage.

- **Legal implications:** No legal implications have been identified at this stage. This will be kept under review.
- **Risk implications:** At this stage in the project, no significant risks have been identified. This will be kept under review.
- **Equalities implications:** Underpinning the review will be diversity and inclusion. At this stage in the project, no negative equalities implications have been identified. This will be kept under review and equalities analysis will be carried out if necessary, to ensure negative impacts can be mitigated and opportunities for positive impacts exploited.
- **Climate implications:** This will be fully in line with the Climate Action Strategy and will look to drive the implementation of the actions that Members have agreed.
- **Security implications:** There are no security implications which have been identified at this stage in the project. This will be kept under review.

Conclusion

17. The City is unique, combining a rich history with a huge capacity for re-invention. It has faced countless challenges in the past and has always emerged as a global destination of choice. These unprecedented times have reshaped what our audiences want and the City needs to act fast to remain competitive.

Appendices

- **Appendix 1:** Destination City – Scope
- **Appendix 2:** Summary CV - Danny Lopez

All of which we submit to the judgement of this Honourable Court.

DATED this 22nd day of September 2021.

SIGNED on behalf of the Committees.

Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Chair, Policy and Resources Committee

Deputy Wendy Hyde
Chair, Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee