

Committee(s)	Dated:
Culture, Heritage & Libraries – for information	16/07/22
Subject: Culture Mile	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	7, 10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
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Summary

This report provides details of the inception, development, achievements and current status of the Culture Mile project.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report.

Background

1. Culture Mile is a flagship cultural district project which has been funded by the City Corporation from 2012. It was originally established as a partnership between the City Corporation, the Barbican Centre, the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, the London Symphony Orchestra and the Museum of London.
2. Culture Mile was set up to create a ‘world-class destination for culture and learning’ in the heart of London. Practical activity to build the cultural district has been underway for the past 5 years and the project has reached the halfway point of the 10-year strategy.
3. Since its inception, Culture Mile has brought an expanding network of organisations into new collaborations based on culture, creativity, learning and place in order to deliver on a clear set of outcomes: **Transform the area; Boost the local economy; Convening connections; Social mobility and Creative citizenship.**

4. Culture Mile's footprint stretches from Farringdon to Moorgate, focusing on this as the 'visitor destination zone' in which the founding cultural partners are located. This part of the City is undergoing significant transformation through the realisation of a series of major projects (see Appendix 1). These projects, to be realised between 2017 and 2028, amount to an approximate (and largely confirmed) City Corporation investment of between £300m and £400m in the Culture Mile area (excluding £200m investment in the Elizabeth Line in 2017, and of an estimated total of between £400m and £500m).
5. Culture Mile was conceived and developed in response to several clear factors that still stand:
 - the low-quality experience of travelling to and from the area's cultural venues
 - the transformative effect of the opening of the Elizabeth Line on the area between Farringdon and Moorgate
 - the concern to manage the consequences of Brexit and the need for the City to remain competitive as a place to do business
 - the significant degree of City Corporation investment concentrated in the area
 - the global trend of cultural districts being rapidly developed in major cities worldwide, supporting the 'war for talent' and increasing competition in the international tourism visitor economy
 - the aims and priorities of the Corporate Plan 2018-23.
6. Culture Mile was thus articulated in 2012 as a cultural hub which would advance the City Corporation's ambition to develop the area between Barbican and Farringdon into a focal point for cultural activities. The City Corporation first expressed this policy priority in the *Cultural Strategy 2012-2017*, subsequently stating in *Visit the City: Visitor strategy and action plan for the City of London 2013-2017* the aim to "develop a cultural hub across the Barbican, Museum of London, Guildhall School and Milton Court campuses to promote the City's cultural pre-eminence, animating this area to drive footfall and enhance the visitor experience".
7. From the first stages, the cultural hub was conceived as an opportunity to bring disciplines and organisations together into powerful collaborations for a common cause. The link between the expertise of the cultural partners and City public realm has been particularly important in this regard, positioning the project as a 'cultural placemaking' initiative. It has been working beyond the confines of the cultural sector and establishing how the strength of the City's cultural offer can contribute value in a range of areas such as local economic growth, social mobility and business success – within its vision to create a great place and destination.
8. It was agreed that public realm investment should be focussed into a specific area in the Square Mile – that which contained the major cultural organisations – so that over time a distinct difference could be made, and the area's unique character revealed.
9. In 2013, the Policy & Resources Committee established a dedicated Cultural Hub Working Party, chaired by the Policy Chair, to oversee the development of

the cultural hub and in 2014 Publica were commissioned to lead the development of the Cultural Hub vision.

10. The City Corporation's Local Plan, adopted in 2015, emphasised the importance of championing culture in the Square Mile, with content that included 'promoting the further improvement of the Barbican area as a cultural quarter of London-wide, national and international significance.' That year the *Vision for the City of London Cultural Hub* was published, outlining a set of values and principles, recommended actions, and a potential geographic footprint for the Cultural Hub. The vision and principles were adopted by the Court of Common Council. During 2015, the Policy & Resources Committee also granted the continuation of the Cultural Hub Working Party, as well as appointing the Assistant Town Clerk to the role of Cultural Hub Director.
11. 2016 focussed on the Cultural Hub's identity. The Working Party made a successful bid to Policy & Resources for funding of £100k to employ a specialist agency to assist the City Corporation and its partners in the development of a dedicated brand, marketing, and communications strategy. Jane Wentworth Associates and Pentagram were appointed to deliver a new brand and identity. The final cost of the exercise was £115,250 with additional resource was funded from monies set aside for Cultural Hub purposes by the Chamberlain. A further £23,000 + VAT was authorised for additional services from JWA and up to £20,000 + VAT was requested to enable the creation of a Culture Mile website and digital presence. This was taken from £0.4m set aside in the 2017/18 Revenue and Capital Budgets for Marketing and other costs connected with the Cultural Hub.
12. Also, in 2016 the Planning and Transportation Committee agreed to approve the allocation of up to £350k for the creation of a Look and Feel Strategy and associated programme, so that specialist input could be procured to ensure that a local public realm design strategy proceeded in tandem with the branding and identity work on the Cultural Hub. Funding came from the Cultural hub funding allocation in the Town Clerk's local risk budget, derived from 2016/16 corporate underspend. Led by creative design studio Fluid and delivered in 2017-18, the final report establishes a set of principles for public realm development in the area and makes recommendations across a range of areas including lighting, wayfinding, public information, public art and place activation, greening and climate resilience, and servicing, infrastructure, and management.
13. The new 'Culture Mile' brand was endorsed by the Cultural Hub Working Party and launched publicly in July 2017. The Working Party were keen to see 'quick wins', so an indicative programme was endorsed by the Working Party in February 2017 and approved by Members in March 2017. The total estimated cost for Phase 1 and development of Phase 2 work was £565,000, to be delivered between July 2017 and December 2018. This funding came from the £5m provision set aside by the Chamberlain from the City Fund for works associated with the Cultural Hub Look and Feel Strategy.
14. From 2017, building on a skeleton staff structure and co-operative/ad-hoc partnership working to date, a paper to the Working Party cemented the Culture

Mile's staffing structure and the long-term approach to inter-organisational collaboration. This took the form of a series of workstreams for the most critical functions, each guided by a core partner organisation or City Corporation department and managed by a senior officer with expert knowledge of that area. Workstreams were defined as: Programming; Marketing; Public Realm; Partnerships; Property; Learning; Community and Communications, with a Culture Mile Manager and Coordinator appointed (in mid-2018) to a central coordinating and enabling role. This approach was designed to be resource efficient, avoid accidental duplication, to bring skillsets and disciplines into routine and regular creative collaboration, and over the long term to support ever closer collaboration between the partnered organisations.

15. In 2018 Culture Mile was further cemented as a Corporation priority through the inclusion in the 2018-2022 City of London Cultural Strategy of the Strategic Objective to "Develop Culture Mile in the northwest of the City which will become an exciting destination for London and act as a catalyst for change across the rest of the Square Mile".
16. In February 2018 Policy & Resources Committee received a paper from the Working Party explaining that underspends had been used to fund Culture Mile to date. It had become increasingly difficult to co-ordinate the range of work across different workstreams using ad-hoc funding, which hampered forward planning and recruitment of staff. Funding was therefore sought, and approved, for revenue funding to enable a core level of support and activity requiring £1.43m per annum for 2018/19 and 2019/20.
17. This revenue funding covered all workstream staffing and activity except Public Realm and Learning. City Public Realm was allocated, through Planning & Transportation/Streets and Walkways Committees, a capital sum of £5m for implementation of the Look and Feel Strategy, and separately, the Education Board allocated a total of £1.45m to the Learning workstream from 2018/19 up to the end of 2022/23. The Learning workstream, known as Culture Mile Learning, was previously the Museum of London's Learning and Engagement Forum, and brings together all 27 City Corporation funded organisations, across the Square Mile and beyond, that have a cultural learning offer.
18. In March 2018, the Policy & Resources Committee approved the ten-year Culture Mile Strategy for 2018-2028, with the vision that "The Square Mile is more than one of the world's most important financial markets: we want to redefine it as a global leader in both commerce and culture." The strategy was based on the funding and objectives agreed by Policy & Resources Committee in February 2018.
19. Culture Mile's activities began in earnest in spring 2018 with an ongoing programme of inspiring creative events in unexpected places, which supported a high-quality experience and welcome for visitors, workers and local communities. Highlights have included:

- Culture Mile’s launch event, the *Tunnel Visions* audio-visual experience in the Beech Street Tunnel produced by the Barbican, which attracted an audience of 50,000 over one weekend
 - the Smithfield 150 celebrations (August 2018) led by the Museum of London – 25,000 people experiencing six festival zones over a bank holiday weekend
 - Sound Unbound (May 2019), a Barbican-led celebration of classical and experimental music in 27 stages across the district. 160 events that attracted 9,000 people; 5-star reviews
 - The *Play the Mile* season in summer 2019 which brought an estimated extra 44,000 visitors into the City
 - Winning multiple awards inc. Best Meanwhile Project 2019 from the Developer (for Play Streets), Time Out London Green Space of the Year Award 2021 (for Gaia’s Garden) and Real Estate Project of the Year 2021 from the UK Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum (for Gaia’s Garden)
20. During 2019/20 the project’s activities generated a total of £686k (est.) secondary spend in the district.
21. The Covid-19 pandemic required the cancellation of Culture Mile’s plans for outdoor programming in 2020. Despite this, Culture Mile engaged 100,000 people approx. during the 20/21 ‘lockdown year’ and made convincing progress particularly in two areas:
- ***developing cultural participation projects with and by local residents***
Culture Mile created Play Packs for families living in central London who lacked internet access, and have distributed 20,000 of these through food banks, mutual aid groups and community centres. Its Imagine Fund was piloted to support local projects.
 - ***bringing together culture and commerce to work together for the City’s recovery***
Following its successful *Creativity: the Commercial Superpower* conference at Mansion House, Culture Mile instigated the Lord Mayor’s Culture and Commerce Taskforce and partnered with Culture & Visitor Services and Mansion House to establish how the cultural and FPS sectors can collaborate more effectively and how creativity and culture can be at the heart of the City’s recovery from the pandemic. Members of the Culture Mile core team led and facilitated much of the Taskforce’s activities and Culture Mile took on the direct delivery of two projects recommended by the Taskforce.
22. As a brand, Culture Mile’s recognisability among the public has risen fast – from 26% in 2018 (Smithfield surveys) to 65% (Perception Analysis). As of mid-2022 has a combined reach of 12,500 followers across social media, with 1,400 engaged email subscribers and an average of 2,500 visitors to its website per month.
23. Culture Mile launched in 2017 with 12 further organisations committing to working within the partnership to transform the local area. By 2022, including relationships developed through the independent Culture Mile Business Partnership, that has increased to 84 – a 700% rate of growth over 5 years.

Governance & staffing arrangements

24. Culture Mile's development has been overseen at Member level by the Culture Mile Working Party. The Working Party was chaired by the Policy Chair and met 3 times/year to receive updates on Culture Mile's progress and to debate and make recommendations in relation to alignment with wider Corporation priorities, the potential for strategic support of creative industries businesses in the district, and options for Culture Mile's long term business model. As part of the Lisvane Review, Member oversight of Culture Mile transferred to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee from January 2022.
25. At operational level, the Culture Mile Executive brought together multiple organisational and departmental leads to advise and support delivery. The Culture Mile Executive has been chaired by the Culture Mile Director and since April 2021 by the Director of Innovation & Growth.
26. As befits a multi-disciplinary, inter-organisational project, Culture Mile's staffing structure has been unique in the context of the City Corporation and its partners. Nine workstreams were created in 2018, each with an expert 'workstream lead'. Six of these were sponsored by the cultural partners and three by the City Corporation. The 'central' workstream, led by the Culture Mile Manager, brought these workstreams into regular creative collaboration around defined project outcomes. Given the objectives of the Target Operating Model, Culture Mile has been a powerful model of how cross-organisational working, and collaboration across Corporation Departments, can work effectively.

Financial context

27. In 2018/19 and 2019/20, the investment of £1.43m per annum in Culture Mile's core revenue budget by the Policy & Resources Committee was supplemented by annual awards of £274,500 from the Education Board (for Culture Mile Learning). Project-based investments of £580,000 from the Resource Allocation Subcommittee were made in 2019/20 (for Public Realm projects). In 2019/20 it was calculated that every £1 of City Corporation investment generated an additional £1.17 (cash or in kind) from partners and corporate sector stakeholders.
28. In November 2019, the Policy & Resources Committee considered Culture Mile's core revenue budget funding proposals of £1.378m for 2020/21 and £1.15m for 2021/22 and decided to reduce Culture Mile's 2020/21 Core Revenue Budget to £1m and to provide this for one year. Committee members took the view that Culture Mile should move quickly to a business model which balanced City Corporation investment with external funding and were concerned that bold action was needed to ensure that City Corporation did not become the 'bank of last resort' for the project. The Property and Communities workstreams were discontinued at end March 2020, when the reduction in core revenue funding took effect.
29. In autumn 2020, the team were advised that due to pressures of the Fundamental Review, City Corporation funding would again be reduced

substantially. Proposals to fund Culture Mile over 2 years from 2021/22 – 22/23 to an amount of £424k (plus carry forward requests from other areas totalling £185k) were made to Policy & Resources Committee in January 2021.

30. Central to these proposals, which were accepted, was that Culture Mile would prioritise the creation of an independent business partnership which would campaign for a Business Improvement District to be created in the district from spring 2023 onwards. Achieving success in a BID ballot in spring 2023, it was argued, will unlock resources for placemaking, culture-led activation and other enhancement from outside of the City Corporation within a legally binding and sustainable framework.
31. The 2021/22-2022/23 proposals also required the discontinuation of the Programming workstream (which had become the 'Creative Communities' workstream during the covid lockdowns). This area, which has been led throughout by the Communities & Neighbourhoods team at the Barbican, was repositioned to apply for funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Neighbourhood Fund. In June 2021 we learnt that this £750k funding application to maintain this program to March 2024 was successful and this has enabled it to continue at a level of resourcing increased approximately back to 2018/20 levels.
32. Funding for Culture Mile's activities outside of the City Corporation has come from a variety of sources and has included:
 - Bloomberg LP - £50,000 for delivery of the Creative Exchange programme
 - Brookfield Properties - £56k in each of 20/21 and 21/22 for realisation of digital art commissions
 - Business Partnership - £30k in each of 21/22 and 22/23 to support the BID campaign; £60k in 22/23 to deliver a series of Demonstration Projects
 - Dominvs Group – £4.5k in 21/22 for brokering the partnership that created Gaia's Garden project
 - Foundation for Future London - £50k contribution in 19/20 for the Fusion Prize and £50k in 22/23 for Co-designing Equity in the Public Realm

Current position

33. The rapidly shifting picture in terms of Culture Mile's funding base since 2020 has necessitated a significantly reduced level of outputs (which was compounded by covid, particularly in 2020/21) and a shift to a project model within which Culture Mile's aims are achieved by a set of separate programmes, each led by and accountable to a different body. These activities have remained linked within the brand and are co-promoted through the Culture website and social media channels, and the team continues to meet to explore opportunities for collaboration.
34. Culture Mile has been staffed by a mix of fixed term contracts and permanent staff. All staff in a cross-cutting function – central coordination, partnerships and the marketing and communications are due to come off contract by March 2023. In the lead up to this period these team members are supporting the BID campaign through the production and delivery of a series of 'demonstration

projects' and identifying how the various aspects of Culture Mile can be effectively secured alongside the BID from March 2023 onwards.

35. The areas of activity are:

- The Business Partnership – supporting an independent business partnership which will lead to a ballot for a new Business Improvement District (BID) to be created in the district by spring 2023
Geographical remit: proposed BID footprint (see Appendix 1)
Led by: independent BID Board
Funded by: businesses in the area that have a rateable value greater than £200k (if ballot is approved)
Estimated resource: £2.8m/year approx. (based on a 1% of RV BID multiplier with a cap of £4m on individual businesses)
- Creative Communities – strengthening connections with and between neighbours and the heritage and culture on their doorstep
Geographical remit: whole Square Mile and neighbouring wards in adjacent boroughs
Led by: Barbican Centre's Communities & Neighbourhoods Team
Funded by: CIL Neighbourhood Fund (to March 2024)
Estimated resource: £750k total approx.
- Creative Learning – producing world class cultural learning experiences to develop the 'fusion' of creative, communication, thinking and organisational skills among young people that today's employers need
Geographical remit: whole Square Mile and beyond
Led by: Culture Mile Learning at the Museum of London, which brings together 27 organisations that have a cultural learning offer, and which are funded by the City Corporation
Funded by: Education Board (currently until end March 2023)
Resource: £247,500/year
- Creative Spaces – transforming the public realm with an emphasis on arts and creativity
Geographical remit: Culture Mile area
Led by: Department of Environment
Funded by: RASC / Streets & Walkways /Planning and Transportation Committees
Resource: £12m total ringfenced for delivery of Smithfield public realm transformation; further project funding drawn down for other projects by Committee approval
- Outdoor Arts – activating public spaces in the district with performances and installations
Geographical remit: Culture Mile area
Led by: Destination Team
Funded by: City Corporation Growth Fund for Destination City, external funding TBC
Resource: TBD

36. Not included in this list is Cross-Sector Collaboration, an activity area which ran from 2017-22 and which has been designed to strengthen the area's credentials as a place to do business and enable deeper collaboration on shared priorities across culture and commerce. This area has been responsible for a series of significant initiatives including the Creative Enterprise and Innovation Report of 2019, co-leadership of the Lord Mayor's Culture & Commerce Taskforce during the pandemic, and Creative Exchange, a programme sharing skills and knowledge between the cultural and commercial sectors, entirely funded by Bloomberg LP.

Corporate and Strategic Implications

37. Throughout its existence Culture Mile has contributed steadily and often distinctively to a range of outcomes in the City Corporation Corporate Plan 2018-23, particularly 7 (*We are a global hub for innovation in finance and professional services, commerce and culture*) and 10 (*We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration*).
38. There has been significant challenge to and change within each of the Culture Mile partners since the project's public launch in 2017. Among the most significant shifts is the City Corporation's adoption of the Destination City strategy in spring 2022 and the recasting of its Culture & Visitor Services as the Destination Team. The Destination City agenda clearly shares Culture Mile's bold ambitions for the City to be recognised as a high-quality leisure destination. It is therefore important to ensure that the learning and insights around destination development built up over the past 5 years among the Culture Mile team can be taken on board, and that the bold strategic opportunities around how Culture Mile contributes to the Square Mile wider destination agenda are properly established.
39. Cross-coordination between the multiple major projects underway in the area (and listed in Appendix 1) have taken place at officer level within the Smithfield Area Advisory Group and the Barbican Area Advisory Group. These groups meet every 6 weeks and, with their focus on sharing intelligence and identifying efficiencies, have a valuable collaborative purpose for the senior officers involved. They were chaired by the Assistant Town Clerk until his departure at end March 2022; a replacement chair is yet to be identified. In the interim they are chaired by the Markets Co-location Programme Existing Sites Lead (for Smithfield) and by the Culture Mile Manager (for Barbican).

Conclusion

40. This paper has summarised the unique and complex nature of the Culture Mile project to date. Members are asked to note the significant progress this major cultural placemaking initiative since its launch in 2017, and the substantial City Corporation investment to date both in Culture Mile and in the multiple projects that are being delivered in this part of the City over the coming years.

41. The case for a joined up and creative approach to transforming this area into a major destination for the City's cultural and learning offers remains as strong as ever and has arguably been further strengthened by the challenges the City has faced in the years since Culture Mile was first imagined – particularly Brexit and covid. Culture Mile stands ready to play its part in the new Destination City approach. It can offer a creatively compelling, character-rich area that responds to the public's fast-moving expectations about how they want to experience culture in cities, it can continue support the success of our major cultural partners, and it can provide a unique offer that exemplifies the City Corporation's dual status as a major cultural patron and steward of a globally important financial centre.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Culture Mile's location and major projects.
- Appendix 2 – Useful links

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