

Committee(s): Policy & Resources Committee	Dated: 15/09/2022
Subject: End of Campaign Evaluation: <i>Square Smile</i>	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	7, 8 and 10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	A total of £550k was awarded to deliver this campaign from your Covid Contingency Fund and PIF
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Director of Innovation & Growth and Director of Communications	For Information
Report author: Nick Bodger, Cultural and Visitor Development Director	

Summary

This report reflects on the City Corporation's investment, and lessons learned, in its *Square Smile* campaign through an analysis of City worker footfall and spend during the two phases when the campaign was active. (October to December 2021, and February to April 2022).

While direct causality from the campaign to footfall is impossible to prove, the results in this report should be considered in the context that the campaign's reach was estimated at 5.5m. Those who saw the campaign were 2.2 times more likely to return to the office than those who had not seen it.

The campaign was delivered at a time when there was a critical need for the Corporation to support local business and to be seen to be taking action. The campaign therefore played a significant role in the City Corporation's support package for local business during what was an unprecedented and difficult period.

Key learnings of the *Square Smile* work include the identification of target times and markets on which future activity may focus. This helps inform and support Destination City work going forward.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of this report and appendices

Main Report

Background

1. At its June meeting, your Committee received an interim evaluation report for the *Square Smile* campaign. The campaign was created as a marketing initiative to drive worker footfall back into City offices in the wake of the pandemic. It was derived from an insight that workers would not necessarily return simply because they felt a moral obligation but would if they felt they were missing out. It therefore sought to remind workers what a great fun social experience working in the City can be.
2. *Square Smile* was financed at a total cost of £550,000 by your Policy Initiatives Fund and Covid Contingency Fund. It was approved by your Committee in the midst of the pandemic when there was a critical need to support local business and to be seen to be taking action as the City was largely empty.
3. It ran concurrently with the launch of your Covid Business Recovery Fund and was embedded as a key action in your [*Square Smile: Future City*](#) recovery strategy (see p13). As such, it was a key component in the support package that the City Corporation delivered for its local business community.
4. In terms of legacy, the campaign has helped to influence and steer Destination City strategy, informing actions by identifying windows of opportunity (see learnings in appendix 1). It also established new partnerships on which engagement may be built (as detailed in our interim June report).
5. The campaign launched on 11 October 2021 and concluded on 29 April 2022. Further PR and influencer activity ran over May. It was delivered against a challenging timeline that included a second lockdown, tube strikes and severe storms. As such, it was paused from 9 December 2021 to 20 February 2022 when restrictions were reintroduced. This ensured the campaign ran when it could have most impact.

Current Position

6. This report does not to repeat information provided in the interim report (received at your June meeting). Instead it responds to the request of Members for specific data sets following receipt of that report, and to identify the key outcomes and learnings of the campaign, detailing what the City Corporation's investment delivered in terms of spend in the City.
7. The campaign's reach was 5.5m. Those who saw the campaign were 2.2 times more likely to return to work in the City than those who did not. Reach is therefore a critical marketing metric to consider when gauging the campaign's resonance, noting the more people exposed, the better the chance of them taking action. This metric gives context to the data that follows.
8. Though a very significant spend, the budget for *Square Smile* (£550,000) was relatively modest when benchmarked against comparable campaigns. Monetising Google data and other intelligence allows us to evaluate its effectiveness. The findings of this work are contained in appendix 1.
9. In headline, the following observations have been collated. It should be noted that these cannot be directly linked to the campaign but that they provide a

picture of what happened in the City compared to Westminster during the time the campaign was running:

- i) **Footfall:** The uplift in *worker* footfall in the City was 1% higher than in Westminster. This was the demographic the campaign was aimed at. Meanwhile, there was no observable uplift in retail/recreational footfall in comparison to Westminster
- ii) **Spend:**
 - Eating: The uplift relative to base in the Eating spend index was 3% higher than Westminster.
 - Retail: The uplift relative to base in the Retail spend index was nearly 8% higher than Westminster

10. In terms of key learnings, the following are important:

- i) Retail and recreation footfall remains an area of focus for further promotional marketing work. This will be addressed by Destination City.
- ii) Future promotional marketing opportunities may benefit from targeting specific days of the week for the worker audience group. For example, Wednesdays and Thursdays are back up to nearly 70% of pre-pandemic activity, while Mondays and Fridays are only slightly above half of pre-pandemic levels. This gap represents around 88,000 workers.
- iii) Although weekend footfall activity has returned to normal in the City, it is less than a third of that of a pre-pandemic weekday. There is therefore an opportunity to drive new non-worker audiences to higher levels than pre-pandemic at weekends and to drive a visitor audience group to help close the footfall gap on Mondays and Fridays. Again, this will be addressed by Destination City.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

- **Strategic implications:** the *Square Smile* campaign has supported a return to the office by City workers and a wider return to the City by other communities. In this, it has delivered against key objectives in your Recovery Strategy *Square Mile: Future City* and has paved the way, with learnings and established channels on which to build, for campaigns under the new Destination City initiative.
- **Financial implications:** the *Square Smile* campaign was funded by £550,000 awarded by your Committee from your Covid Recovery Fund and Policy Initiatives Fund, following requests approved at your meetings on 11 March 2021 and 8 April 2021. The campaign was delivered within this budget envelope with added value of £325,127 derived through partnerships and co-promotional activities.
- **Resource implications:** the campaign was delivered by a core team of consultants and agencies appointed to work on *Square Smile* exclusively (the cost of which was met from the budget specified above). Officers from

your Media and Cultural and Visitor Development Teams have supported this work.

- **Legal implications:** none identified
- **Risk implications:** none identified
- **Equalities implications:** none identified
- **Climate implications:** none identified
- **Security implications:** none identified

Conclusion

11. The campaign was delivered at a time when there was a critical need to support local business and to be seen to be taking action as the City began to empty. The campaign was therefore a significant and valuable component of the City Corporation's support package for local business during what was an unprecedented and difficult period.
12. This report demonstrates the value of the City Corporation's investment in its *Square Smile* campaign, and the lessons learned. While it is impossible to attribute direct causality, the City fared better (proportionally) than Westminster during the periods that the it ran.
13. Furthermore, the resonance of the campaign (5.5m reach), coupled with evidence that those who saw the campaign were 2.2 times more likely to return to the office, helps to further demonstrate the campaigns efficacy.
14. The learnings listed help pave the way for the Destination City work, providing a firm foundation on which to build. This includes ongoing development of partnerships with travel operators and delivery of audience research showing key motivators (and barriers) during recovery (as discussed in the June report), as well as identification of target times and markets on which future activity may focus.

Background Paper

- [Interim evaluation of Square Smile campaign](#), report to Policy & Resources Committee, 9 June 2021

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