

Committee(s): Culture, Heritage and Libraries – For Information	Dated: 14/11/2022
Subject: London Metropolitan Archives general update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 3, 4, 8, 9,10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	Existing resource
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	Y
Report of: Director of the LMA	For Discussion
Report author: Emma Markiewicz	

Summary

This paper provides an update to the strategic direction paper of 16/05/2022 on the future direction for the LMA under TOM phase 2.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- note the paper and its suggested next steps

Main Report

Background

About London Metropolitan Archives

1. The London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) is the City’s and London’s memory and our collections reflect centuries of its diplomacy, precedence and tradition. We are also the major collecting body for the City’s more recent past and have a vital role to play in its present and future. Our mission is to collect, preserve and make accessible the record of the history of London, the administrative record of the City of London Corporation; the complex London government of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the archives of businesses, schools, hospitals, charities and many other organisations from the London area. Our 100km of holdings form the largest civic archive in the UK, and the second largest archive, after The National Archives. They are a powerful resource for research, evidence and learning; for understanding decision-making and democracy; and they tell the national story of London as one of the most significant and historic capital cities in the world.

Current Position

We are continuing to build activities back to pre-Covid levels; piloting more flexible opening times to build new audiences.

- We ran Summer Saturdays from June to August, building on the popularity of the Magnificent Maps of London exhibition
- We are running Open Saturdays from September to December to provide a more flexible service for researchers
- We have recommenced late opening on a Wednesday evening until 7pm, and these are proving to be our busiest days
- Green City, our outdoor travelling exhibition was based at Guildhall Yard, Aldgate Square, Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest through the summer months

Visitor numbers are still in flux, and appear to be settling into a seasonal pattern, with summer being especially busy for on site researchers.

- We saw unprecedented numbers of researchers in the reading rooms through August as academics from the US returned to use our services
- We will have delivered on site sessions for over 2500 school children by the end of school year, and through partnership projects with Culture Mile Learning and Islington Council
- We have extended our maps exhibition until April 2023 to exploit its popularity and will continue to programme events alongside the exhibition out of hours, including Saturdays
- We are developing relationships with Innovation and Growth to exploit potential for LMA within the Destinations strategy, participating in the Cultural Partners and Attractions Steering Board
- Following successful work with Open Spaces teams on the Green City exhibition, we have recently held collaboration development sessions with both the Barbican curatorial teams and Barbican Library team, to identify new areas for partnership
- Our community partners are beginning to rebuild their on-site projects and we have seen a marked increase in interest from groups wishing to partner with LMA (these include BrickLane Circle, Friends of Huntley Archives at LMA, Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration, Aid for Japan, Peel Institute and Deafroots)

In a paper setting out the strategic development for LMA presented to the Committee on 16th May 2022, I proposed to take the following 3 steps over the coming year:

- a. **Commission an in-depth strategic review of our current and future audiences** to better understand who they are and what they need. This would enable us to segment our potential audiences and how to shape our on-site and digital offer accordingly.

This work has begun with our partner Opinium Research Ltd., who have been commissioned to deliver the following:

- Establish data from key audience groups and potential visitors
- Create direction and focus for our audience engagement
- Provide a simple framework for segmenting audiences and strategy for growth
- Use industry knowledge and analysis to make recommendations for effective engagement with target audiences (formats, timings etc.)
- Make suggestions towards language and tone to apply to future branding work

They are currently in the process of surveying existing users and non-users to establish the future potential audience for LMA, profile their demographics, attitudes, interests and needs. This will help us to identify and grow the local audience and attract more footfall to the building, and online. We will build a new marketing strategy for LMA and work is already underway to develop this, consulting marketing specialists including the City's Cultural and Visitor Development team.

- b. **Review the staffing structure:** I am in the process of a staff consultation exercise working with the CoL Learning and Development team to deliver a series of workshops, gathering feedback and ideas on reshaping the current structure to unlock our expertise; grow capacity for our engagement and learning offer, and digital services. The data provided through the Opinium research will also inform the process. A new staff structure will be in place by April 2023. This will create more development opportunities for existing staff by broadening out roles to enable greater expertise in collections and shifting to an audience-centred rather than a task-based approach. This new structure will mean LMA can begin to offer a curated public programme that goes far beyond the existing research user base and broadens out into general interest audiences.

- c. **Enable members to take firm decisions about whether LMA can remain in our current location** at the end of the lease term in 2035. This is the single biggest factor affecting the long-term future development of London's biggest and most high-profile archive. I am working with the CoL City Surveyor's team to secure funding to resource a strategic requirements report for a future fit-for-purpose LMA. The work we are doing to grow audiences will inform the shape of future services and business model for the archive, and in

turn enable a greater understanding of the requirements for the site and physical location of LMA. A current interdependency is the Guildhall Refurbishment project which is due to report to Members in November on options. LMA and Guildhall Library currently maintain significant holdings in the basements at Guildhall.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Financial implications – none at this point. Longer term there are implications for the development of the archives building, wherever it is sited.

Resource implications – as above.

Legal implications - none

Risk implications – none

Equalities implications – we will continue to undertake equalities impact assessments

Climate implications – none

Security implications – none

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