

Committee(s): Culture, Heritage and Libraries – For decision Policy & Resources – For decision	Dated: 14 November 2022 17 November 2022
Subject: Proposals for the implementation of Destination City	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1,2,7,9 10 and 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
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
Report of: Damian Nussbaum, Executive Director, Innovation and Growth (IG)	For Decision
Report author: Luciana Magliocco, Destination Director	

Summary

Destination City launched in May 2022, following an independent review which set out a renewed vision for the City to be a leading destination for workers, visitors and residents.

Strong progress has been made since establishing Destination City including the recruitment of the new Destination Director and Programme Curator in September. October saw the launch of its first large scale event which attracted mass media traction and audience engagement.

However, Destination City is not just an events programme. Critical to its success will be an integrated approach to reinventing the City experience at every touch point. We must build a world class brand proposition that resonates with a diverse range of audiences and build a marketing and activation programme that inspires action and advocacy. Ultimately all contributing to the overarching objectives of reinvigorating the City’s vibrancy and drive continued economic growth.

Destination City’s Implementation Plan highlights the strategic priorities that need to be undertaken to set the foundations for a successful delivery programme. It also outlines the proposed direction of travel for future activity.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve the key strategic priorities as highlighted in the Implementation Plan, in Appendix 1. A summary of the priorities are listed in the table on page one.
- Approve the 3-Point Business Plan, for Destination City to elevate the Welcome, Wayfinding and Wow Factor experience across the Square Mile, in Appendix 1. The 3 Point Business Plan is detailed under Strategic Priority 5: Destination City Delivery Programme.

Main Report

Background

1. The review was completed at an exceptionally difficult time for the City, when footfall in the Square Mile was down 60% on pre-pandemic levels (November 2021). The review recognised the incredible challenges the pandemic continues to present for the City's businesses and its negative impact on the overall vibrancy of the Square Mile. It also considered the growing value of place and cultural vibrancy in enhancing the City's proposition.
2. Based on the feedback of over 70 stakeholders and meetings with staff from across the Corporation, it made ambitious recommendations to address these issues, and to enhance the City's leisure offer to one that is in line with its business proposition and benefits a global city.
3. The review made new ambitious recommendations to enhance the City's leisure offer and marketing to one that matches its business proposition and benefits a global city.
4. The review provided a blueprint for change and set ambitious targets to increase visitor numbers by 5%, from a peak of 21m in 2019 to 22m by 2025 and spend by 7.5% (from £2.1bn to £2.25bn). Given the huge fall in visitors and spend since 2019, this is a very ambitious target. The review is included at Appendix 2
5. The review was presented to the Court of Common Council (CCC) and approved in January 2022.
6. A Growth Bid of £2.3m was agreed in January and February 2022 to fund the destination strategy, which Members of your committees, RASC and Finance approved.
7. The previous Culture and Visitor Services Team was restructured, under TOM, and the new 'Destination Team' was approved by Culture Heritage and Libraries, and Establishment Committees in January 2022.

Current Position

8. On his election in May 2022, the Chairman of Policy and Resources announced Destination City publicly, securing positive media coverage in both the Financial Times and Telegraph, amongst others.
9. The Destination Director and Programme Curator started in September 2022. The Head of Promotion along with other team appointments are currently being recruited for. The Destination Team organisational chart is included at Appendix 3.
10. The Policy and Resources Committee (P&R) will have strategic overview of the Destination Strategy, with the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee (CHL) positioned as a key committee in the implementation of recommendations. Policy and Resource's overview will help to ensure the significant buy-in to the Review required across departments to achieve the stated ambitions and the team's focus on galvanising them to deliver.

11. New cross-Corporation governance structures have also been established. This includes a Chief Officer Steering Group, made up of the executive directors of Innovation & Growth, Environment, Communications, City Surveyor's, Town Clerk's and Police. The group will meet quarterly to drive forward the destination programme of work. It will be supported by an Officer Group, with membership drawn from these departments. The new governance structure for Destination City is included at Appendix 4.
12. An industry-led steering group has been established to provide strategic and independent council to all aspects of the Destination City Agenda. The City Envoy Network has met twice. Membership of the group is included at Appendix 5.
13. Destination City launched its first major event, the Golden Key on October 15th. The event was created to reappraise perceptions of the City of London and act as a catalyst to drive additional footfall and spend to the Square Mile on a weekend day. It was also created to baseline future Destination City activity, acting as a pilot scheme in which to trial new ideas and approaches but also gather data and learnings. The event had several challenges to contend with - an incredibly short lead time of 3 months, the absence of the full Destination City team being in post, a stop on all marketing and communications due to the unforeseen mourning period and the wider challenges in getting hospitality businesses to open. Nevertheless, the event was remarkably successful in achieving its key aims.
14. A fuller assessment will be made as the full information comes in. However, initial results/learnings were:
 - a. 81 pieces were achieved across print, digital, and broadcast formats at a national, London and local level. This included the Times, Telegraph, TimeOut and Evening Standard.
 - b. The dedicated event website achieved 491k visits in a two-week period. This was created ahead of the Destination Website which will be developed as part of the brand review, building on the learnings from the dedicated site.
 - c. Social media acted as a major communication and influential platform, achieving a reach of 373,119 with 63,450 engagements
 - d. Over 30,000 people attended the event, based on entrance and exists counts into activation zones and TfL data of taps into the City on the day
15. Whilst the event was successful in driving footfall and enhancing the customer experience, it has more importantly provided us with a fantastic legacy to build upon. With a new audience, it gives us the foundations on which to develop Destination City's narrative and programme of delivery to drive sustained growth across the Square Mile. We will use learnings and recommendations to inform future decisions and activity. As we scale up activations, it highlighted the need for more robust internal processes to be put in place to establish more effective stakeholder communication.

Proposals

16. Noting progress to date as described in items 8 to 14 above, your Committee is now requested to consider and approve a new Destination City Implementation Plan. The Plan appears at Appendix 1.
17. Specifically, Members are asked to approve the key strategic priorities as set out in the Plan and the 3-Point Business Plan (also within the Implementation Plan document) which will seek to elevate the Welcome, Wayfinding and Wow Factor experience across the Square Mile.
18. This Plan builds on the work described above and will enable your newly formed Destination Team to focus on high-level priorities that will deliver the targets set and approved by Members when the growth bid was awarded in April 2022.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

- o **Strategic implications** include alignment with the [Corporate Plan](#) across all outcomes, supporting a flourishing society, a thriving economy and the shaping of outstanding environments.

All proposals cited in appendix 1 also reflect key pillars in the Destination City Review, which embeds the ambitions of the City Corporation's Recovery Strategy [Square Mile: Future City](#) into a longer-term plan.

- o **Financial implications:** all proposals (appendix 1) will be realised from within IG Destination City's local risk budget allocation (which includes the "growth bid" of £2.3m awarded earlier this year).

The proposals described also enable the delivery of a strategy that will form the foundation for achieving the aspiration of 3:1 ROI in annual partnerships.

Similarly, as proposals are realised, it is anticipated that visitor spend in the City will begin to increase, building towards the agreed 7.5% increase on the pre-Covid visitor spend figure (£2.1bn) by 2025.

- o **Resource implications:** a new Destination City team has been recruited with a few key positions still being advertised (eg the Head of Promotion). The new team is shown via organogram in appendix 3. All proposals will be realised within this resource except where specialist consultancy is required. The costs of this consultancy are accommodated within the figures shown and will be met from the Destination City's local risk budget.
- o **Legal implications:** none identified.
- o **Risk implications:** the growth of visitor markets, and thus City visitor footfall and spend, is subject to a series of macro-factors outside of the control of the Destination City team. These include but are not limited to the cost-of-living crisis; the reversal of VAT-free shopping for international visitors; train strikes; future pandemics; terrorist threat; fewer business visitors flying into the UK; and recruitment issues at leisure, retail and hospitality assets (resulting in some unable to meet demand).

These risk factors are considered within all proposals and where partial mitigations may be applied (eg pivoting audiences from an overseas focus to a domestic one), they have been built in.

- **Equalities implications:** all proposals will be purposefully developed to engage visitors from a wider range of backgrounds and characteristics. The cross-cutting theme of inclusivity runs through all Destination City work.
- **Climate implications:** the proposals seek to embed “good growth” principles at their heart. Sustainability is another cross-cutting theme that runs through all Destination City work.

Conclusion

19. An independent review, ‘Destination City’, set out a renewed vision for the City to be a leading destination for workers, visitors and residents. It made ambitious recommendations to enhance the City’s leisure offer and marketing to one that is in line with its business proposition and befits a global city.
20. Many of the foundations needed to deliver the review’s recommendations have been put in place. Further work now needs to be completed with regards to the City’s leisure brand, digital platform, data capture, commercial strategy and welcome approach.
21. Once these have been secured, the Destination Team will begin to develop and implement the Destination Strategy to achieve the desired footfall and spend targets.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Destination City Implementation Plan

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