

<b>Committee(s):</b> Culture, Heritage and Libraries – for decision	<b>Dated:</b> 23/01/2023
<b>Subject:</b> Culture Mile Transition – update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	7, 10
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	n/a
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	n/a
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	n/a
<b>Report of:</b> Damian Nussbaum, Executive Director of Innovation & Growth	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Tim Jones, Culture Mile Manager	

### Summary

The process of transitioning the Culture Mile project to become a key pillar of Destination City is underway and will conclude at end March 2023, when the project's funding comes to an end. The process is proceeding smoothly and decisions from this Committee are needed in terms of the project's brand and identity and in relation to the existing public realm branding designs that are visible in the area.

### Recommendation(s)

Members of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee are asked to:

- Note the report.
- Endorse the recommendation that the City Corporation and the partnership's cultural organisations cease to use the Culture Mile brand from 1 April 2023
- Agree in principle that the City Corporation is happy to explore the transfer of the existing public realm designs and associated rights to the area's new BID (assuming the area's businesses vote to create this; a ballot result will be available in February 2023).

### Main Report

#### Background

1. The City Corporation's investment in the Culture Mile project will come to an end in March 2023. The Destination City Implementation Plan, approved by this Committee at its November 2022 meeting, included summary proposals to

'transition' the Culture Mile project so that it is embedded in and becomes a key pillar of the City Corporation's Destination approach.

2. There is a recognition that during its 5-year life as a funded project, the Culture Mile project delivered a high-quality portfolio of projects that conveyed how arts and culture can connect with a range of other areas and so be at the heart of the transformation of the northwest part of the City over the next decade. The transition process ensures that the project's accomplishments can give momentum to Destination City and that learning is retained and applied going forwards. Given the significant volume and diversity of stakeholders that have worked or engaged with the Culture Mile project, the transition process also re-engages with this community – to inform, encourage discussion, address concerns and establish how they can be set up for future partnership and success, in the context of Destination City or beyond.

### **Current Position**

3. The transition process is over halfway through its implementation and is proceeding without significant concerns. A substantial proportion of the City Corporation's elected Members have been informed about the proposed direction of travel. These include all members of the Policy & Resources and Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committees, former Members of the Culture Mile Working Party and all Members representing Wards within the Culture Mile footprint. Feedback from Members has been approving of this approach with no concerns raised.
4. The Culture Mile Manager has briefed the Directors and/or senior Officers (as appropriate) of each of the project's founding cultural partners (the Barbican Centre, the Guildhall School, the LSO and the Museum of London). We have discussed with the senior officers leading what have been the Culture Mile 'workstreams' the implications of each of them taking full oversight and leadership of their area from April 2023. These discussions have been constructive and straightforward.
5. The board of the Culture Mile Business Partnership (the independent group of developers and business leaders advocating for the creation of a new Business Improvement District in the area) have also been briefed, and updates sent to all members of the Steering Groups reporting to the board. A range of further stakeholders have also been contacted, with a statement due to be posted on the Culture Mile website shortly.
6. In January, a series of handover sessions between the remaining Culture Mile team and the Destination team will take place to pin down Culture Mile's role as a 'brand pillar' for Destination City, and to ensure the archive is available to relevant officers going forward.
7. There are two points to note in relation to Culture Mile Learning, the workstream which has been led by the Museum of London and which has historically been entirely funded by the City Corporation's Education Board.

- The Education Board is reconfiguring the terms on which it funds its learning projects. The future of Culture Mile Learning – including its goals and activities - is dependent on the outcome of its liaison with the Education Board and officers in the Education and Skills team in relation to changes in the funding regime.
  - Assuming Culture Mile Learning continues in some form, it will operate under a new name, given that (subject to this Committee's approval) the Culture Mile brand may no longer be used from April 2023 (see further below).
8. Beyond this, there are 2 aspects of the project which require decisions by this Committee so that the transition process can continue smoothly:
- The future of the Culture Mile brand
  - The future of the area's public realm designs

## Options

9. The Culture Mile brand
- With the launch of a new consumer-facing brand for Destination City scheduled for spring 2023, as well as the likely launch of a new brand for the new BID (should the ballot be successful), maintaining the existing Culture Mile brand beyond March 2023 would create confusion among the public and needless 'competition'. There are very limited alternatives to ceasing the use of the Culture Mile brand at the end of March 2023.
10. Future of the Culture Mile public realm designs
- In July 2021 a distinct set of designs were rolled out across Culture Mile's public realm spaces (wall surfaces, bollards, planters etc.) as well as within the entrance spaces of the cultural partners. These were designed to help cement an awareness of Culture Mile's location in the minds of the public, and to convey that an ambitious, joined up approach to the area's future was in place. Now, with the disappearance of Culture Mile brand, we must ask whether these designs should remain in place.

A decommissioning budget of £15,000 is already pre-allocated (in the budgets of the Environment Department's Policy and Programmes team, drawn down from Planning & Transportation and Streets & Walkways Committees) for the removal of the designs in the next 2-3 years. As the designs were not designed to be permanent, they will have to be decommissioned at the end of that period. Removing the branding from April 2023 will remove the issue and declutter the streetscape and create a return to visual consistency across the Square Mile. No other area in the City currently has its own individual visual identity of this kind.

Alternatively, subject to a successful ballot outcome in February 2023, we might explore with the new BID the transfer to them of these designs, including IP rights and associated costs with maintenance/removal. This would depend on the BID being comfortable taking on the designs within its own identity. The Business Partnership Board has indicated willingness to explore this idea. Doing this will save the City Corporation £15,000 of decommissioning costs and

enable the new BID to have a 'quick win' in terms of maintaining a strong visual presence in the area.

## **Proposals**

11. In relation to the above options, it is proposed that:  
The Culture Mile website and social media channels are taken down at end March 2023 and use of the logo, term and brand narrative is not used thereafter by the City Corporation or the Culture Mile partners.  
This will minimise confusion and point people more clearly towards what they want to engage with. All Culture Mile brand assets and designs (which are owned by the City Corporation) will be archived and made accessible to the Destination team.
12. Should it come into being, discussions are held with the new Culture Mile BID about its appetite for taking on the existing public realm designs.  
It is recommended that the new Culture Mile BID is approached in April 2023 to establish their appetite for taking on ownership of the designs (design IP and their physical rendering) of the public realm branding. Transferring these designs (which will not be used by any other party going forward) will provide an ongoing rationale for keeping them up in the public domain and gift the new BID a project that will support it to get going confidently.  
Should the BID decide not to adopt these existing designs, decommissioning of the public realm branding can proceed as such time deemed appropriate by the Environment Department, as the decommissioning budget is already ringfenced for this purpose.

## **Key Data**

13. No relevant data pertains to these proposals and project.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

14. Strategic implications – the City Corporation's ongoing commitment to the Culture Mile Strategy will be advanced by the new Culture Mile Steering Group, reporting into the Destination City governance structure
15. Financial implications - none
16. Resource implications – none
17. Legal implications – none
18. Risk implications – none
19. Equalities implications – none
20. Climate implications – none

21. Security implications - none

## **Conclusion**

22. The transitioning process for the Culture Mile project is proceeding smoothly with understanding and approval from the City Corporation's elected Members, senior officers and from external stakeholders. Decisions in the areas of project brand and identity and public realm branding will ensure remaining loose ends are tied up effectively and the project can focus on supporting Destination City to establish itself as successfully as possible, whilst maintaining Culture Mile's legacy.

## **Appendices**

23. None

### **Tim Jones**

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