

Committee(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture, Heritage and Libraries – For Information • Policy and Resources – For Decision 	Dated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 04/11/2024 • 07/11/2024
Subject: Support of the development of a new Culture Strategy for the City of London Corporation	Public
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes 	Vibrant Thriving Destination
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	Y
If so, how much?	£45,000
What is the source of Funding?	PIF
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	Y
Report of: Emma Markiewicz, Director of The London Archive and Head of Profession (Culture), Town Clerk’s Department	
Report author: Omkar Chana, Interim Director (Culture), Town Clerk’s Department	

Summary

This report highlights the need to support the development of a new Culture Strategy for the City of London Corporation. The City Corporation has appointed a new Head of Profession for Culture, who will lead the creation of a strategy that reinforces the City Corporation’s leadership in culture and supports the Destination City programme. The Martin Review emphasised the importance of an independent Culture Strategy to maximise the City’s unique cultural assets.

To begin this work immediately, the report proposes a bid of £45,000 from the Policy and Resources Committee’s Policy Initiative Fund, enabling key research, stakeholder consultation, analysis and the creation of a new Culture Strategy. The new Culture Strategy would align with the City Corporation’s corporate priorities and ensure the Square Mile remains a vibrant cultural destination for residents, workers and visitors. Delivering a Culture Strategy is inextricably linked and a key enabler for the Destination City programme which aligns with the Policy and Resources committee.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve an application to the Policy and Resources Committee’s 2024/25 Policy Initiatives Fund for £45,000 to support the development of a Culture Strategy for the City of London Corporation (detailed further as option 2 in this report).

Main Report

Background

1. In April 2024, Members of the Policy and Resources (P&R) Committee and the Culture, Heritage and Libraries (CHL) Committee endorsed the 14 recommendations from the Destination City – Independent Review 2024, led by Paul Martin.
2. In May 2024, the Court of Common Council confirmed a recommendation from the Independent Review in terms of governance, that is:
 - *[To] align accountability for the refreshed Destination City Programme to the Policy & Resources Committee while noting that accountability for the Culture Strategy remains with the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee.*
3. Also agreed as part of the Destination City – Independent Review 2024, two recommendations in terms of culture, that are:
 - *[To] request the Town Clerk/Chief Executive to consider options for the future Head of Profession for Culture as described and make an appropriate appointment to progress the cultural strategy.*
 - *[To] align the new culture strategy with the Destination City vision in an approach that is collaborative, develops new partnerships and sets its sights on the City of London as an international cultural and heritage destination.*
4. The Martin Review referred to a Culture Strategy, but the terms of reference of that review did not include the development of the Culture Strategy. To recap, the review was asked to “*consider how an Arts and Culture Strategy is both aligned, and distinct from, the leisure offer*”.
5. The previous Culture Strategy ran from 2018-2022 and has now ceased.

Current Position

6. In August 2024, Emma Markiewicz, Director of The London Archives was appointed as the Senior Responsible Officer to lead as the Head of Profession for Culture. The role is to lead the delivery of the Culture Strategy for the City Corporation, encompassing our institutions as well as other cultural and partner attractions in and around the Square Mile. This is a pivotal role, reporting to our Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee and linking with the Destination City programme.
7. Following the appointment, the Head of Profession for Culture took over operational duties (from October 2024) for the team that was previously under Innovation & Growth – Destination City (referred to in this report as the Culture team).

8. The Destination City – Independent Review 2024 recommended the reframing of Destination City as an opportunity for the City Corporation to create and deliver a world class cultural strategy. The review states “*if any local authority area needs a culture strategy, it is surely the City of London*” with its unique depth and range of cultural and heritage attractions.
9. The Head of Profession for Culture has a principal task of creating the new Culture Strategy for the City of London Corporation. This piece of work needs to be undertaken at pace in order to support Destination City and to fill a significant gap which has grown. It is intended that the implementation of the Culture Strategy will reposition the City Corporation as a leader of culture in the Square Mile.
10. The investment the City Corporation makes in its culture and heritage is of national and international significance, and with the potential to be exemplary. At the heart of the investment is to enable priceless cultural assets within the Square Mile to be used and enjoyed by as many people as possible – Londoners, the wider British public and international visitors throughout the world. However, individual attractions need to be set within a wider context of an area that values, appreciates and cherishes its heritage and culture.
11. The Culture team reports to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee and received a budget of approximately £1.617m in 2024/25. The majority of this budget is used for staffing, leaving only a small proportion for operational and project-related expenditure. The delivery of projects and activities for 2024/25 has already been planned and budgeted for.
12. This work would enable the development of a key principle of the Martin review – that Culture should have a standalone strategy that is independent of Destination City with an intentional overlap in recognition that there will be both shared objectives and outcomes.
13. This work will also enable a much-needed comprehensive understanding of the City’s existing audiences, identify potential growth markets (regionally, nationally and internationally), and uncover opportunities within current audience segments.

PIF application – Rationale

14. This application cannot be funded through existing departmental local risk budgets because the need has arisen mid-year, as a direct recommendation from the implementation of the Martin Review.
15. Additionally, the remaining budget from the Growth Bid (£2.6m) remains with the Destination City programme (under P&R) and is no longer directly accessible by the Culture team.

PIF application – Strategic Link

- a. **Policy lead area for the Policy and Resources Committee** – Destination City is the key policy link for the new Culture Strategy. The Martin review identifies: “*the cultural attractions of the City of London are a principal driver*

of the Destination City programme. Individual attractions need to be set within a wider context of an area that values, appreciates and cherishes its heritage and culture”, thus contributing to the idea of the City of London as a destination for visitors, workers and residents.

- b. **Priority area for the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee** – The development of a new Cultural Strategy is key for the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee, for whom it is a critical priority over the coming years.
- c. **Corporate Plan outcomes** – A new Culture Strategy would link with all areas of the Corporate Plan, most specifically *‘Diverse, Engaged Communities; Flourishing Public Spaces and Vibrant Thriving Destination’*. Delivering the latter in a co-ordinated way is dependent on the implementation of a Culture Strategy.
- d. **Promotion of the City or City’s role in London or nationally** – A new Culture Strategy would significantly communicate to London, to the nation and to an international audience that the City Corporation’s continued sponsorship of culture – seen through its significant investments in the Barbican, Museum of London and elsewhere – is more than commendable. It is exemplary.

PIF application – Outcomes

16. This PIF application will enable the following outcomes.

- a. **Internal insights:** A review of existing audience data from City Corporation departments, current cultural partners, and assets, providing a clearer picture of the current landscape and identifying gaps or opportunities.
- b. **Audience profile and market opportunities:** An understanding of the Square Mile’s existing external audiences and potential growth areas, highlighting untapped segments and providing strategic recommendations to target them effectively.
- c. **Engaged and informed stakeholder network:** A collective vision and input from key stakeholders, including staff, institutions, partners, and Members, ensuring the strategy reflects a wide array of perspectives, both leveraging existing, and creating new, partnerships.
- d. **Collaboratively developed Cultural Strategy:** A Cultural Strategy that is co-created through consultation, ensuring it is both inclusive and reflective of the diverse needs and aspirations of the City Corporation’s cultural ecosystem.

PIF application – Economy

17. Where the relevant skills are available, we would utilise existing resources in the Culture team to support the research and development involved in the delivery of this work. This would need to be augmented with external support where

necessary. We would also set aside some local budget from next year (2025/26) to support any further implementation activities or if the scope of work expands after the initial work has been completed.

PIF application – Delivery

18. The next step would be to agree the scope of work/terms of reference by Members of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee. On approval of this, the work to identify and procure consultancy and research services would commence. Approving this PIF in November 2024 would enable CHL to approve the scope in December 2024.

19. The ambitious target date for delivering the outputs including the datasets from the research and the consultation would be by the end of March 2025. In line with the previous Culture Strategy and our Corporate Plan, we envisage the new Culture Strategy to have a term of at least five years.

PIF application – Reporting

20. In the first instance, progress will be reported to the CHL Committee. Additionally, we would complete the standardised progress update form biannually and at the end of the initiative.

PIF application – Repeat Expenditure

21. Supporting the development of a Culture Strategy has not been funded via the PIF in previous years.

PIF application – Benefit Sustainment

22. Once the Culture Strategy has been approved, the proposal is to continue implementation by aligning existing programmes and projects funded through local budget from CHL. Where there is an overlap of objectives/outcomes with the Culture Strategy and the Destination City programme, there would also be opportunities to bid for additional funding from the newly created Destination City Partnership Fund.

Options

23. **Option 1 – PIF support is not agreed.** This would delay starting the development of the Culture Strategy until 2025/26.

24. In order to find the budget, the 2024/25 programme could be deprioritised but we are past midway in the delivery year (at month 7) so, on top of the reputational challenges of pulling out from programmes very late in the year, this would result in low staff utilisation. Alternatively, the 2025/26 programme could be scaled-back. As some of the plans are part of the annual programme, any cutbacks could create subsequent challenges (with a potential impact reducing the investment on projects like Open House or exhibitions). Cultural planning has a long lead time so this would need to be planned now.

25. **Option 2 – PIF support is agreed for £45,000** to commence with the development of the Culture Strategy without any delay.

Proposals

26. If the Policy and Resources Committee's 2024/25 Policy Initiatives Fund supports Option 2, the proposal to develop the Culture Strategy would comprise the following.

- a. **Internal review** – a review of existing audience data, including that held by City Corporation departments, our existing cultural partners and assets.
- b. **External audience analysis** – a piece of research to gain a comprehensive understanding of the City's existing audiences, identify potential growth markets, and uncover opportunities within current audience segments.
- c. **Stakeholder engagement** – a set of stakeholder and partner workshops and interviews to ensure that our staff, institutions, partners and Members can input to this work.
- d. **Co-creation** – a process of consultation in the development of the Cultural Strategy.

27. The scope of work/terms of reference would be agreed by Members of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee. The approach to developing the Culture Strategy would be planned in the following stages.

- a. **Scoping** – understand what should be included (and excluded) in the development of the Culture Strategy. For example, to align with the Martin review, it is likely that this work would be limited to the footprint of the Square Mile and include children and young people from a broader catchment area. The proposal is for the scope of work to include options to utilise the budget allocated from CHL to the Culture team, as well as considerations for the total revenue budget managed by CHL. The proposal is for the scope of work to also include ways to leverage the budget with partners.
- b. **Delivery** – identify and procure consultancy and research services to commence immediately. The target date for delivery for the outputs, including the datasets from the research and the consultation, would be 31 March 2025.
- c. **Transition to Implementation** – depending on the outcome of the Culture Strategy, there may need to be a phased approach to get ready for full implementation (this is consistent with the approach post the Martin Review).

Corporate & Strategic Implications

28. Strategic implications – the Culture Strategy spans three areas of the Corporate Plan, ‘Diverse, Engaged Communities; Flourishing Public Spaces and Vibrant Thriving Destination’. For the latter, culture is at its core and our Corporate Plan Outcome states that: ‘*Attracting businesses and people to a safe, secure, and dynamic location is vital to our future. **A world-leading culture and leisure offer is integral to creating a vibrant, thriving destination where everyone prospers.***’
29. Financial implications – It is requested that an allocation of £45,000 be drawn from your 2024/25 Policy Initiative Fund, categorised as ‘Supporting the development of a Culture Strategy’ and charged to City’s Estate. The current uncommitted balance in the 2024/25 PIF is £1,048,846 prior to any allowances being made for any other proposals on this agenda.
30. Resource implications – Based on skills and availability of resource, the intent is to utilise a combination of working with the existing Culture team, augmented with external support where necessary.
31. Legal implications – None identified.
32. Risk implications – If funding is not agreed then there is a risk that implementing the recommendations from the Martin Review will be delayed, or only partially delivered.
33. Equalities implications – None identified. Any emerging work with equalities implications would be handled through the City Corporation’s existing equalities-related groups.
34. Climate implications – None identified.
35. Security implications – None identified.

Conclusion

36. The development of a new Culture Strategy for the City Corporation represents a critical opportunity to reaffirm our position as a leader in culture and heritage. With the appointment of Emma Markiewicz (Director, The London Archives) as the Head of Profession for Culture, we are well positioned to drive forward this policy initiative. The strategy would build upon the recommendations of the Martin Review, ensuring that our cultural assets and objectives, including those linked to Destination City, continue to thrive and attract a diverse and engaged audience.
37. We must seize this moment to ensure the Square Mile remains a vibrant cultural destination, not only for Londoners but also for visitors from around the world. By approving the requested allocation from the Policy Initiative Fund, there will be timely progress on the Culture Strategy’s development, leveraging expert consultancy and collaboration with key stakeholders. The alternative—delaying the strategy—would not only hinder our progress but also risk our cultural leadership in the Square Mile.

38. Our continued commitment to culture is paramount, and with the necessary resources in place, we can ensure that our cultural investments remain of national and international significance, enriching the Square Mile and the broader community. This is a unique moment to shape a strategy that secures our cultural future for generations to come.

Appendices

- None

Background Papers

- Destination City – Independent Review 2024 - Summary of Recommendations, CHL & P&R, 11 April 2024 ([public](#))
- Destination City – Independent Review 2024 – Recommendations, CHL & P&R, 11 April 2023 (available on request)
- Destination City Governance, Court of Common Council, 23 May 2024 ([public](#))
- Departmental Budget Estimates 2024-25, CHL, 29 January 2024 ([public](#))
- Implementation Plan for revised Destination City Programme and Organisational Structure for new Destination City Hub, P&R 17 October 2024 (non-public)

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