

Committee(s): Communications & Corporate Affairs Sub Committee Policy and Resources Committee	Dated: 28 th November 2024 7 th November 2024
Subject: Delivering the Square Mile Sport Strategy (2023-30) – Update Report	Public report: For Information
This area of work delivers on all of the Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	NA
What is the source of Funding?	NA
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	NA
Report of: Paul Wright, City Remembrancer	
Report author: Sam Hutchings, Head of Sport	

Summary

This report sets out the work that has taken place to deliver the City Corporation’s new Sport Strategy – A Global City of Sport. Outlining the vision and the five priorities agreed under the strategy, this report provides details on the various events and initiatives that have been achieved so far. Also, looking to the future, a summary of key issues that will need to be considered is outlined in relation to the next phase of delivering the sport strategy.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

Main Report

Background

1. Last summer, Members agreed to [A Global City of Sport: A Sport Strategy for the Square Mile \(2023-30\)](#) which sets out a vision and five sport themes / priorities for the City Corporation over the next seven years. The Vision is to make the City of London a leading global city of sport, through valued and exceptional sport facilities, events and engagement. The five priorities are:
 - INVEST in sport facilities
 - ACTIVATE our streets / spaces
 - CELEBRATE the impact of sport
 - ATTRACT more high-quality sport events
 - SUPPORT community sport
2. The delivery of the strategy is monitored by the Sport Sounding Board which meets quarterly and is chaired by the Lead Member for Sport. The Head of Sport, along with the Sport Strategy Officer and the Community Sport Officer, work with departments across the organisation to deliver on the five priorities and report to the Sounding Board as well as other relevant committees on progress and decision requests.

Phase 1: Strategy Delivery Progress (2023-26)

3. Owing to resource restrictions at the time, when approving the new strategy Members agreed that it should be delivered in two phases. The first phase would allow the strategy to get up-and-running through seed funding from the Policy Initiatives Fund. During this period, additional staff could be appointed to take forward the five priorities and options for moving to the next 'delivery' phase would be considered. Progress on delivering the five priorities is set out below:
 - i) **INVEST in facilities** – to ensure they are fit-for-purpose, commercially viable and meet stakeholder needs:
 - Sport Facility Options Appraisal – the Sport Consultancy were appointed to undertake a facility options appraisal and reported back on this work earlier this year. They assessed options for improving sport and leisure facilities across the Square Mile and made recommendations on how this should be taken forward.
 - Investment in Golden Lane Leisure Centre – following the facility options appraisal, Members agreed to invest over £10 million into refurbishing Golden Lane Leisure Centre so that it is able to continue operating in the future. A further report on delivering this programme of work will be submitted to relevant committees in due course.
 - Commitment to Investigate New Site Options – Members also agreed that officers should seek to work with interested developers to consider options for a new leisure site elsewhere in the Square Mile. Potential opportunities will be explored in the next phase of delivering the sport strategy.
 - ii) **ACTIVATE spaces** - to encourage accessible sport and physical activity that is free to use and open to all:

- New Sport Strategy Officer – a new Sport Strategy Officer was appointed in January 2024 on a full time two-year fixed term basis. As well as supporting the delivery of the strategy in its entirety, this role has specifically been tasked to take forward priorities 2 and 4 of the strategy, working closely with colleagues in the Environment Department to make public spaces more active and entice high quality sport events to the Square Mile.
- Local Plan 2040 – the new Local Plan was approved earlier in 2024 and makes specific reference to the new sport strategy and endeavours to improve active and sporting opportunities on our streets and spaces. Following a subsequent consultation exercise, officers have been working with Sport England to help maximise the impact of these aspirations to ensure they meet the demands of local people.
- Old Watermen’s Way – plans for the first free-to-use publicly accessible outdoor gym in the Square Mile are underway. The facility is next to the Thames Pathway near London Bridge and should be an attractive addition to the landscape. Subject to a successful funding application, it is expected that parking surplus funds will cover the modest costs of constructing and maintaining the gym.
- Blackfriars Undercroft – discussions are ongoing on the future use of this site, which currently is occupied by Thames Tideway but will be vacant next year. Suggestions to incorporate an outdoor gym and a permanent skate park are being considered and relevant departments are being consulted on potential future use for this site.

iii) **CELEBRATE impact** - to continue delivering a focused sport engagement programme that brings long term benefits to our stakeholders:

- Grassroots Sport – a number of events supporting grassroots sport have taken place at Guildhall over the past year, including the London Sport Awards, the London FA Awards and the London Youth Games Workforce Celebrations.
- Diversity in Sport – this autumn the City Corporation will host a number of events that support diversity and inclusiveness in sport. These include the Access Sport 20th Anniversary and the Pearl Anniversary of the Brighton Helsinki Declaration which celebrates and promotes women in sport.
- Business of Sport – the City Corporation will host the Global Sport Agora for the third time at Guildhall, which is an informal forum for senior business and sport leaders to discuss key shared issues.
- Elite Sport – following approval by Members last year, the City Corporation embarked on a business focused sport engagement visit to Paris for the Olympic and Paralympic Games this summer. In addition, Guildhall has been the venue for some high-profile boxing match press conferences, receiving widespread positive media attention. Next year, England will host the Women’s Rugby World Cup and the City Corporation is working with the organisers to help celebrate this tournament.
- Freedoms – a number of sport related freedoms are approaching, recognising the contribution of specific individuals to national sporting

success. These include Sir Hugh Robertson, the current chair of the British Olympic Association, and Mary Jane Peters, a former Northern Irish athlete and athletics administrator.

- Sport Diplomacy – your Head of Sport sits on a cross government working group, involving key departments (DCMS, DBT, FCDO) alongside UK Sport, to consider upcoming sport diplomacy opportunities to promote British trade and influence internationally through sport. Discussions on potential research and event initiatives are being considered as part of this and further information will be provided in due course.
- Olympic City Legacy Partner – owing to the contribution made by the City of London during the London 2012 Games, the International Olympic Committee has officially recognised the City Corporation as an Affiliate of the World Union of Olympic Cities. This recognition provides the City Corporation with the opportunity to attend and vote in the organisation's AGM, which meets annually in Lausanne, Switzerland.

iv) **ATTRACT events** - to entice more mass participation (MPEs) and high-profile spectator sport events (SSEs) onto City streets and public spaces:

- Ongoing Events – your Sport Team continues to work with the Environment Department on planned mass participation events in 2024 and beyond. These include events such as the London Marathon, the London Triathlon, the Great City Race and the Square Mile Relay. A review of how these events are supported is currently underway and will be reported to relevant committees next year.
- New Events – discussions are ongoing with potential event organisers, including London Marathon Events, to entice high profile quality mass participation and spectator sport events to the Square Mile. It is hoped that a bicycle focused event, similar to the London Nocturne, will be launched in 2025.
- Guildhall Yard – the Yard has potential to be an exceptional backdrop for high profile spectator sport events and efforts are being made to bring a competitive 3X3 basketball and boxing events to the venue as well. If confirmed, there may also be opportunities to link these events to our wider sport and organisational priorities, by involving our schools and academies as well as the local community.
- Host City Conference – the Lead Member for Sport and Head of Sport are due to attend a sport event conference in December in Glasgow in early December. Glasgow will host the 23rd Commonwealth Games in 2026 and this event is expected to involve many of the City Corporation's key partners on sport.

v) **SUPPORT community** - help to establish more sport clubs, classes and activities in the Square Mile, with a particular focus on activities for young people and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- Community Sport Officer - a new Community Sport Officer was appointed in May 2024 on a part time one-year fixed term basis. This role has specifically been tasked to take forward priority 5 of the strategy, working

closely with colleagues in the Community & Children's Services to bring forward exciting and dynamic community sport events and activations across the Square Mile.

- Central London Leisure Forum – the Head of Sport chairs a forum for sport and leisure leads from central London boroughs to discuss shared issues affecting local sport and leisure provision. The Sport Strategy Officer assists this work which has provided an opportunity to learn from other similar organisations involved in delivering sport and physical activity to local stakeholders.
- Summer of Sport – working in partnership with many of our Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) across the Square Mile, an exciting programme of free sport events and activities took place over the summer involving local residents and workers. These included pickleball, table tennis, crazy golf and fitness classes. A interactive sport activation - Exergame – was also available to local people at Artizan Street Library & Community Centre.
- LA 2028 – following suggestions from a number of Members, discussions have taken place with the British Olympic Association and the British Paralympic Association about the potential to launch a funding pool which would support potential high-achieving local athletes compete in the next Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles. Further work is needed to ascertain how this could be managed but it is hoped that the initiative will be in a position to launch next year.
- Community Events – the Community Sport Officer is working with Fusion Leisure Ltd – our current leisure centre managers - to explore opportunities to increase the number of sport and leisure activities available to local residents. These include a series of classes and events across school holidays and to support local residents. Particular focus will be given to young people, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as people over 60, carers and those with a disability.
- London Youth Games – the Sport Team are looking at ways to improve the City of London's position in the annual London Youth Games. One way is to provide greater support to local schools and also involve some of the pupils from City sponsored academies who are eligible to stand on behalf of the City of London. We will also be looking to expand the number of sports we compete in to help enhance our future ranking.

Phase 2: Maximise Delivery & Impact (2026-2030)

4. As agreed by Members when approving the new strategy last year, a further report on moving to Phase 2 of delivering the strategy should be prepared for consideration by the end of 2025. This report will put together proposals on how to ensure the sport strategy can be delivered effectively and efficiently going forward, with the following aspects due to be considered:
 - Governance – the sport strategy is currently monitored by the Sport Sounding Board which is chaired by the Lead Member for Sport. All Members of the Court of Common Council with an interest in sport are currently eligible to join the Board, which has no formal powers and meets quarterly. It may be felt that a

more formalised structure should be initiated to ensure decisions on sport are streamlined and managed effectively.

- Remit – the current focus of the sport strategy is rightfully on the Square Mile, to ensure our residents and workers needs are met in relation to sport and leisure provision. However, there is a clear crossover of interest in relation to facilities and activities provided outside the Square Mile, such as our open spaces and educational institutions. Members may feel that the remit of the Sport Team should be widened to help support the strategic oversight of these areas.
- Resourcing – so far most of the costs of delivering the sport strategy, including additional staffing, have been met from the Policy Initiatives Fund (PIF). Beyond March 2026 it is acknowledged that an alternative funding arrangement needs to be found to ensure the ambitions of the sport strategy can be met. Assuming this is possible, workload and staffing of the sport team will also need to be reviewed. It should also be noted that, under the new leisure contract for managing Golden Lane Leisure Centre, there may be an opportunity to bring community sport development provision back in-house.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

5. Strategic implications – the new sport strategy aligns with and will support the delivery of the Corporate Plan, mainly by improving the wellbeing of our community but also in support of plans to make the City of London a vibrant and attractive destination.
6. Resource implications – Any change will be carried out in accordance with relevant HR procedures.
7. Financial implications – PIF funding of £175,000 per year for 3 years from 2023/24 to 2025/26 was approved in June 2023. This covers additional staff costs, sport engagement work, events & activations and consultancy services to assess sport provision. In addition, £100,000 was allocated from PIF in November 2023 specifically for engagement during the Paris Olympic & Paralympic Games. Phase 2 will need to consider long term permanent funding arrangements to ensure ongoing delivery of the strategy and the five priorities identified.
8. Legal implications - None
9. Risk implications - None
10. Equalities implications – In line with our Public Sector Equality Duty 2010, proposals set out within the strategy are intended to have a positive impact on people protected by existing equality legislation – age, disability, gender, race etc. Sport naturally breaks down barriers and encourages social cohesion. Efforts will be made to support events and initiatives that have a positive impact on diversity and equality.
11. Climate implications – Owing to the nature of sport and physical activity, objectives are likely to reinforce climate goals and the need to reduce the organisation’s carbon footprint. Particularly by encouraging active travel options and by using outdoor facilities which do not require energy supplies.
12. Security implications – Any planned new high profile sport events and activations would need to be assessed appropriately for potential security risks.

Conclusion

13. This report provides an update on delivering our new sport strategy – A Global City of Sport. It highlights the various events and initiatives that have been delivered to date and also aspects relating to delivery of the next phase of the strategy.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Overview of City Corporation Engagement in Paris Olympics & Paralympics 2024

Background Papers:

[A Global City of Sport: A Sport Strategy for the Square Mile \(2023-30\)](#)

Sam Hutchings

Head of Sport

E: sam.hutchings@cityoflondon.gov.uk