

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LIBRARIES COMMITTEE

Monday, 9 December 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee held at Artizan St Library, E1 7AF on Monday, 9 December 2024 at 10.30 am

Present

Members:

John Griffiths (Deputy Chairman)	Judith Pleasance
John Foley	Deputy Alpa Raja
James St John Davis	Anett Rideg
Jason Groves	David Sales
Jaspreet Hodgson	Ian Seaton
Amy Horscroft	Deputy Dawn Wright
Wendy Hyde	Alderswoman Elizabeth Anne King, BEM JP
Alderman Bronek Masojada	Caroline Haines
Deborah Oliver	Brendan Barns

In Attendance

Officers:

Rob Shakespeare	- Keats House, Environment
Jayne Moore	- Town Clerk's Department
Emma Markiewicz	- Head of Profession (Culture)
Rachel Levy	- Community and Children's Services
Omkar Chana	- Innovation and Growth
Andrew Buckingham	- Town Clerk's Department
Simon Glynn	- Environment
Laurence Ward	- Town Clerk's Department
Jen Beckerman	- Head of Profession (Destination City)

1. APOLOGIES

The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Chairman John Griffiths due to the Chairman sending his apologies as he was travelling at the time of the meeting.

The Chair thanked the staff at Artizan Street Library for hosting the meeting, particularly Rachel Levy and Claire Doolan, and congratulated the staff on the Makerspace that Members had viewed prior to the meeting.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

No declarations were made.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, That the minutes of the meeting of 04 November 2024 be approved as a correct record, subject to one correction to the list of attendees.

4. **PRESENTATION ON BUDGET**

The Committee viewed the presentation of the Head of Finance, Chamberlain's Department that presented the following information:

- Explanation of Local, Central Risk and Recharges;
- 5 Year Summary of Budgets by Service Area; and
- Review of budget, assets and service of each main service area.

Members noted that the Committee's total 2025/26 net budget amounts to **£24.610m** which is split between Local Risk, Central Risk and Recharges (inc. Cyclical Works Programme):

LOCAL RISK BUDGETS (£8.127m): - These are budgets deemed to be largely within the Chief Officers control (e.g. employees).

CENTRAL RISK BUDGETS (£7.237m): - These are specific revenue items where a Chief Officer manages the underlying service but where the eventual outturn can be strongly influenced by external factors outside of their control (eg interest on cash balances). Inflation is not added to these budgets other than by exception.

RECHARGES (£9.246m) : This relates to expenditure / income that was first recognised in another service area and transferred to the Committee. The control of these costs is exercised at the point where the expenditure / income first arises as Local or central risk. (e.g. Central support costs).

The Committee noted the figures set out below:

Culture, Heritage & Libraries	Original Budget by Service Managed				
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Service	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Guildhall Art Gallery	(2,926)	(3,031)	(2,774)	(2,616)	(2,837)
City Information Service & Outdoor Arts	(1,301)	(1,167)	(1,479)	(1,645)	(1,821)
Police Museum	(18)				
Guildhall Library	(553)	(575)	(574)	(610)	(2,511)
Small Business, Enterprise & Research Centre	(578)	(602)	(569)	0	0
London Archives	(2,875)	(2,786)	(2,970)	(3,253)	(4,952)
London Archives Projects	0	0	(101)	(98)	(45)
City Records Services	(1,003)	(962)	(985)	(1,215)	(1,320)
Heritage Gallery	(25)	(25)	(25)	(25)	(25)
Keats House	(334)	(266)	(300)	(431)	(365)
Monument	108	121	92	18	(3)
Barbican & Shoe Lane Libraries	(2,919)	(2,968)	(3,131)	(3,431)	(3,944)
Artizan Street Library	(396)	(381)	(398)	(446)	(449)
Roman Remains & Guildhall Complex Land	(22)	(21)	(35)	(25)	(67)
Mayoralty & Shrievalty	(125)	(115)	(118)	(123)	(176)
CHL Directorate (mainly capital recharges)	(1,860)	(1,908)	(2,252)	(2,131)	(285)
Museum Of London Grant	(5,292)	(5,292)	(5,292)	(5,450)	(5,810)
TOTAL	(20,119)	(19,978)	(20,911)	(21,481)	(24,610)

The Committee also noted the income, expenditure and funds allocated to Guildhall Art Gallery, City Information Service & Outdoor Arts, Guildhall Library, London Archives, City Records Services, Keats House, Monument, Barbican and Shoe Lane Libraries, and Artizan St Library & Community Centre, noting that individual budget-holders are accountable for each set of figures for each asset.

Members asked for clarification on the Recharge element, noting that it constitutes the largest element of the budget and that the Committee has no control over it, noting also that the total allocation increase for 2025/26 (of approximately £3.2M) relates mostly to recharges and changes in the way recharges have been allocated particularly around the Directorate figures that have been reallocated to more accurately reflect the fund destinations, over and above an additional recharge amount of approximately £2M.

Members asked whether the figures could be supplied with the recharge figures stripped out, and the meeting heard that those figures would be circulated by February 2025.

Members sought clarification on the uplift on funds allocated to the Mayoralty and Shrievalty in the coming year. The meeting noted that further figures detailing that allocation would be provided by February 2025.

Members expressed concern at the apparent paucity of staff at Guildhall Art Gallery.

On the increased projected income for Keats House (£81K in 2024/25 to £118K in 2025/26) a Member asked how that would be achieved. The meeting heard that the projected income is achievable on the basis of assumptions about the post-pandemic recovery, some exciting programmes, and cost reductions.

A member asked for further information on the projected increase in income at City Records Service (zero in 2024/25 to £41K in 2025/26). The meeting heard that the City Records Service income has been moved over from the London Archives income.

The meeting noted the challenging 2025/26 income target for Monument (£556K). A Member asked whether the CoLC is compensated when The Monument is closed due to staffing shortages when Tower Bridge is prioritised (noting that the City Bridge Foundation is allocated the funds to staff The Monument). The meeting heard that further information on The Monument is given at agenda item 11 and that a rebate is given when The Monument is not staffed and closed as a result of that, though the financial and reputational costs to The Monument being closed at short notice are significant.

A Member commented that there is merit in taking a broad overview of the cultural retail offering.

A Member asked for information on the latitude that the Committee had in budget allocation. The meeting heard that the overall envelope is fixed though Chief Officers (to whom budget responsibility is allocated)

A Member commented that the budget should reflect the Strategy being developed and noted that the 2026/27 period was the earliest point at which the budget could be adjusted to align with the strategy, noting also that future income generation opportunities.

5. **DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET ESTIMATES 2025-26**

The Committee considered the report of The Chamberlain, Deputy Town Clerk, Executive Director Environment, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services, and the City Surveyor.

The Committee reviewed the proposed allocation of the 2025/26 revenue budget to ensure that it reflected the Committee's objectives.

A Member sought clarification on this section: "Executive Director Environment (£0.014m net decrease) – minor adjustment, decrease attributed to a reduction in depreciation at Keats House" and also queried the accuracy of staffing costs.

The meeting noted that the depreciation of Keats House covered an extended time period, and that staffing costs were increased partly as a result of historic vacancies, and that casual staff were used at the City Information Centre.

A Member commented that there appeared to be missed opportunities to showcase British art at Mansion House.

A number of Members commented that Guildhall Art Gallery did not appear to be getting the resources it needed given its importance and significance.

RESOLVED, That the Committee

- Approve the budget for submission to the Finance Committee;
- Authorise the Chamberlain, in consultation with the Deputy Town Clerk, Executive Directors of Community and Children's Services, Environment, and the City Surveyor to revise these budgets to allow for any further implications arising from Corporate Projects, the Target Operating Model other reviews and changes to the Cyclical Works Programme; and
- Authorise the Chamberlain to agree minor amendments for 2025/25 budgets arising during budget-setting.

6. **DC IMPLEMENTATION**

The Committee heard from the Head of Profession (Destination City) noting that Destination City was approved in its current form as a programme of action to drive the growth strategy for the Square Mile, noting also the four workstreams to pursue growth: improvement of pedestrian connectivity between places; development of a consistent experience (including events and culture); establishment of a premium concierge service for relocating businesses; and the driving of footfall Friday to Monday.

The Committee noted that the Destination Advisory Board's first meeting takes place on 10 December 2024 (and will meet quarterly thereafter) and that the Deputy Chair (John Griffiths) represents the Committee on that Board and will keep the Committee updated on Destination City. Members noted that recruitment is under way to the DC Hub that is expected to work across the Corporation, seeking to improve cross-departmental communication, generate partnerships, and break down silos with careful analysis of data and analytics.

A Member commented that it would have been beneficial to have received information on Destination City beforehand and asked that such information be distributed ahead of the meeting in future.

A Member commented on the importance of residents within the Destination City scope, noting that residents benefit from increased footfall generally and that the Residential Reset programme focussed on residents - public updates on that having been provided earlier in the year to the Corporation's Communications and Corporate Affairs Sub-Committee.

Members commented on the importance of communication over and above social media strategies.

A Member commented on the importance of ensuring that SMEs are included in the scope. The meeting noted that SMEs are consulted on a regular basis, and that SMEs are provided with regular content updates.

7. **COMMISSION RESEARCH INTO THE CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION'S LINKS TO THE HISTORICAL TRADE IN ENSLAVED AFRICAN PEOPLE**

The Committee received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

A Member commented on the benefits of including the relationship between Freemasonry and the slave trade.

A Member commented that the Corporation should formulate a plan on what it would do with the findings of the research.

A Member commented on the role of the Church of England in the matter (noting the role of St Mary Woolnoth in particular), noting also the role of other City institutions and other research already undertaken that could be incorporated into the proposed research.

Members noted and endorsed the application to the Policy and Resources Committee's Policy Initiatives Fund for £34,400 to commission a piece of independent research into the City of London Corporation's links to the historical trade in enslaved African people.

8. **DEVELOPING THE CULTURAL STRATEGY - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Profession (Culture).

Members noted that the audience analysis described in Appendix 1 may require a specific commission with an agency that is not the same agency as the one likely to be tasked with developing the strategy, noting also that the scope is to include "a review of existing data and policies...carried out by the in-house team".

The Committee noted that the workshop on 12 December 2024 may result in amendments being suggested to the Terms of Reference, at which point the updates would be agreed via Delegated Authority.

Members noted that the Culture team would be limited to projects where there are existing delivery commitments during the development of the Cultural Strategy.

A Member commented on the role of the Barbican Centre in the strategy, noting that the Strategy was not expecting to inform the Barbican Centre's direction and that the Barbican Centre is involved in discussions around the strategy – noting also other major cultural institutions in the City of London such as the London Museum and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Members noted that any amendments made under Delegated Authority could impact on the timing of the final confirmation of the Terms of Reference, noting the interest in getting the Terms of Reference finalised by the end of 2024.

RESOLVED, That Members

- Approve the Terms of Reference to develop the Cultural Strategy (set out in Appendix 1); and
- Approve that any updates to the Terms of Reference be made under Delegated Authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee.

9. **UPDATE ON ARTIZAN ST LIBRARY**

The Committee received an update on the Artizan St Library & Community Centre from the Head of Barbican & Community Libraries and from the Library Centre Manager.

Members thanked the Artizan Street Library staff for the opportunity to view the Maker space and for the dedication of the staff to the facilities.

Members noted the following:

- An average of one induction per week is delivered for the Makerspace on one or more of the machines;
- Parent reader sessions are to be introduced imminently working in partnership with local schools; and
- A football lending service is available free of charge.

A Member asked for further information on book lending figures. The meeting heard that books have been purchased to tie in with the library's facilities and that book issue figures are close to pre-pandemic levels.

A Member asked for more information on the volunteer profile. The meeting heard that volunteers are mainly City workers and residents.

10. **MID-YEAR UPDATE REPORT FOR KEATS HOUSE 2024/25**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director, Environment, and noted the activities at Keats House.

RESOLVED, That Members confirm, on behalf of the City Corporation as Trustee, that the register appended to the report satisfactorily set out the key risks to the Keats House charity and that appropriate systems are in place to identify and mitigate risks.

11. **UPDATE ON MONUMENT**

The Committee heard an update on the Monument from the Assistant Director Culture & Projects.

The Committee noted that an operational delivery transition plan for the Monument that would have brought the Monument under the aegis of the

Environment Department has been superseded and the Monument is likely to have a new management home away from Tower Bridge within a cultural service area, and a fresh transition plan was recently drafted that is expected to be presented to the Committee in February 2025.

The meeting also noted these points:

- The Monument's Conservation Management Plan is led by a team within the City Surveyor's Department;
- Negotiations for the space around the Monument are being led by the City's Planning section;
- Income generation opportunities are being actively sought, these include the conversion of a disused public convenience facility to a small retail unit that may be offered to a third party;
- In the April-November 2024 period, the Monument welcomed just under 60K visitors (down from 70K during the same period in 2023) that is believed to be attributable to the tourism boost generated by the coronation of King Charles III in May 2023;
- Admission income in that period is c. £238K which is in line with the 2023 period, attributable to variations in the composition of visitors;
- Over 1200 school students visited the venue, and projected bookings are good; and
- Closures due to staff shortages are down by 46% compared to the same 2023 period, though the closure rate is still approximately 10%.

Members noted the reduced closure rate and commented that there were still too many days lost due to staff shortages.

A Member asked whether there would be any interaction between the proposed opening of the new retail space as described and developer activity. The meeting noted that the disused convenience is reaching the end of its projected life cycle and by the time the development begins the space would cease to be used and probably be removed.

12. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no other business.

14. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED, that – under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the non-public items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

The meeting ended at 12.45 pm

Chairman

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