

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s)	Dated:
Markets Board Resource Allocation Sub (Policy and Resources) Committee Investment Committee	22 January 2025 3 February 2025 17 February 2025
Subject: Draft High-Level Business Plan 2025/26 – City Surveyor’s Department	Public report: For Decision
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • Provides business enabling functions 	Providing Excellent Services, Leading Sustainable Environment, Flourishing Public Spaces, Dynamic Economic Growth, Vibrant Thriving Destination.
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:	The City Surveyor and Executive Director of Property (CS.329/24)
Report author: Anna Flashman & John Galvin - City Surveyor’s Department	John Galvin/Anna Flashman City Surveyor’s Department

Summary

This report presents for approval the high-level Business Plan for the City Surveyor’s Department for 2025/26. Members should note that the Business Plan now includes the Markets division, which had a separate plan in 2024/25.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- i. Note the factors taken into consideration in compiling the City Surveyor’s Departmental Business Plan; and
- ii. Approve, subject to the incorporation of any changes sought by this Committee, the departmental Business Plan 2025/26.

Main Report

Background

1. As part of the new framework for corporate and business planning, departments were asked to produce standardised high-level, Business Plans for the first time in 2017 for the 2018/19 year. Members welcomed these high-level plans for being brief, concise, focused and consistent statements of the key ambitions and objectives for every department.
2. Since 2025/26, the high-level Business Plan has evolved with a new template. They are now slightly longer than the 2-sided version of 2017, but still offer concise insights into the department's operations.
3. High-level Business Plans for Financial Year 2025/26 align to our Corporate Plan 2024-2029. As a high-level plan, this document does not capture the granularity of departmental work but gives the overall picture of activity, key impacts, trends where applicable and direction of travel.

Draft final high-level Business Plan for 2025/26

4. This report presents, at Appendix 1, the draft final high-level Business Plan for 2025/26 for the City Surveyor's Department.
5. The Markets Division merged with the City Surveyor's Department in November 2023, and a new integrated plan has been produced for 2025/26.
6. Feedback has been critical to the development of this plan:
 - a) Members – The Business Plan has been circulated to the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Investment Committee, Resource Allocation Sub (Policy and Resources) Committee and Markets Board to gain their feedback and input.
 - b) Staff – In November, the City Surveyor hosted an 'all department' event dedicated to the proposed business plan, and a draft of the plan was subsequently sent to all staff. Feedback was sought as such that this could be integrated into the plan, or responded to, as appropriate. The business plan and departmental priorities were discussed in detail with the departmental Senior Management Team (SMT) through a series of meetings. Finally, the plan formed part of the formal agenda at the department's Equity, Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion Group in September and October, allowing the forum to consider the people and equalities elements within the plan and agree its key priorities for 2025/26.
 - c) Customers – In 2024, the department conducted several surveys including a comprehensive "voice of the customer" survey for Investment and Corporate Property occupiers, as well as the Market tenants survey and Property Projects Group post-project reviews. This feedback has helped shape the department's priority areas for 2025/26.

- d) Corporate stakeholders – The department is a key member of the organisation’s Strategic Planning Group. This forum considers all the organisation’s business plans to ensure cross-cutting activities are appropriately reflected, and opportunities to break down organisational silos are grasped and to provide oversight and scrutiny. Feedback from this group has been embedded within the department’s business plan. This draft Business Plan was approved at the Town Clerk’s Senior Leadership Team meeting on 10 December 2024.

Performance Measurement:

7. The department’s key performance indicators (KPIs) are contained on page 3 - 5 of Appendix 1. The department’s 2025/26 KPIs have been created to track and monitor progress in delivering its key workstreams. Members will note that the majority of these measures are aligned with those reported in prior years, allowing for year-on-year comparisons.
8. The department reports on a sub-set of these measures to each of Investment Committee, Resource Allocation Sub (Policy and Resources) Committee and Markets Board. Measures reported to these that are tailored to each Committee’s terms of reference. The department’s business plan update is reported alongside our risk register. This is such that progress towards, and those factors that could prevent the achievement of our objectives can be assessed.

Measuring Impact and Value for Money (VfM)

9. The Business Plan demonstrates the department’s commitment to delivering value for money while making a positive impact on the community, the environment and the wider City of London Corporation (Appendix 1 page 5). The City Surveyor and the SMT regularly evaluate departmental performance to ensure continuous improvement of services, and overall performance and refine strategies to maintain agility and responsiveness to the evolving needs of stakeholders.

Departmental Operational Property Assets Utilisation Assessment Findings

10. Aligned with the requirements of Standing Order 56, the department undertook a utilisation assessment of those corporate spaces that the department has been using. Most of the space occupied is at the Guildhall, with a smaller operational provision at the Central Criminal Court and the 3 wholesale markets. The City Surveyor’s Guildhall space assessment was undertaken in December 2024.
11. The current average utilisation for the department was deemed appropriate, with no surplus space identified. This review highlighted both challenges and opportunities for improving workplace efficiency and alignment with corporate standards.

12. Although CSD's current utilisation rate of 53% is below the 60% target, this reflects the nature of property activities and the department is operating within a workspace allocation of 6.67 m² per person, which is significantly lower than the target of 10 m² per person. This indicates a more compact yet potentially efficient use of space, albeit with scope for some improved utilisation.

Recommendations to improve utilisation

13. Consider consolidation of CSD's operations to support the goal of collaboration and enhancing operational effectiveness.

14. Continue to pursue optimal space usage without requiring additional floorspace. By maintaining the current Net Internal Area (NIA) of 1,167 m², aligning with the target space allocation of 10 m² per person, and striving to achieve a peak utilisation rate of 60%, the department can balance efficiency with emerging workplace trends.

15. These measures aim to enhance workplace flexibility and collaboration, aligning with corporate objectives and adapting to post-pandemic office trends.

16. The department will be reviewing all its assets again in December 2025.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

17. The City Surveyor's Department is dedicated to supporting and advancing the objectives outlined in the Corporate Plan.

18. Our collective aspirations for the medium-term are reflected within the departmental business plan and each workstream maps to one or more of the six strategic outcomes and is supported by key performance measures.

19. This department plays a crucial role in realising the City's vision by executing major construction initiatives, such as Salisbury Square, London Museum, and Barbican Renewal, while also preserving our heritage estate for the benefit of all Londoners and generating substantial revenue from both investment and operational property portfolios, which underpins all our activities.

20. The department actively collaborates with corporate leaders to ensure the effective implementation of our strategic priorities, particularly in relation to Destination City, the Climate Action Strategy, Equity, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EEDI) initiatives and the City's Corporate Property Asset Management Strategy for 2024-29. Further, the department is providing significant support to the delivery of the Operational Property Review and the Natural Environment Charities Review.

Security implications

21. The business plan highlights the department's management of security across the City of London Corporation (CoLC) and the City of London Police property portfolios.

Financial implications

22. The financial information presented within the Business Plan reflects the departmental rather than the Committee budget.

23. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report and this plan aligns with the 2025/26 budget estimates and estimated resource allocations. Whilst the department's local risk position is challenging and inflation costs rising it continues to generate significant income and capital receipts to support the CoLC's financial sustainability.

Public sector equality duty

24. Where appropriate the department will complete an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for upcoming changes.

Equalities implication

25. The department has an active volunteer EEDI Group. This is seeking to enhance these areas within the department. The business plan highlights the areas of focus of this Group for 2025/26.

Resourcing implications

26. There are no resourcing implications arising directly from this report.

27. The department has carefully considered the balance of resources allocated across the various workstreams. It works throughout the year to dynamically adjust assignment to account for emerging needs and requirements.

Risk Implications

28. Key risks managed by the department are included in the Risk Update Report that is also reported to this Committee that are relevant to its Terms of Reference.

Climate Implications

29. The department supports the delivery of the Climate Action Strategy targets (achieving EPC C by 2027 and EPC B by 2030 and Carbon Net Zero (CNZ) by 2040) related to our financial and property investments and CNZ by 2027 for operational properties.

Conclusion

30. This report presents the proposed high-level Business Plan for 2025/26 for the City Surveyor's Department for Members to consider and approve.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Draft High-Level Business Plan 2025/26 - CSD