

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Culture, Heritage and Libraries – For Decision	Dated: 10/02/2025
Subject: Draft Business Plan 2025/26 – The London Archives (including the Culture Team)	Public report
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • provides statutory duties • provides business enabling functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse Engaged Communities • Vibrant Thriving Destination • Providing Excellent Services • Flourishing Public Spaces
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	n/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	No
Report of: Greg Moore, Deputy Town Clerk	
Report author: Emma Markiewicz, Director of The London Archives and Head of Profession for Culture.	For Decision

Summary

This report presents for approval the high-level Business Plan for The London Archives, including the Culture Team, for 2025/26.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- i. Note the factors taken into consideration in compiling The London Archives and Culture team 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 generally welcomed these high-level plans for being brief, concise, focused and consistent statements of the key ambitions and objectives for every department.
2. High-level Business Plans for FY 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 departmental activity, customer feedback, trends where applicable and direction of travel.

Draft final high-level Business Plan for 2025/26

3. This report presents, at Appendix 1, the draft final high-level Business Plan for 2025/26 for The London Archives, including the Culture Team.

Sections to answer:

- a. Member Involvement:

The draft has been discussed with the Chair and Deputy Chair for comment in advance. We will report on aspects of the report throughout the annual Committee cycle for comment, information and approval as per the usual process.

- b. Prioritisation and alignment to Corporate Plan 2024-2029:

Priorities for The London Archives and Culture Team are shared with CHL through the provision of regular updates throughout the Committee cycle, and these are reflected in our ongoing business planning.

The key priority areas we would highlight from within the plan are The London Archives Accommodation review and audience and schools development work, which inform the new vision for The London Archives and its future home, and the Guildhall Library development programme.

The key priority for the Culture team is to develop the Cultural Strategy. This is a fundamental piece of work, which will be aligned with the Corporate Plan 2024-29. All priorities and workstream will stem from the Cultural Strategy.

c. Synergies and combatting silos

The major areas of the plan which is cross-cutting are:

- The TLA accommodation project, which requires close collaboration with Surveyors and Chamberlains departments.
- The Guildhall Library development project, which provides opportunities to collaborate with City departments, teams and institutions including City Belonging, Adult Services, Destination City and the City Bridge Foundation.
- Development of the Culture Strategy.
- Audience growth across the services, through close collaboration between teams and services including the Culture Team, Destination City, TLA, Guildhall Library and Guildhall Art Gallery.
- The vision for the Cultural Strategy is for it to serve the needs of the Culture team, the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee, the City Corporation and the Square Mile (and in some cases immediately beyond).

d. Resources utilised:

The bulk of the TLA budget is allocated to staffing costs, and we continue our work to develop skills, knowledge and personal development which supports the development of the services. The TLA mission statement and vision focus all teams on working together to achieve shared priorities of audience growth and development. Improving public spaces at TLA and Guildhall Library to provide a welcoming and flexible environment is central to our audience strategy, but our focus is on refreshing spaces to keep costs to a minimum or attracting partnership funding or commercial income to support development.

The Culture team budget is heavily allocated to staffing costs because the resource base was setup to deliver Destination City – phase 1. With the Destination City Review 2024, the transition to the Head of Profession for Culture, and the development of the Cultural Strategy the approach has been to limit recruitment to key roles and maintain an agile resource so that it is possible to optimise to deliver the new Cultural Strategy when it is approved.

e. Performance Measurement:

Performance against KPIs is monitored internally through quarterly reporting and regular meetings as a senior management team for TLA. Baseline KPIs will be set at the beginning of the financial year, informed by 2024/25 performance. Developing a performance measurement framework is a key part of the Cultural Strategy terms of reference and these would be integrated into this business plan cycle at a commensurate point in the annual cycle.

f. Measuring Impact and Value for Money (VfM):

Quantitative and qualitative data is gathered from our users on an annual basis through an audience survey, and additionally as required via surveys to our mailing lists, event visitors and in our research spaces.

Departmental Operational Property Assets Utilisation Assessment

4. **[In this section Chief Officers are required under delegations to report on their Compliance with Standing Order 56.** An utilisation assessment and an analysis of comparative organisation/asset exercise, in accordance with the scope set out in the Operational Property Review, is required. This must also be made available to the OPR at or before the presentation of the Business Plan to Committee]:

The report must say how and when the utilisation assessment has been undertaken and state whether assets were identified fully or partially utilised or fully underutilised

The London Archives site in Northampton Road, Islington: The site is fully utilised by the service. We anticipate that storage areas will reach full capacity in 2032. The lease on the site expires in 2035. The majority of space on the site is dedicated to archives storage. We began our programme to review and improve use of the public spaces last year and this will continue in 2025/26, ensuring that all space is used effectively and use is informed by our audience surveys and feedback. The main open office space will be developed this year to maximise the available space and accommodate the incoming RIBA Library team.

Guildhall Library: The spaces used to deliver the library service to researchers and visitors and store library books and archives are fully used. Library office spaces are partly utilised, meaning that not every desk is occupied every day, but are fully used at times, depending on the presence of volunteers and visiting staff from The London Archives. Utilisation of spaces at and around the library will be reviewed through the Guildhall Library Development Programme to ensure that available space is used effectively.

North Block Basement rooms SB34, SB25, NB019, NB013 and GYE Basement Rooms – S1, B2 are fully utilised for archive storage.

Culture Team office space is on the First Floor of the West Wing in Guildhall which is utilised. A utilisation assessment took place with the City Surveyor's Department when the team reported into Innovation & Growth. Other assets under management include the Guildhall Art Gallery, the City Information Centre and the Roman Bathhouse.

All spaces have been assessed by TLA and Culture Team staff and information has been shared with City Surveyor's Department and the Transformation team.

Corporate & Strategic Implications – [Please state ‘none’ if not applicable instead of deleting any of the sub-headings below]

Strategic implications

The London Archives and Culture Team business plan supports delivery of the Corporate Plan by providing outstanding public services, developing and growing diverse audiences in the City and at City destinations, providing excellent education and lifelong learning opportunities and developing City spaces as vibrant destinations. TLA in particular also delivers against the UK Government strategy for archives, Archives Unlocked.

Security implications

None identified.

Financial implications

On completion of the Cultural Strategy, there may be options that require CHL budgets to be reappropriated or additional investment to deliver on all of the recommendations.

Equalities implications

We expect workstreams b, d, e and j to have a positive impact on people protected by existing equality legislation.

Workstreams b, d and e will purposefully seek engagement with all Londoners, developing public engagement which reflects London’s diversity today. Our schools programme will seek engagement across London’s primary and secondary schools, raising awareness with children across the capital of the incredible resources contained within City’s archives. Our public programme will include a wide range of events developed for diverse audiences, purposefully presenting a range of ways to engage with our services. Our new community programme will be developed with all Londoners in mind, ensuring that our programme is diverse and inclusive.

Through the milestones set out in workstream e and j, we will continue to develop our public spaces, creating an environment which is welcoming to all and considers the need of all our visitors.

Our internal EDI Forum will review and develop our practice, monitoring our EDI action plan throughout the year.

Public sector equality duty

See above

Resourcing implications

The London Archives Accommodation Project is at pre-feasibility stage to gather intelligence and data in order to inform the scope of options. £150,000 (including £10k costed risk provision) of funding was secured from Finance Committee’s Contingency on the 7th of May 2024. The project is not attached to any other funding at this point.

TLA previously funded a strategic review into spatial and business model requirements for the future, and these will inform the pre-feasibility review.

Funding options for the Guildhall Library Development Programme will be identified during the development phase this year, reviewing both City Corporation funding options and potential for partnership contributions.

Risk Implications

The London Archives Accommodation Project carries a key risk as decisions are needed well in advance of 2035 and lease expiry, to secure alternative premises and undertake works.

Climate Implications

None identified.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Final high-level Business Plan 2025/26

Conclusion

This report presents the high-level Business Plan for 2025/26 for The London Archives, including the Culture Team, for Members to consider and approve.

Appendices

[Appendices should be clearly labelled and submitted to the Committee clerk as a separate document – this supports a consistent approach to the preparation and presentation of documents, including how they are published to the website]

[Provide details of any appendix, these should be listed for easy reference and report collation purposes]. **Please state 'none' if not applicable instead of deleting this section.**

- Appendix 1 – Final high-level Business Plan 2025/26

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