

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Policy & Resources Committee	Dated: Thursday, 8 May 2025
Subject: Destination City Update Report	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes 	Vibrant, Thriving Destination Dynamic Economic Growth
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:	Gregory Moore, Deputy Town Clerk
Report author:	Jennifer Beckermann, Senior Responsible Officer for Destination City, Executive Director and Private Secretary to the Policy Chairman Benjamin Dixon Head of the Policy Unit, Office of the Policy Chairman

Summary

The Destination City Hub has been very active since our last update to the Policy and Resources Committee in February 2025.

The second meeting of the Destination Advisory Board (DAB) took place on 27 March 2025. The agenda focused on confirming the renewed Destination City vision and agreeing on activities and deliverables of the first year of the programme. The Destination City Partnership Fund (DCPF) fund is now live and accepting applications for funding.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- a) **Note** the summary of the discussion of the second meeting of the Destination Advisory Board held in March 2025.

- b) **Note** the launch of the Destination Partnership Fund and promote the fund by directing organizations our Central Grants Unit website for applications.

Main Report

Background

1. Destination City is the growth strategy for the Square Mile. Our ambition is to make the City an even more attractive place, to start or grow your business; to start your career, find a new job, go out with your colleagues after a day at the office; to visit on an evening or weekend. Our success will be measured by attracting more businesses, more workers and more visitors to the Sq. Mile
2. Members approved the appointment of 14 individuals to the Destination Advisory Board in November 2024. A final external member was appointed via delegated authority – Sarah Weir. Ms. Weir attended her first Destination Advisory Board meeting on 27 March.

Destination Advisory Board

3. The second meeting of the DAB took place on 27 March 2025.
4. A summary of the DAB discussion can be referenced at Appendix 1. The agenda focused on the implementation of the renewed Destination City vision and its associated activities. Members discussed the importance of partnerships and data-driven decision-making to ensure sustainable impact of the program.
 - a. The Board applauded progress to date and the clarity of vision, metrics and programme deliverables proposed by the Destination City team; Board Members highlighted the many interdependencies among various workstreams and reflected that the ambitions of DC should be viewed as a cross-corporate endeavour, requiring strong alignment and communication between City of London Corporation Service Departments, Institutions and the wider Sq Mile ecosystem.
 - b. The Board received a briefing from Katie Stewart, Executive Director, Environment about development of the City Business and Investment Unit. The concierge-style service will focus on attraction and retention of businesses was well-received by Board Members who emphasized the importance of creating high-quality environments for talent retention.
 - c. The SRO and the DC Hub team shared the initial PowerBI dashboard – drawn from data available in the High Street Data Service.
 - d. Andrew Jackson CBE, Tower Director, Historic Royal Palaces shared insights into the Tower's approach to the visitor economy, including the Tower's transformation/renewal agenda *Tomorrow's Tower*. The Board

reflected on how to improve connectivity between cultural landmarks within the City and its immediate boundary areas and discussed shifts in visitor patterns.

5. Following the election and confirmation of Committee Chairs, the DAB Membership will be refreshed to reflect any changes among City Corporation allocations (for example, new representatives from Culture, Heritage and Libraries and Planning & Transportation).

Destination City Partnership Fund

6. To encourage joint working and co-creation with partners, Members of this Committee approved the creation and parameters of the Destination City Partnership Fund at their last meeting in February 2025.
7. The Destination City Partnership Fund is now live and accepting applications for funding: [Destination City Partnership Fund - City of London](#).
8. The Destination City Partnership Fund (DCPF) will be administered by the Central Grants Team (CGT) and has added a fourth strand to the existing funding themes:
 - Inspiring London Through Culture
 - Stronger Communities
 - Enjoying Green Spaces.
9. The initial allocation of £200,000 to the Fund is being split equally over four quarters of the fiscal year. The minimum grant that an organisation can apply for is £1,000 and the maximum grant is £10,000. Through the Destination City Partnership Fund, the City Corporation is seeking to co-fund projects with partners. Proposals must set out what cash and in-kind contributions will be made to match-fund the cash contribution requested from the City Corporation.
10. Members of the Destination Advisory Board endorsed a “test and learn” approach for the Fund. To avoid duplication and ensure better alignment with the City’s Business Improvement Districts, DAB Members suggested a representative of BIDs be included in the Fund decision panel; the BIDs have appointed a representative to sit on the panel from June onwards.
11. The fund will prioritise applications that can demonstrate sustainability of an intervention (e.g. to show that there is an audience for a particular type of event that would *sustainably* drive footfall on Saturday mornings).
12. The Destination City Hub hopes that Members will promote the Fund and encourage applications.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications:	The proposals contained in this paper will deliver against the Corporate Plan outcomes of Vibrant, Thriving Destination and Dynamic Economic Growth.
Financial implications:	The Destination City programme is funded through a re-allocation of the Growth Bid over 2 years.
Resource implications:	The Destination City Partnership Fund will be delivered by the Central Grants Unit, thereby capitalizing on well-established best practices and expertise..
Legal implications:	None
Risk implications:	As with all financial contributions, there is a risk that partners do not delivery on their commitments. However, given the limited size of the value of contributions and the due diligence applied via our Central Grants team, we are confident that the majority of DC distributed funding will be well spent.
Equalities implications	The proposals above recommend undertaking research to better understand the demographics of the target worker population so that the impact of measures.
Climate implications:	None
Security implications:	None

Conclusion

13. The Destination City Hub has been very active since our last update to the Policy and Resources Committee. In addition to hosting the Destination Advisory Board meeting on 27 March, the Hub has welcome four new team members in April, and the Destination City Partnership Fund is now live and open to applications. We have also made good progress with respect of enhancing our relationship and partnership working with the City's five Business Improvement Districts. A collaboratively commissioned study looking at how to enable "a lively and consistently animated ground floor experience", another key deliverable of the Martin Review, is underway. In the next weeks, the Hub looks forward to supporting the Environment Department with the launch of the City Business and Investment Unit.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of the Destination City Advisory Board held on 27 March 2025.

Jennifer Beckermann

Senior Responsible Officer, Destination City
Executive Director and Private Secretary to the Policy Chairman
jen.beckermann@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Benjamin Dixon

Head of the Policy Unit, Office of the Policy Chairman
benjamin.dixon@cityoflondon.gov.uk