

Destination Advisory Board (DAB)

27 March 2025

Attendance

1. Chris Hayward - Policy Chairman, City of London Corporation [*Chair*]
2. Andrew Jackson CBE - Tower Director, Historic Royal Palaces [*Cultural Institution Appointment*]
3. Charlotte Fletcher - Chair, Cheapside Business Alliance [*BID Appointment*]
4. Tony Matharu - Founder and Chairman, Central London Alliance CIC/Blue Orchid Hospitality
5. Sean Ghouse - Director of Retail UK, Fortnum & Mason
6. Andrew Hilston - Managing Director, The Ardent Companies
7. Sarah Weir - CEO & Founder, Albion & East
8. Simon McCaugherty - Director of Destination, London & Partners [London & Partners Appointment]
9. Shravan Joshi – Planning & Transportation Committee Representative, City of London Corporation
10. Helen Fentiman – Community & Children’s Service Committee Representative, City of London Corporation
11. Ian Thomas - Town Clerk & Chief Executive, City of London Corporation
12. Jen Beckermann – Destination City SRO and Executive Director & Private Secretary to the Policy Chairman, City of London Corporation
13. Ben Dixon – Head of the Policy Unit and Interim Head of Destination City Programme, City of London Corporation
14. Emily Slatter – Policy Unit, Office of the Policy Chairman, City of London Corporation
15. Emma Markiewicz – Director of The London Archives & Culture SRO, City of London Corporation
16. Etches, Sheena - Grants Unit Funding Manager, City Bridge Foundation, City of London Corporation

Apologies:

1. Paul Martin - Independent consultant for the Independent Review 2024
2. Munsur Ali – Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee Representative, City of London Corporation
3. James Thomson – Policy & Resources Representative, City of London Corporation

A public summary of the Destination Advisory Board meeting held on the 27th of March 2025.

The second meeting of the Destination Advisory Board followed the formal approval of the renewed Destination City vision, outcomes and year 1 activities by the Policy & Resources Committee. Now moving into its delivery phase, the Board first discussed the approved Destination City scope and activity plan.

Members welcomed the clarity of the vision and appreciated the structure presented, and emphasized the importance of managing the interdependencies between the four workstreams. A key theme of the discussion was partnership—particularly in reference to the launch of the Destination Partnership Fund. The Board endorsed a “test and learn” approach, citing upcoming events as opportunities to trial activations that would have lasting, sustainable impact. Members stressed the importance of data collection and evidence based decision making. Indicators such as hotel performance, business mix and visitor footfall, were seen critical to both guiding decisions and demonstrating impact. The SRO welcomed these reflections and added these metrics would be included in the Destination City Dashboard, which is currently in development. The SRO and the DC Hub team shared the initial PowerBI dashboard – drawn from data available in the High Street Data Service. Members were impressed by progress to date, and the emphasis on realistic and measurable targets.

Katie Stewart, Executive Director for Environment, introduced the City Business and Investment Unit (CBIU). The unit will provide a concierge-style service to proactively attract, grow and retain businesses in the Square Mile, responding to recommendations from the Paul Martin Review. The Board expressed strong support for the proposal. Discussion emphasised the changing expectations of businesses, particularly the desire for high-quality, distinctive environments that support wellbeing, and talent retention. The Board noted the need to phase priorities within the unit and ensure alignment with existing investment and innovation activity – at the national level and with the GLA. The importance of “soft” infrastructure—such as health, leisure, culture and place identity—was underscored as key to complementing physical investment.

Board Member Andrew Jackson CBE, Tower Director at the Tower of London, shared insights into the Tower’s approach to the visitor economy. The Board reflected on how these insights could apply to the City’s approach to the visitor economy, particularly its ambition to create a *‘Destination that People want to Live, Work, Learn and Explore’*. There was strong interest in improving wayfinding and connectivity between major cultural landmarks, particularly along the riverside. The Board also discussed shifts in visitor patterns, including the rise in weekend footfall, and considered how programming could respond. Health and wellbeing, cultural experiences and leisure were seen as vital to broadening the City’s offer and ensuring it appeals to a wider visitor base. The importance of a clear and connected visitor journey was also raised. This agenda item emphasised the need to work at pace to create a consolidated calendar of events, and promote these events consistently and actively across

both owned, earned and paid platforms. Members commented that occupiers and businesses across the Sq Mile require content for their individual worker intranets or owned platforms and the City should be “pushing” material to this network.

In closing, the discussion emphasized that the Destination City programme needs to become core-corporation business, driven by strong cross-organisational alignment, partnerships, a strong evidence base, and experimentation. The Board’s focus on businesses and visitors emphasised the need for communicating a more integrated and compelling offer that aligns with the broader vision of making the City of London a dynamic and attractive destination in which to live, work, learn and explore.