

Committee(s): Culture, Heritage and Libraries – For Decision	Dated: 09/05/2025
Subject: City Arts Initiative – Recommendations to the Committee	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vibrant Thriving Destination • Flourishing Public Spaces
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Decision – SITC • For Information – Fleet Street & Salisbury Square.
Report author: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emma Markiewicz, Head of Profession for Culture • Joanna Parker, Principal Planning Officer, Environment 	

Summary

This report presents the recommendations of the City Arts Initiative (CAI) which met on 3 April 2025. At this meeting CAI considered the following proposals:

1. Sculpture in the City 14th Edition Shortlist
2. Fleet Street Heritage Wall Proposal
3. Salisbury Square Court Building – poetry and lighting updates

Recommendation(s)

CAI recommends that members of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee are asked to approve:

1. **Sculpture in the City** 14th Edition Shortlist for the onward delivery of 14th edition to be delivered by the Culture Team.

CAI recommends that members of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee are asked to note:

2. **Fleet Street Heritage Wall:** The CAI panel is not in support of the current proposal and recommends that the applicant reapplies taking on board feedback around inclusion, accessibility and content. Members should note that planning permission was approved 29 April 2025, and this is further discussed through the report.
3. **Salisbury Square Court Building Designs:** The final text and poetry selection for the ground floor granite panels and integrated lighting. Members should note that the Capital Buildings Board (CBB) expressed support for the lighting and poetry at the meeting of 5 February 2025. Members should also note these proposals are also referred to the planning division as a part

relevant planning condition. Since the CAI review, the applicant has indicated further finessing of the poetry selection (which will be referred back to CBB) is to take place and officers will provide a verbal update on this status at the Committee meeting.

The sequencing of the gap in committee meetings and the pre-election period meant that items 2 and 3 could not be brought back to CHL before they went to the relevant planning decision-making process and Capital Buildings Board. As part of the existing process, approvals are subject to gaining any necessary permissions and licences from environmental health, planning and highways.

Main Report

Background

1. The CAI met on 3 April 2025 to consider the proposals outlined below. CAI is a group made up of City Corporation Officers, external arts experts and City of London Members. Members were not present at the 3 April meeting due to the outcome of the 2025 election with three members who sit on CAI no longer in office.
2. At the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee meeting on 20 May 2024, Members approved the CAI's recommendations on the delegated authority criteria for CAI applications. Items 1, 2 and 3 require referral to the CHL Committee.
3. Members should note that the CAI process will be reviewed in line with the forthcoming Culture Strategy to further improve the delivery of public art in the City and ensure greater cross-collaboration with other key corporation departments.
4. Further background information is available in appendices below. Full details of all the applications to the CAI are available on request from the Cultural Policy & Partnerships Officer (katie.whitbourn@cityoflondon.gov.uk).

Proposals

Sculpture in the City (SITC) 14th Edition

5. The CAI received an application for the 14th edition of Sculpture in the City (SITC). SITC is an annual sculpture park that uses the urban realm as a rotating gallery space. It has been established in the City for 13 editions. The delivery of the project is overseen by the CoL Culture Team. Lacuna, a leading cultural studio, is contracted to lead on the artistic elements of the project.
6. SITC is funded by the City Corporation and an extensive partnership of City of London businesses. This includes Aviva, Bloomberg, Brookfield Properties, CC Land, EC BID, Hiscox, Nuveen Real Estate and T42. The City Corporation is

contributing up to £50k to the project this year and up to £150k in-kind. All other costs are funded by the project partners and patrons.

7. As noted by the CHL Committee on 10 February 2025, a new framework has been agreed with the Partner Board. This includes delivery of the 14th Edition alongside future visioning workshops for further programme development. This will align with the recommendations from Cultural Strategy as they emerge.
8. As a bridge, this year includes setting the maximum total artworks to 10. This means installing up to four new artworks and retaining up to six existing artworks.
9. The sculptures for the 14th edition will be sited across multiple locations on private and public land in the Eastern Cluster area from July 2025 – May 2026.
10. Locations for this year's edition include:
 - a. Corner of Bishopsgate and Wormwood St
 - b. 100 Bishopsgate
 - c. 40 Leadenhall St
 - d. St Botolph without Bishopsgate Churchyard
 - e. 70 St Mary Axe
 - f. Undershaft – St Helen's Church
 - g. Undershaft – Crosby Square
 - h. Leadenhall Building
 - i. Creechurch Lane (TBC)
 - j. Aldgate Square (TBC)
 - k. Mitre Square (TBC)
11. Site visits have taken place with the City Highways officers, artists and gallerists to identify and confirm suitable locations and have all been used previously by SITC.
12. Details of all shortlisted artworks and locations can be viewed in appendix 1. The shortlist is selected by the SITC arts advisory panel which is made up of professionals with expertise in the arts sector. Final artworks from the shortlist will be confirmed by end of April 2025.
13. CAI reviewed the shortlist and agreed that this year's selection is of high artistic quality, the CAI panel recommended that this year's selection of works includes an emerging artist as well as high profile artists.
14. The panel requested that City health and safety officers are consulted on the final artworks, particularly in relation to the Lynda Bengalis due to the use of recycled water and risk of water contamination.
15. Each artwork has specific maintenance requirements. SITC contracts specialist conservators who visit the artworks once a month as well as on a case-by-case basis if any damage occurs. The CAI panel asked that the maintenance plan for the Lynda Bengalis water feature is shared if the artwork is confirmed.

16. The CAI recommend that the shortlist of artworks for Sculpture in the City 14th edition is approved provided the applicant gains the necessary permissions from planning, highways and environmental health. Each artwork will go through a rigorous technical feasibility study with the project team and structural engineers prior to licences being sought.

Fleet Street Heritage Wall

17. On 3rd April 2025, the CAI reviewed plans for the Fleet Street Heritage Wall from Fleet Street Community Interest Company. The project was initially set up to create the Fleet Street Heritage sundial on Bouverie Street which has been implemented and 94 information panels are now displayed on the Fleet Street Heritage website ([The Heritage of Fleet Street](#)) with funding received from the City of London Neighbourhood Fund and private donations. A selection of these pages are on display in Wine Office Court on the hoarding to the Daily Telegraph Building development site sponsored by Fleet Street Business Improvement District.
18. Fleet Street Heritage CIC (FSH) have submitted plans based on the mock up at Wine Office Court to reproduce the website pages as a permanent heritage wall of information consisting of 89 A3 ceramic tiles which will be placed underneath the sundial on Bouverie Street across the width of the flank elevation. These panels are replicas of the research content from the FSH website. The tiles would be manufactured from frost proof porcelain ceramic by Craven Dunnill and fixed with cementitious tile adhesive. Each ceramic tile is printed with historic information largely as text in a small font with some limited historic visuals. The design of each tile is in the format of an old newspaper style and the tiles are layered in 3 rows and grouped in themes: Tourist Information, Architecture, Places, Old Newspapers, People and Children. QR codes are included on the bottom right of each tile which links directly to the webpage to enable reading to be completed at a later time. The final content is yet to be selected. There is also a possible plan for an audible link. The proposals can be viewed in appendix 2.
19. The initial concepts for the project were referred to CHL in January 2024. Members agreed that the proposal should be reviewed by City Arts Initiative (CAI). The CAI panel informally reviewed 4 options for the Fleet Street Heritage wall in July 2024 and provided feedback.
20. All four options focussed on the webpages for the primary content and format. The panel noted the meticulous historical research and tireless commitment of the FSH. All proposals were considered too complex, academic, and detailed in design, format, and content and so visually unengaging and unlikely to appeal to a contemporary and broad audience. There had been no wider stakeholder engagement to contribute to the curation of the project, CAI advised the proposals would benefit from creative input and project management to transform the research idea into a visual format. The CAI also suggested partnership working to enrich the project with the BID and their wider strategic proposals, existing local institutions and developers working in the Fleet Street area. In addition, 1:1 meetings took place with the City's access and inclusion officer to

provide further expert advice around inclusive engagement on the project and accessible layout, formats, interpretation and good practice for way finding.

21. Fleet Street Heritage CIC submitted a planning application (24/03125/FULL) on 17 December 2024 this was identical to one of the previous proposals reviewed by CAI. This has received 33 letters of support and planning permission was granted on 29 April 2025 with conditions (outlined in paragraph 28).
22. At the 3 April 2025 CAI meeting, the panel re-reviewed the current proposal which was almost identical to one of the four options from July 2024 and is submitted for the above planning application. The areas developed since July 2024 include the inclusion of QR codes, the potential for an audible link via the website, justification for the small size of the font and inclusion of “Children’s” pages. The CAI agreed that the concept and format had not been progressed to consider best practice in terms of visual engagement, accessibility, and inclusion which all other applicants are required to bring to arts and heritage projects in the City. The panel agreed that this is particularly essential for a permanent installation. Particular attention was drawn to inaccessibly positioned QR codes, font, inaccessible language, text heavy content and limited opportunity for engagement for a wide range of users.
23. The panel also noted that the area was particularly susceptible to graffiti and agreed that details of a long-term maintenance plan should be confirmed and resourced before installation takes place.
24. The panel also agreed that the branding of the project should be reviewed to ensure clarity of ownership, noting that the red and black colours could be confused with the City of London Corporation.
25. The panel also noted Health & Safety issues with a particularly narrow footpath in the area, and due to the small size of the text, it would require visitors to stop and read it which could lead to blocking of the footpath and restrict passing on the pavement.
26. The panel agreed that the accuracy and suitability of the content (89 information panels) should also be reviewed and verified by officers before it is installed to ensure there would be no reputational issues. The appropriate internal resource would need to be sought for this and will be managed via the planning condition (see paragraph 28).
27. The City Arts Initiative supports the aspirations of this project to celebrate the heritage of Fleet Street and the potential educational opportunities for visitors, but as proposed there are significant shortcomings. The panel recommends that Fleet Street CIC develops the design format further to ensure that the installation is more visually engaging, legible, accessible and inclusive to support engagement for a range of users and celebrate the heritage of Fleet Street in a way that appeals to a broader audience.
28. As a result of the direct feedback from the CAI, the planning permission decision has attached conditions relating to: improved interpretation for access and

inclusion; content review; and maintenance. The planning report also reviewed obstruction of the highway pavement which is considered to be acceptable. All conditions will be managed via the planning division in line with the usual process.

29. The CAI panel unanimously did not support the proposals at the meeting of the 3 April for reasons set out in the report. The additional conditions attached to the planning decision are welcomed to enhance the proposal. However, the fundamental issues CAI have consistently raised around the quality of the concept and format remain and therefore the CAI advises the CHL Committee not to support the proposal in its current form.

Court Building, Fleet Street, Salisbury Square Development Artworks

30. At the CHL Committee meeting on 4 November 2025, Members approved the artist concepts and designs for the new court building at Salisbury Square due to open in Q1 2026. Members noted that the final text and poetry selection for the granite panels and lighting designs would return to the committee for approval. There is a tight timescale on the delivery of this flagship Corporation project, (which includes the fabrication of the artwork). As a result, the poetry selection lighting designs were reviewed at the Capital Buildings Board (CBB) on 5th February 2025 where support was expressed for the proposals. CAI Officers were not made aware of this timing until after the CBB meeting and the gap in CHL committee meetings due to the pre-election period meant this content could not be referred come back to CHL committee any sooner. Therefore, the poetry and lighting is now being referred to CHL to keep the committee informed.
31. At the time of writing, some further refinements are being made to the poetry text in 4 of the artwork panels. Any further updates on the detail of this will be verbally given to members at the 9th May committee meeting. Amendments will be referred back to CBB on 21 May 2025.
32. The poetry extracts and designs that were reviewed by the CAI panel on 3 April can be viewed in appendix 3. The poetry was selected by the artist with close review by the members of the Capital Buildings Board. The poems selected all are associated with themes of justice. The current poetry selection includes extracts from:
- a. On Laws, Kahill Gibran
 - b. Meditations, Marcus Aurelius
 - c. London, William Blake
 - d. The Merchant of Venice, William Shakespeare
 - e. Ode on a Grecian Urn, John Keats
 - f. The Last Answer, Christina Georgina Rossetti
 - g. Magna Carta
 - h. Hard Times, Charles Dickens
 - i. Justice, Rudyard Kipling
 - j. Book of Exodus, King James Version
 - k. Book of Exodus, New International Version
 - l. Commentaries on the Laws of England, William Blackstone

33. Upon review of the poetry selection, the CAI panel was disappointed there was not greater diversity in the selected poets to resonate with a wider contemporary audience. The panel also recommended that the subsequent interpretation and information aspects of the proposals could bring an additional level of depth and educational dimension to the artwork through the onsite plaque, QR code and website. The CAI panel has provided some suggestions of poetry organisations and poets who the applicant could potentially collaborate with. Furthermore, there was a request to include the name of the poet on the artwork, but the applicants have indicated there is limited space and this will be picked up via the interpretation panel.
34. The interpretation panel is envisaged to be a small metallic engraved plaque which will include the artwork title, artist name, artwork description, QR Code (which will link to the website) and braille.
35. The applicants also submitted further detail on the lighting designs and confirmed that the light fittings would have transparent covers/diffusers and would be angled in a way to avoid any glare to pedestrians. The lighting controls will be dimmable, and settings can be adjusted.
36. CAI recommends that the final poetry selections and the lighting designs for the Court building artworks are supported by CHL Members, and that the applicants are advised to explore diversity and inclusion and education further in the interpretation materials associated with the artwork.

Strategic implications

37. Financial implications – Funding for CAI projects/installations are all fully funded. Funding for the Salisbury Square Artworks were approved by the Capital Buildings Board as a part of the City of London Salisbury Square Envelope Budget. Sculpture in the City is funded by the City of London together with a group of partners mentioned in paragraph 5.
38. Resource implications – Apart from officer time handling enquiries, providing applicant support and managing the installations, there are no resource implications other than where specifically noted.
39. Legal implications – No legal implications have been identified.
40. Risk implications – There is a potential reputational risk if the Fleet Street Heritage Wall is installed as currently proposed in regard to the City not upholding best practice in terms of EEDI and accessibility which is expected of all other project partners particularly for permanent installations. The panel contents also should be reviewed to ensure they are not contentious. The planning conditions outlined will seek to mitigate this risk.
41. This has further highlighted the need to revise the City Arts Initiative process to ensure the CAI panel and officers can consistently and effectively add value to future proposals for public art installations which aligns with other Corporation

departments. The plan is for the CAI panel/process to be reviewed later this year to better articulate how it works in conjunction with planning requirements and capital projects board, and with the forthcoming Culture Strategy.

42. Health & Safety implications – The City Arts Initiative has Health and Safety representation on the panel and is consulted with further where necessary. The RAMs for specific projects will also be reviewed by planning and Highways teams if these permissions are required. There a low-risk health and safety concern raised regarding Fleet Street Heritage Wall and the font size requiring people to stop and thus causing congestion on the highway. As aforementioned Sculpture in the City artworks go through rigorous feasibility testing and RAMs will be submitted to City Health and Safety Officers.
43. Equalities implications – The City Arts Initiative has an access officer present on the panel, and the panel reviews applications in terms of accessibility and inclusivity. In the CAI application, applicants are expected to display how equalities and accessibility have been considered as a part of their proposal. Concerns have been raised regarding the inaccessible format and design of the Fleet Street Heritage Wall as well as the lack of diversity of the poets selected for the Salisbury Court Building.
44. Climate implications – No climate implications have been identified.
45. Security implications – No security implications have been identified.

Conclusion

46. This report summarises the discussions of the City Arts Initiative. It presents recommendations in relation to the public art applications considered on 3 April 2025.
47. Whilst sequencing has not allowed for the full input of the committee (in the Salisbury Square Development and the Fleet Street Heritage Wall) we ask that Members are supportive of the CAI recommendations in the proposals outlined above, noting that support has been gained from the Capital Buildings Board for Salisbury Square Development and planning approval has been issued for Fleet Street Heritage Wall with additional conditions as a result of CAI feedback.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - SITC 14th Edition Shortlist & Locations
- Appendix 2 - Fleet Street Heritage Wall Proposal
- Appendix 3 - Salisbury Square Court Building Poetry Presentation

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