

# City of London Corporation Committee Report

<b>Committee(s):</b> Policy & Resources Committee – For Decision	<b>Dated:</b> 16/10/2025
<b>Subject:</b> Destination City Programme - Delivery Update Report	<b>Public report:</b> For Decision
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</li> </ul>	Vibrant, Thriving Destination
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	The Destination City programme is funded through a reallocation of the Growth Bid.
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	Yes - funding has been agreed for the duration of the programme.
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Gregory Moore</b> , Deputy Town Clerk
<b>Report author(s):</b>	<p><b>Jennifer Beckermann</b>, Executive Director and Private Secretary to the Policy Chairman, SRO for Destination City.</p> <p><b>Benjamin Dixon</b>, Head of the Policy Unit and Interim Head of Programme, Destination City</p> <p><b>Emily Slatter</b>, Policy Unit, Office of the Policy Chairman</p>

## Summary

This report provides an update on the Destination City Programme as agreed by Members in October 2024 following the recommendations within the independent review of Destination City by Paul Martin. This report highlights progress across core deliverables, including the development of a Destination City Dashboard, while comparing key data against agreed KPIs.

At their recent Policy and Resources Away Day in July, Members asked officers to 'scope understanding of changing values and demographics of the next generation of workers.' To that end, this report makes recommendations on progressing Member's direction in line with the Destination City outcomes of being '*an inclusive and welcoming destination which attracts the next generation of talent*'.

The report presents an evidence base and seeks the Committee's approval to establish baseline metrics for this outcome by: (a) working with colleagues across

the Corporation to consult the Office for National Statistics on their estimates of City-wide worker demographics and assess the quality and coverage of this data, with the aim of developing a shared dataset and common understanding of its application across the Corporation; and (b) conducting a survey of City workers.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Members are asked to:

- **Note** progress in implementing agreed Destination City outcomes, including the development of the Destination City Dashboard at Appendix 1.
- **Note** initial research identifies *‘meaning’*, *‘wellbeing’*, and *‘upskilling’* as the core areas of focus under the Destination City outcome *‘an inclusive and welcoming destination which attracts the next generation of talent’*.
- **Approve** the Destination City Hub – in consultation with Corporation colleagues – to consult the Office for National Statistics on their estimates of City-wide worker demographics and assess the quality and coverage of this data, with the aim of developing a shared dataset and common understanding of its application across the Corporation.
- **Approve** the Destination City Hub to act as the corporate lead to scope and commission a repeatable survey of City workers to measure sentiment.
- **Approve** minor amendments to the Destination City Partnership Fund Policy at Appendix 2.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. Following the 2024 Martin Review, the Policy & Resources Committee agreed to reframe Destination City as the growth strategy for the Square Mile; a programme of collective action that seeks to ensure that the Square Mile remains a globally attractive place for businesses, attracts workers back to the office, and is a place in which people want to live, work, learn and explore. Through Destination City, we are working together to ensure the long-term economic success of the City of London.
2. Members agreed the programme would focus on four overlapping outcomes:
  - To be a globally attractive destination for business
  - To attract current City workers back to the office - "*earning the commute*"
  - To be an inclusive and welcoming destination which attracts the next generation of talent
  - To be a destination where people want to live, work, learn and explore
3. In February 2025, Members agreed the DC Hub could return with recommendations on how to deliver and relevant metrics for the outcome, "*to be an inclusive and welcoming destination which attracts the next generation of talent*". This aligns with a request from the Policy and Resources Committee at their Away Day in July 2025 to better understand changing values and demographics of the next generation of workers. More detail on this can be found below.
4. The four outcomes are supported by several cross-cutting pieces of work, including a renewed approach to communications, resetting our relationship with our Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and the development of the Destination City Dashboard – an update of which can be found below.
5. The DC programme is being delivered by the Destination City Hub. This small programme management team sits within the Town Clerk's Department, and works alongside the City Corporation Service Departments, Institutions, and with external partners, guided by the Destination Advisory Board and the Policy and Resources Committee.

### **Current Position**

6. The Destination City Hub is making progress across all agreed outcomes of the programme, with delivery enabled through cross-organisational collaboration, as well as external partnerships such as with our City institutions and City BIDs.

### **Destination City Dashboard**

7. Recommendation 8 of the Martin Review proposed that the City Corporation 'establish a Destination City dashboard'. Members agreed the initial scope and indicative metrics to be included in this dashboard in February 2025. Since then, work has been undertaken to consolidate relevant datasets into Microsoft Fabric,

the City Corporation's common data platform, as the foundation for an interactive PowerBI dashboard.

8. The consolidation of data into Microsoft Fabric will enable the City Corporation to collate, measure and report progress consistently, while also providing a mechanism to hold both internal departments and external partners to account for delivery, success, and value for money.
9. The Destination City Dashboard will be published externally on the City Corporation website and updated regularly. The Hub will assemble and publish this dashboard, focusing initially on available datasets while working closely with partners to obtain additional datasets or information relevant to the DC programme.
10. Alongside the dashboard, the Hub will produce regular insight reports to inform further action and shape future activities. A static copy of the first version of the Destination City Dashboard is included as Appendix 1, consisting of the following sections:
  - a. **State of the City:** This section presents top-level indicators for the City: on economic performance, spend, and visitors. Monitoring these indicators will allow us to ensure we understand and reflect on the wider context within which we are operating. For instance, in tracking monthly indicative footfall data, we noted that July was the busiest month the Square Mile has seen for three years, with the number of visitors and workers surpassing 11.5 million.  
  
The data in this section is drawn from the Office of National Statistics, the GLA's High Streets Data Service, and TfL's open-source publications. Where relevant and possible, updates are automated to ensure the latest data is presented. Appendix 1 shows a screenshot of the data taken on 23/09/2025.
  - b. **Destination City Outcomes:** This section outlines the specific measures and targets for each of our Destination City programme outcomes. This will help evaluate the impact of our chosen interventions. Data in this section is drawn from the GLA's High Streets Data Service and internal reporting.
  - c. Further work is being undertaken to develop the third section of the Destination City Dashboard: **the City Health Check**. This section will bring together a wide range of data and indicators linked to our Destination City Outcomes, from a variety of internal and external sources. Updates to the City Health Check will be added periodically to the dashboard once the relevant information is incorporated into Microsoft Fabric.
11. Members are asked to **note** the progress made on developing the Destination City Dashboard at Appendix 1.

### **The Destination City Partnership Fund**

12. Destination City aims to deliver its outcomes in partnership, following Mr. Martin's advice to support external organisations with events and activations, rather than deliver events ourselves. The Destination City Partnership Fund was established to encourage creative and innovative ideas that help to deliver the

aims of the Destination City Programme. Through the fund, the City Corporation aims to draw on the ideas and delivery expertise of all those who operate in or interact with the City. The fund seeks to ensure the Corporation is a co-funder of projects, moving away from a trend of the Corporation being the sole funder.

13. The total value of the fund is £200,000 for the fiscal year 2025-2026. Applications opened in May 2025 and are processed by the Central Funding and Charity Management Team. It is a rolling programme with applications received throughout the year. The decision-making board includes representatives from across the Corporation – including the Environment Department, Culture Team, Destination City Team, Central Grants Team, as well as a representative from our City BIDs.
14. To date, we have received ten applications. Five applications have progressed to the panel; three have withdrawn, one did not meet the funds criteria, while two are currently being processed by the Central Grants Team ahead of being assessed by the decision-making board.
15. Four applications have been approved and are detailed below:
  - Temple Bar Trust:** Establishing an annual ceremony to mark the 'Opening of the Gates' of Temple Bar - a colourful historic moment which seeks to attract visitors, workers and local residents. Funding was awarded to pilot the ceremony, with the aim of making the event a regular occurrence.
  - Guildhall School of Music and Drama:** To support the delivery and marketing of the inaugural Vibrance Trail of light projections, soundscapes and immersive artworks, including expansion of the trail to include St Giles' Cripplegate.
  - Dr Johnson's House Trust:** To support marketing and Sunday opening costs at Dr Johnson's House, attracting weekend visitors to the City.
  - Team London Bridge:** To develop and deliver a series of guided walks to promote medical heritage and health innovation through time in The City and London Bridge.
16. Members are asked to **approve** changes to the Fund's policies, following a 6-month review of operation. This can be found in full at Appendix 2. In summary, these changes propose:
  - a. Increasing the maximum individual grant from £10,000 to £20,000, and raise the total Destination City Partnership funding available to the same applicant from £20,000 to £30,000 within any two-year period, measured from the application date of the first grant awarded; and
  - b. Extend the assessment period from 8 to 12 weeks from receipt of a valid application.

### **Launching the City Business and Investment Unit**

17. A core aim of the Destination City Programme is to position the City as 'a *globally attractive destination for business*'. To support this, Members approved establishing a premium concierge service for relocating businesses. In June

2025, the City Business and Investment Unit (CBIU) was launched at Guildhall in partnership with stakeholders across the Square Mile. As the UK's economic heart, the Square Mile benefits from the CBIU, which aims to attract, retain, and grow investment by providing concierge-style support to new and existing occupiers and investors, keeping the City ahead of global competition.

18. The Destination City Hub supports the CBIU by providing City-specific data, policy analysis, and delivering initiatives that reinforce the City of London's status as a global business hub. This includes collaborating with the CBIU on business engagement and service development. For instance, in early September, the DC Hub and CBIU jointly sent a letter to 100 of the City's major occupiers, encouraging closer partnership in our ambition to "attract workers back to the office." The letter has already achieved a 20% response rate thus far, with positive early feedback noting that senior stakeholders would "be very interested to understand more about this initiative, and potential opportunities to work together to support this."

### **Destination Advisory Board**

19. The Destination Advisory Board met for its third meeting on 11 June 2025 to welcome new members and review progress on key initiatives supporting the City's growth. Members received a copy of the minutes of the Board at their September meeting.
20. The Board highlighted health and wellbeing, sustainability, and investment in future talent, and discussed tailoring messaging for different audiences. The Board also considered ways to increase worker engagement, footfall and received an update on a co-commissioned ground floor use report examining amenities and opportunities across the City.

### **Commissioning of a Ground Floor Study**

21. As noted above, developing a consistently lively and animated ground floor experience is an important component of ensuring the City is a destination where people want to live, work, learn and explore. This concept was also a key component of the Martin review.
22. In partnership with the five City BIDs and the City River Partnership, the City Corporation has instructed Bruce Gillingham Pollard, following a competitive tendering process, to undertake a piece of work that will provide a sense of amenity provision across the Square Mile, look at future demographic trends and identify the components of a lively and active ground floor experience. Progress will be reported to this Committee in due course.

### **Convening & Communicating**

23. **City of London Calendar of Events:** One of the main recommendations from the Martin Review was to establish a '*consolidated calendar of events*' which promotes and brings together all of the activities already happening across the Square Mile. The calendar should promote, not duplicate efforts on our own social media channels.

24. In August 2025, a new interactive ‘*What’s On*’ calendar was launched, designed to improve event discoverability and user experience on our consumer-facing website - CityofLDN. Developed in collaboration with the Culture Team and NLA, the calendar allows users to view events by date, filter by themes such as family, music, free, and food & drink, and quickly identify activities of interest. The calendar has been actively promoted through social media and newsletters, driving strong engagement since launch. Views on the What’s On page have risen by 35.43% month-on-month, underlining the impact of consolidating City events into a single, accessible platform.
25. The NLA and City Corporation are working to further consolidate our online platforms. Work is underway to bring together the CityofLDN and OneCity websites.
26. **Destination City Bulletin:** In April 2025, a new monthly Destination City Bulletin was published to provide updates from across the Destination City portfolio and promote collective successes from across the Square Mile. Recognising the power of sharing data and insights, the Destination City Hub team also brings readers the latest City of London data and news on the progress of the programme. Core audiences include elected Members and key partners.

### **Creating ‘An inclusive and welcoming destination that attracts the next generation of talent’**

27. Sustaining that economic growth requires a strong talent pipeline of skilled workers and requires the City Corporation to respond to the evolving needs of workers — an issue highlighted at the Policy and Resources Committee Away Day in July. This underpins the Destination City objective to position the Square Mile as “*an inclusive and welcoming destination that attracts the next generation of talent.*”
28. In agreeing the Destination City Programme implementation plan in February 2025, Members agreed officers should return to the Committee with our proposals for delivering this workstream. The DC Hub have undertaken research to develop an evidence base to underpin our approach to this outcome and consulted widely across the City Corporation on how best to progress.
29. While currently available demographic and workforce data offer valuable insights, data of this kind can be complex, and its use across the Corporation remains fragmented. Drawing primarily on Office of National Statistics figures<sup>1</sup>, we can provide indicative statistics on the City’s workforce, though these are based on self-reporting and may not present a complete picture:

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<sup>1</sup> The following insights were compiled by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) following a series of requests submitted in June-August, for data relating to the demographics and characteristics of those in employment in the City of London. The data provided for all characteristics, except for Sexual Identity, is derived from the Annual Population Survey, April 2024 – March 2025, weighted 2022. Whilst ONS interviewers attempt to capture information as accurately as possible, some respondents do give ‘City of London’ as a generic response when their workplace may not strictly be within that area. Estimates of some characteristics are based on a small sample size, which may result in a less precise estimate. As such, the ONS advises that they should be used with caution.

**Ethnicity:** 37% of the City's workforce was of black, Asian or a minority ethnic origin, with the largest sub-section identifying as Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, at 9% of the total.

**Age:** 60% of City workers are aged between 25-44, 12% are over 55.

**Gender:** The City workforce gender balance is 63% male and 37% female.

**Religion<sup>2</sup>:** 43% of City workers are non-religious. Of the 57% of City workers identifying as religious, the largest proportions identify as Christian (35%), Muslim (10%) and Hindu (5%).

**Disability status:** 10% of City workers have a disability under the Equality Act.

**Sexual Identity<sup>3</sup>:** 94% of City workers identify as heterosexual/straight. Small sample estimates indicate that 3% of City workers identify as gay or lesbian, 2% bisexual and 2% other.

30. To identify key priorities for action, the Destination City Hub conducted further desk research into the changing preferences of the future workforce. For this purpose, officers defined the future workers as '*Gen Z*' (born 1997-2012, currently in their teens and twenties) and '*millennials*' (born 1981-1996, currently in their thirties and early forties), with some consideration of '*Gen Alpha*' (born 2010-2025, the oldest of which are around 15 years old).
31. This research indicated that these generations value not only financial reward but also meaning, wellbeing, opportunities for skills development, sustainability, and diversity and inclusion. These sources are noted at Appendix 4 but, for example:
  - Around 90% of Gen Z and millennials say that having a sense of purpose is important to job satisfaction and wellbeing, and over 40% have left roles they felt lacked purpose.
  - 70% of Gen Z and 59% of millennials engage in skills development at least weekly.
  - Work-life balance and mental and physical health are particularly important for Gen Z, with nearly a third indicating that benefits supporting stress management would incentivise them to attend the office more frequently.
32. Complementing this, a City Corporation commissioned report of October 2024 by Yard Creative/CBRE identified six success factors and opportunities which the City should focus on in order to enhance its appeal to the future workforce – namely, to be:

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<sup>2</sup> The ONS advise that disclosure rates tend to be lower for questions around religion. As such, the baseline total of employees when calculating the percentage differs from other characteristics.

<sup>3</sup> Sexual identity dataset is derived from the Annual Population Survey, January 2023 – December 2023, weighted 2022. Sexual identity estimates have their own weighting as responses to these questions are only taken in person (i.e. the ONS does not take proxy answers from other household members). This means that totals for this characteristic can differ from variables which use our broader weighting.



**Accessible:** Well-connected by public transport

**Sociable:** Close to amenities that drive social connection, built community and attract people to the office

**Serviceable:** Close to life-centric amenities

**Healthy:** Close to green space

**Inspiring:** Inspirational area that supports and an occupier's brand

**Strategic:** Provides access to talent

33. The report further emphasised that business occupiers and investors prioritise access to skilled talent, often following it when making investment decisions. This highlights the strategic importance of promoting the City and implementing targeted interventions: creating a highly skilled and inclusive workforce directly supports economic growth.
34. While some factors lie beyond the City Corporation's direct control, evidence points to a clear set of priorities shaping the choices of the next generation of workers: meaning, wellbeing, and upskilling. Although these priorities are not exclusive to younger cohorts, their growing emphasis reflects shifting attitudes over time and signals where the Corporation can focus efforts to strengthen the City as "*an inclusive and welcoming destination.*"
35. The DC Hub has consulted widely across the organisation for input, including but not limited to the City Corporation's Culture Team, Education Strategy Unit, Police Authority Board, Communications and Engagement Team, Innovation and Growth, the CBIU, Mansion House, and core institutions such as GSMD and the Barbican.
36. In response, the Destination City Hub is mapping existing initiatives and programmes across the Corporation that align with these themes. This mapping will provide a clearer picture of the City's current offer and identify opportunities to enhance, coordinate, or better communicate activity to workers, residents, and visitors. This work is intended to provide a clearer understanding of what is currently being delivered and where opportunities exist to improve alignment and efficiency.
37. Officers will continue to map, consolidate, and communicate existing activity across relevant areas, with progress and outcomes reported to Committee at appropriate points.
38. For example, in relation to "meaning" and "wellbeing," the Hub will work with the Communications and Engagement team to extend the impact of the City Belonging Project, as well as highlighting other existing work such as Progress Together. For "upskilling," it will collaborate with the Education Strategy Unit and others to showcase the City's exceptional educational ecosystem and access to lifelong learning opportunities – such as AI and coding courses, amongst others.
39. The Destination City Hub is also identifying gaps in our data as well as consulting on the most appropriate usage of available data sets to determine which pieces of information could be obtained to better understand the changing nature of the

City's workforce, both in demographics and attitudes to work and place. A sentiment raised also during the Policy and Resources Away Day in July 2025 and built upon in the proposals below.

## **Proposals**

40. At their Away Day in July, this Committee asked officers to provide more information, allowing them to better understand changing values and demographics of the next generation of workers.
41. To support this request and advance the Destination City goal of becoming *an inclusive and welcoming destination*, this report seeks approval to work across the organisation on two activities to form baseline metrics for this outcome: (a) working with colleagues across the Corporation to consult the Office for National Statistics on their estimates of City-wide worker demographics and assess the quality and coverage of these data, with the aim of developing a shared dataset and common understanding of its application across the Corporation; and (b) conducting a survey of City workers.

### **a) Cross-Corporate ONS Demographics Data Capture**

42. Currently, worker demographics data is obtained from the ONS through the lens of the City of London's role as a global business hub for financial and related professional services, providing facts and figures about employment and firms located within the City, as well as highlighting some recent changes to the City as a workplace.
43. ONS data presents some well-known difficulties, including small sample sizes, difficulty identifying City workers, and concerns over recent data quality. These challenges are well known within the Corporation, and we will work closely with ONS to mitigate them and ensure use of the best available data.
44. The Destination City Hub seeks to address some of these challenges, supplement the data beyond those within the financial and related professional services, and ensure coordinated use of data across the organisation. To do so, the Destination City Hub has consulted with teams across the Corporation – seeing value in expanding our requests to the ONS to reflect the entire business and worker data across the City of London, looking to produce a standard data set that can be used across multiple departments.
45. By developing a standardised data set usable across multiple departments, the Corporation can ensure consistent, evidence-led decision-making and better align cross-corporate initiatives with workforce needs. It is proposed that this consultation would be led by the Destination City Hub in coordination with Innovation and Growth, and with input from colleagues across the Corporation who would find such data useful for their own work.

### **b) Survey of City Workers**

46. We propose to address some of the challenges with the ONS data, by complementing existing demographic analysis with an annual survey of City workers. This survey will be designed to capture evolving perspectives on the

priorities of *meaning, wellbeing, and upskilling*, alongside wider attitudes to work, community, belonging, and the Square Mile as a place. It will help to fill key gaps in our evidence base and enable us to develop a series of measurable sentiment scores for City workers. Importantly, we recommend a professional firm conduct the survey to ensure data veracity.

47. This report recommends that the Destination City Hub act as the corporate lead for this survey. Due to the diverse nature of the City worker population, obtaining a representative sample across sectors and seniority may be complex – so we will work with potential research partners to address these issues as far as possible, as well as seek advice on survey questions which will be developed in consultation with cross-departmental teams.
48. Insights gathered will help enable the Corporation to track trends over time, measure the effectiveness of its actions, anticipate shifts in expectations, and demonstrate leadership in shaping a more inclusive and welcoming City. This report recommends that the Destination City Hub act as the corporate lead for this survey in consultation with teams across the Corporation.
49. The survey will be funded within pre-approved Destination City budgets and commissioned in line with corporate procurement rules. If there's a wider desire for a larger representative survey, officers would assess the necessary resources with the departments involved. In the immediate term, approval from Members will allow the commissioning process to begin and establish the foundations for a long-term evidence base.
50. By combining enhanced demographic intelligence with a deeper understanding of workforce — and aligning this with existing initiatives — the Corporation will be better positioned to identify priorities, close gaps, and monitor progress. This cross-corporate, evidence-led approach will ensure efforts are mutually reinforcing, maximise the impact of the Corporation's investment in people and place, and strengthen the City's position as a truly inclusive and welcoming destination for the next generation of talent.

### **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 reallocation of the Growth Bid over 2 years.

Resource implications – Delivered by existing programme team.

Legal implications – We will comply with GDPR, data protection and any associated procurement rules as per City Corporation legal obligations and policies.

Risk implications – Data from a single survey is time-limited: useful for point-in-time analysis but insufficient to track changing needs and expectations. ONS data also presents risks, including small sample sizes, difficulty identifying City workers, and concerns over recent data quality. These challenges are well known within the Corporation, and we will work closely with ONS to understand exactly what they can

provide, the quality of the data and associated concerns, and guidance as to how it can be used.

Equality implications – The proposals above recommend undertaking research to better understand the demographics of the target worker population to ensure the City of London is both welcoming and inclusive to the future workforce.

Climate implications – N/A

Security implications – N/A

## Conclusion

51. Work across the DC programme is progressing at pace – with significant progress being made across all four Destination City workstreams. This includes the launch of our new Destination City Dashboard, a key recommendation from the Martin Review aimed at enhancing the City Corporation’s in-house capacity for obtaining, analysing and visualising data.
52. The City Corporation already delivers a wealth of programming, activity and initiatives that deliver on our ambition to become, *“an inclusive and welcoming destination that attracts the next generation of talent”*. However, this work is scattered across the City Corporation and there are ways to better promote and potentially consolidate programming that deliver similar outcomes, or provide better, more tailored services, based on an enhanced understanding of our worker population.
53. Members are asked to approve two evidence-gathering initiatives: consult the Office for National Statistics on their estimates of City-wide worker demographics and assess the quality and coverage of this data, and conducting a survey of City workers with a view to conduct this on an annual basis. Together, these will create a robust evidence base to guide future action and ensure the City remains attractive to the next generation of workers.

## Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Destination City Dashboard: Test Examples
- Appendix 2 – Destination City Partnership Fund: Proposed Policy Amendments
- Appendix 3 – Destination Advisory Board Public Summary July 2025
- Appendix 4 – Research Note

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