

Committee(s): Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee – For Decision Policy & Resources Committee – For Decision	Dated: 03 November 2025 13 November 2025
Subject: Sculpture in the City – 14 th edition and proposal for future delivery	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse Engaged Communities • 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?	City Fund - Local Risk Budget and external Partner funding
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Greg Moore, Deputy Town Clerk	
Report author: Emma Markiewicz, Head of Profession for Culture Omkar Chana, Culture Director (Interim)	

Summary

This report updates on the Sculpture in the City (SITC) programme and the successful delivery of the 14th edition (2025-26). The report also outlines a proposal for changing the ownership and delivery model for the SITC programme from the City Corporation to a new Community Interest Company.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the successful delivery of the SITC’s 14th edition under the Head of Profession for Culture.
- Approve the in-principal transfer of the SITC programme to a new Community Interest Company (CIC) for future management and delivery; and that the City Corporation maintains its links with the programme through representation on any new CIC’s Board of Directors.
- Delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee, to finalise the operational details of any CIC establishment and timing of any transfer.

Main Report

Background

1. Sculpture in the City (SITC) is an artwork exhibition in the public realm, located in the City of London. It is an annual programme and while all the artworks are temporary, some are kept on display for more than a year depending on their popularity and availability.
2. SITC is run by the City of London Corporation (acting in its general corporate capacity) with a range of Partners and Patrons within the Square Mile, each of whom contribute to the annual operating cost.
3. The geographical location of the artworks is within the area covered by the Eastern City Business Improvement District (ECBID).
4. SITC started in 2011 when it comprised of four artworks. In 2025, the 14th edition has been successfully delivered with 11 artworks. Additionally, there is an accompanying programme of activations alongside the artworks. The activations programme delivers a broad programme of events to enable better interaction with artworks (e.g. curated tours) and aims to engage a diverse audience from children to local workers.
5. SITC has been delivered by different teams within the City Corporation:
 - **2011 – 2023 Environment Department:** ended its support in 2023 due to funding constraints and the implementation of a new target operating model (TOM) process.
 - **2023 – 2024 Innovation & Growth Department:** delivered the 13th edition under Destination City phase 1, took on the project contingent upon full funding as it had no additional budget to support the work.
 - **2024 – 2025 Town Clerk's Department:** delivered the 14th edition under the Culture Team, took on the work and reallocated local budget and resource to secure delivery.
6. Since 2023, governance and oversight for the SITC programme has been provided by the Culture, Heritage and Libraries (CHL) Committee. The programme also has its own SITC Partner Board. Corporates who make a significant financial contribution are offered a seat on the Board. The Board makes recommendations to the CHL Committee for approval alongside the SITC Arts Advisory Board who are responsible for the shortlisting of artworks. The annual selection of artworks is approved by the CHL committee via the City Arts Initiative (CAI) process.
7. The SITC programme is an exemplar for the City Corporation working in partnership with corporates to leverage a co-funded approach.
8. In 2023 despite previous financial pressures, Partners remained committed and expressed their desire for the SITC programme to have a refreshed future vision and operating model. However, the challenge was that annual delivery activity left little time for future visioning work.

9. In July 2024, the CHL Committee resolution covered the Head of Profession (Culture) to consult with SITC Partners/Patrons. The consultation included to baseline the operating model for future years and align with the new culture strategy.
10. In November 2024, the SITC Partner Board agreed a new framework to enable the delivery of the 14th Edition in 2025, with both City Corporation and partner funding. The framework was based on a reduced number of artworks in the annual cycle to enable some capacity to consider a future operating model.
11. In 2025, the SITC Partners proposed,
 - To continue with an annual programme in 2025 (14th edition) albeit at a smaller scale to allow for the development of future visioning.
 - A future framework that set out aspirations for a refreshed programme with enhanced sponsorship, more activations to complement the artworks, and a sustainable model for the future.
12. At CHL in May 2025, the committee approved the SITC 14th edition shortlist for delivery by the Culture Team. This year the cycle installed three new artworks and retained eight existing artworks (three of which are permanent pieces, owned by corporates that have purchased them after being exhibited in the programme).

Current Position

SITC 14th edition delivery

13. An evaluation report for the 14th edition was presented to the SITC Partner Board in September 2025. Appendix 1 contains the report, with some highlights below.
14. **Artworks** – three new artworks by four new artists including
 - Looping Loop (by Andrew Sabin) outside 70 St Mary Axe, a large-scale sculpture created using a new eco conscious material.
 - Roots (by Ai Weiwei) at St Botolph without Bishopsgate, a cast-iron tree root sculpture which is part of a series created in collaboration with Brazilian artisans and communities exploring uprootedness.
 - Dendrophiles (by Jane & Louise Wilson) beneath the escalators of The Leadenhall Building highlighting hidden stories beneath London's modern architecture.
15. **Activations Programme** – delivering an extended programme of more than 12 separate events and activities based on the artworks, spanning from July 2025 to April 2026 across all artwork locations.
16. **Education Programme** – 24 workshops for six local schools, covering around 120 school children. Additionally, 3000 family trail maps were printed and distributed across the City and a Sculpture in the City family day at Guildhall Art Gallery is planned for 29th October 2025.

17. **Partnerships** – the programme had eight Partners and four Patrons. All organisations remained with the programme from the previous edition.
18. **Budget** – the total cash contribution from the Partners and Patrons was £275k (with an additional £50k from the City Corporation). For the first time in 13 years, the project has established a project reserve. These funds are ringfenced for artwork maintenance, deinstallation and programme development.
19. **PR and Communications** – press highlights include a review in The Guardian (print and online), coverage in Secret London and City A.M., an interview on BBC Radio London, and round-ups in The Art Newspaper, The Evening Standard, The Guardian, and Londonist and social media highlights include over 48k total post organic reach and 17k video views (IG and FB).

Future Visioning

20. The SITC Partner Board defined the outcomes sought from a refreshed approach and agreed that Primera Corporation consider the feasibility of establishing an independent entity to take on SITC ownership, management and delivery. This work was funded by the SITC reserve and commissioned by the City Corporation.
21. The output from the feasibility work is provided in Appendix 2. In summary, the work concluded that it would be possible to establish and deliver the SITC programme through a Community Interest Company (CIC) structure. Some highlights from the work are:
- Unanimous agreement about the importance of public art and the vital contribution it makes to the experience in the Square Mile.
 - Widespread support for the continuation of the project and the proposed new CIC model with support for the shift to a two-year cycle.
 - Stakeholders would consider broadening the geographical scope of the project. Majority of respondents would consider contributing to a refreshed programme financially – location of artworks, community programming, value for money / level of contribution all cited as important factors.
 - All respondents would be happy to look at in-kind support: hosting events, opportunities for staff engagement, participating in selection panels, promoting the CIC and SITC through networks.
 - Interest from new funders (developers) who are now operating within the tall building cluster. Some partners who have stepped back would be open to re-engaging should the new model go ahead.
 - City Corporation Officers restated their support for the project – funding still to be resolved. Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy has been discussed as a possible source of funding, eligibility for such funding to be assessed in line with the relevant policies and legal framework.
 - Acknowledgement that this is the moment for the reset – or long-term future of the project is at risk.

22. In September 2025, the SITC Partner Board reviewed the output from the CIC feasibility work. The SITC Partner Board supported the approach to establish SITC as a CIC entity.
23. From a City Corporation perspective, oversight for the SITC programme is currently with the CHL committee. Additionally, any policy decisions on participating in outside bodies (including appointing Directors), application of funding, transfer of any IPR rights, or authorising their licensing for the purposes proposed is with Policy & Resources Committee. Therefore, both committees are required to approve this approach.

Options

24. Three options are proposed for the future of the SITC programme.

- **Option 1: Retain SITC in the City Corporation with the Culture Team tasked with programme delivery, funded through local risk budgets (City Fund).** The programme is a strong and very well-established example of high-quality artworks in the public realm. It partners with corporates to leverage each organisations contribution and deliver a world-class annual programme. However, the City Corporation's (specifically the Culture Team's) local risk budget is significantly impacted by this work. Whilst SITC aligns with the emerging priorities of the Cultural Strategy, the City Corporation must decide on if it wants to own, manage and deliver (and therefore continue to fund and resource), or if it wants to be more innovative in its approach to partner with external organisations in exchange for SITC ownership.
- **Option 2: Terminate SITC and deinstall the artworks.** In 2023, the Environment Department decided it was no longer able to deliver the programme. Since then, Innovation & Growth and Town Clerk's Department stepped up to continue this work which has pressured local risk budget (City Fund). The risk of this model becoming permanent is that if budgets need to be reprioritised, as they must to deliver across all aspects of the Cultural Strategy, then this would result in no more investment in the programme. The existing sculptures would need to be removed and returned to the artists/agents. The SITC programme has become an established part of the City's art scene. It would be a great shame if the programme was not continued as it has carefully developed with nearly one and a half decades of commitment and has strong support from our partners.
- **Option 3: Transfer SITC ownership, management and operational delivery to an external entity in the form of a Community Interest Company (CIC).** The CIC would be an independent legal entity governed through its own Board of Directors. The detail of the Board's composition is to be determined, the recommendation is that the City Corporation would be represented.

Proposals

25. The recommendation is for **Option 3: Transfer SITC ownership, management and operational delivery to an external entity in the form of a Community Interest Company (CIC).**

26. **Governance** – the proposed ‘SITC CIC’ (company name to be decided) would be managed by a Board of Directors (roles which would usually not be remunerated by a CIC). The day-to-day management would be by an Executive Team (remunerated) directly employed or outsourced to a service provider/managing agent.
27. The feasibility work concluded that it is not possible for an elected Member to sit as a Director on the CIC Board of Directors as there is a restriction in regulations concerning political activities. We will review the feasibility work and reflect on what is appropriate in terms of membership from the Corporations perspective. A CIC must be free from political influence and must not be used as a vehicle to promote or oppose changes in law or government or local authority policy.
28. The CIC must comply with company law and CIC Regulations and keep financial records, auditing accounts, producing an annual report, for example.
29. The CIC ‘Objects’ need to be agreed. These are the specific social missions and activities designed to benefit a defined community or group, not for private profit. The objects must be clearly stated in the CIC’s Articles of Association and are overseen by the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies to ensure the company’s activities provide real community benefit and remain focused on social objectives rather than profit maximisation (implemented through an asset lock which is designed to ensure that profits are used for community benefit).
30. **Funding** – the CIC would switch to a two-year cycle: Year 1 – SITC new programme; and, Year 2 would continue with activations and one new major SITC commission (CIC lead). The success of the CIC would depend on its ability to fundraise. The early indications are positive with funds to be raised through a combination of: private sector patronage with existing and new funders; the developer community and key occupiers; public sector grant funding and in-kind support; sponsorship and brand partnerships; and, continued investment from the Eastern City BID. The CIC would also seek investment via the Neighbourhood Community Interest Levy (NCIL); this will be handled separately from this report, mentioned here for transparency.
31. **Handover** – the CIC would be responsible for delivering the 15th edition and handover would need to be managed swiftly on approval of approach. Artworks that need to be removed at the end of the 14th edition would be managed jointly by the City Corporation and the new CIC (deinstallation funded by the project reserve). The City Corporation would novate any contracts for artworks that remain for the 15th edition to the CIC. The dedicated SITC website and social media accounts would be transferred to the CIC.
32. **Ongoing City Corporation involvement** – the City Corporation would continue to be involved from a planning permission point of view, and the shortlist of artworks would continue to be supported through the City Arts Initiative (CAI) process. The City Corporation would continue to promote SITC on its website and social media platforms.
33. **CIC versus other legal entity options** – a Community Interest Company or CIC is a widely used vehicle that’s core purpose is to benefit the community. Setting up a charity was considered as an alternative option. However, charities tend to have a much broader reach and are comparatively complex when it comes to management, accounting, compliance, and reporting. It is also unclear if the activities of SITC could

be classified as 'charitable'. Charities do have access to some tax reliefs and exemptions which can be attractive, but the nature of activities performed by SITC means that these benefits may likely be negligible when balanced against the regulatory and management burden.

34. One of the primary benefits of a CIC, noting the activities of SITC, is the mandatory asset lock, which would give all supporters comfort that funds raised will remain within the CIC and only be used for the delivery of the sculpture programme, and associated activities, and not distributed to shareholders or others.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

35. **Strategic implications** – the proposed approach supports the delivery of the Corporate Plan on: Diverse Engaged Communities; Vibrant Thriving Destination; and, Flourishing Public Spaces. It is also aligned with the Destination City programme priorities and the emerging Cultural Strategy.
36. **Financial implications** – commitments from 2025/26 local risk budgets will be fulfilled. Any additional contribution from current or future local risk budgets would need to be agreed and could be linked to the delivery of specific objectives. The working assumption is that the project reserve would fund the deinstallation of the artworks that need to be removed at the end of the 14th edition. Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy has been discussed as a possible source of funding, eligibility for such funding to be assessed in line with the relevant policies and legal framework.
37. **Resource implications** – CIC resources would manage the delivery of the next edition. There may need to be some handover activity (e.g. documentation and shadow work) involving the City Corporation's Culture Team, to ensure that the new team are upskilled to manage the programme. The City Corporation would consider providing in-kind support to the CIC, potentially some hot desk space co-located with the Culture Team which would also help with knowledge transfer. Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department will be requested to provide support for the transfer, funded through the project reserve.
38. **Legal implications** – SITC artwork loan agreements are with the City Corporation. It proposed that all contractual agreements will be novated to the CIC, meaning that the City Corporation would exit any liability for artworks that it installed as part of the SITC programme. There are City Corporation contracts with suppliers (e.g. MTEC and Lacuna) and insurance (provided as an in-kind contribution) which will come to a planned close at the end of the current cycle. The new CIC would be responsible for new supplier contracts. There is a City Corporation contract for conservation cleaning and maintenance of the artworks, and for the dedicated SITC website. Contract novation or expiry will depend on handover timing; these operational details will be worked through with the relevant teams. It is understood that there are no intellectual property rights to transfer to any newly formed CIC. This report is not seeking a decision on eligibility for NCIL funding, that constitutes a separate decision (to be taken in line with the relevant policy/legal framework).

39. **Risk implications** – the City Corporation has previously provided budget to cover overspends; on transfer the responsibility for this would be with the CIC. This is mitigated by moving to a two-year cycle, establishing controls as part of the CIC management, having dedicated fundraising and approaching a broader group of new partners.
40. Whilst the current SITC programme is a partnership, it is run by and strongly associated with the City Corporation. Many of the partners explicitly refer to SITC as a vehicle to enable them to work closely with the City Corporation on work that benefits the public and the Square Mile. Whilst this presents some risk to the group of established partners, this is mitigated through opportunities for developing further partnerships, especially once the Cultural Strategy is approved.
41. The City Corporation has one previous example of establishing a CIC. In 2015, the Policy and Resources committee considered and agreed a report of the the Managing Director of the Barbican Centre, concerning the establishment of a community interest company for the Centre's Drum Works activities. The Committee noted that the substance of the proposal was predominantly a matter for the Barbican Centre Board but that this Committee's views were being sort on the principle of such a venture. Drum Works CIC was incorporated in June 2015, under the performing arts category. Given the City Corporation limited experience of CIC establishment/handover, there is an additional degree of operational, financial, legal and reputational risk if the new CIC is unable to successfully manage operational responsibilities.
42. **Equalities implications** – SITC is available to the public 24/7, and anyone can access it and enjoy the artworks as they are displayed in the public realm. The artworks are also assessed at City Arts Initiative (CAI) and through the planning process for accessibility. The education programme engages with young people from a diverse range of schools often with young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. As part of the considerations for the future programme, the accessibility and inclusivity of the project will be reviewed to ensure a diverse range of artists are showcased and a diverse audience demographic is engaged.
43. **Climate implications** – none identified.
44. **Security implications** – all artworks are submitted to the City Arts Initiative for approval and are reviewed by the Health & Safety office under the Deputy Town Clerk. A technical team and structural engineers carry out feasibility studies on all artworks to ensure viability including Health & Safety. Risk assessment method statements are submitted for all artworks and all licenses, permits and applications are applied for to gain relevant approvals from the City Corporation and landowners.

Conclusion

45. The 14th edition of SITC was successfully delivered in 2025 with the artwork activations programme continuing through to 2026. The SITC Partner Board considered what could be possible for the next chapter of the programme.
46. As part of the future visioning work, the recommendation is for a Community Interest Company ('SITC CIC') to be established. It would be governed by a Board of Directors and the City Corporation would be represented on the Board. The CIC

would own, manage and deliver the future programme. The existing programme would transition to the CIC and contracts for artworks that remain in the public realm would be transferred to the new entity, enabling the City Corporation to exit all liabilities for the programme.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – SITC 14th edition summary
- Appendix 2 – Feasibility study presentation

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