

Destination Advisory Board (DAB)
Summary of Discussion
October 2025

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08 October 2025, 10:30am – 12:00pm

Attendees:

1. James Thomson CBE – Deputy Policy Chairman, City of London Corporation (Chair)
2. Paul Martin - Independent consultant for the Independent Review 2024
3. Andrew Jackson CBE - Royal Historic Palaces
4. Simon McCaugherty - London & Partners
5. Charlotte Fletcher - Chair, Cheapside BID
6. Tony Matharu - Central London Alliance
7. Andrew Hilston - The Ardent Companies (Royal Exchange)
8. Tom Sleight – Planning and Transportation, City of London Corporation
9. Brendan Barns – Culture Heritage and Libraries, City of London Corporation
10. Helen Fentimen – Community & Children’s Services, City of London Corporation
11. Jen Beckermann – Executive Private Secretary to the Policy Chairman & Destination City Senior Responsible Officer, City of London Corporation
12. Katie Stewart - Executive Director, Environment Department
13. Tracey Pollard – Founding Director, Bruce Gillingham Pollard

Officers

- *Ben Dixon – Head of the Policy Unit & Interim Head of Programme, Destination City, City of London Corporation*
- *Joshua Jones - Intelligence and Performance Analyst, Destination City, City of London Corporation*
- *Emily Slatter – Policy Officer, City of London Corporation*
- *Eloise Evans - Programme Advisor, Destination City, City of London Corporation*
- *Diane Dunkley - Programme Advisor, Destination City, City of London Corporation*
- *Tim Hadingham – Head of City BIDs, City of London Corporation*
- *Omkar Chana – Operations & Project Director, City of London Corporation*

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- *Emma Markiewicz – Culture Senior Responsible Officer, City of London Corporation*
- *Amy Coppel – Partnerships Coordinator, Destination City, City of London Corporation*

Apologies:

- Chris Hayward – Policy Chairman, City of London Corporation
- Sarah Weir – Albion & East
- Sean Ghouse – Fortum & Mason
- Jacqui Webster – Resident Representative, City of London Corporation
- Ian Thomas CBE - Chief Executive Officer and Town Clerk, City of London Corporation

A public summary of the Destination Advisory Board meeting held on 08 October 2025

Board Members were welcomed to the fourth Destination Advisory Board meeting - an important milestone for the Destination City (DC) programme, marking one full year since the implementation report on the DC Strategy went to Committee. **The Chair drew the Board's attention to the latest version of the City Corporation's 'pitch deck' which outlines the Square Mile's unique offer to business and asked for further comments on it to be directed to the DC team following the meeting.**

Paul Martin (Independent Consultant for the Destination City 2024 Review) reflected on the previous iteration of the DC programme, before his review. He noted its purpose to attract visitors, by running major events. He emphasised the key difference in the current DC programme – the growth strategy for the Square Mile, which sees the City's role as a being a catalyst, galvanizing and, working alongside City institutions and external organisations like The London Museum when it opens. He recognised the need to be measuring success efficiently, through footfall and spend, the importance of distinguishing the Square Mile from wider London, and the need for an efficient consolidated calendar of events. Members of the Board likewise reflected Mr Martin's work and the previous DC programme – noting that the City's competitive advantage comes from being a global financial centre that is more than just office blocks, its cultural and historical assets are an important component. PM emphasised the need to “stay the course” - the significant gains made in the last year are not to be underestimated, requiring significant cross-corporate collaboration and a shift in organisational culture. Work on the City's growth strategy has progressed significantly and the Corporation should continue to build on this foundation in the months and years ahead. The DC SRO and Ben Dixon (Interim Head of Programme) presented the latest version of the Destination City dashboard and summarised data on economic indicators, footfall, and spend. There was discussion around how businesses might interpret the data – perhaps negatively, choosing reduced opening hours accordingly, or positively, which could work to attract new ground floor occupiers due to the neutrality of the data. The complex macro-economic picture was discussed – including the impact of business rate reform, rising utility costs, and other taxation changes. It was suggested that benchmarking against the rest of London could be a useful improvement of the Dashboard. **Board Members were advised that**

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they will receive pdf files of the dashboard alongside some questions for them to answer following the meeting to further improve this interactive tool

Tracey Pollard (Founder, Bruce Gillingham Pollard) presented progress of the work defining what it means to have a “Vibrant and Consistently Lively Ground floor Experience”. She presented their methodology in pursuit of finding out who will be the customer in the ‘City of the future’, which focuses on their analysis of behavioural shifts and trends. Seven different ‘mindsets’, have emerged which will form the basis of their final report. **Board Members were advised that a survey will be sent to them to gather their insights following the meeting.** Members highlighted the importance of maximising the tools the City Corporation has to influence ground floor, such as planning and licensing, and the effects of fragmented building ownership across the City was also discussed the Board reflected that the elevated F&B market feels saturated, and that the City should focus more on ground floor; Katie Stewart provided an update to the Board on the City’s emerging Spatial framework.

Omkar Chana (Interim Director of Culture) presented on the consolidation of visitor facing websites. It was emphasised that the focus will be on preserving the best elements of the City of LDN website and the NLA hosted OneCity platform and that the project will be complete by January 2026. Board Members stressed that getting a singular site *quickly* should be the priority – having a collective platform that BIDs and other organisations can feed into is essential for the success of the Destination City programme and promoting the wide range of activities that attract and retain visitors, workers and residents here in the Square Mile.