

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Communications & Corporate Affairs Sub-Committee – For decision Policy & Resources Committee – for decision	Dated: 10/12/2025 11/12/2025
Subject: Strategic Branding Review and Consideration of Place Brand	Public report: For Decision
This proposal: delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes	Supports delivery of all Corporate Plan outcomes
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
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?	No
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Report author:	James Tringham, Communications Team – Marketing & Brand (interim) Omkar Chana, Culture Director (Interim), Town Clerk's

Summary

This report provides a comprehensive update on continued work across the City of London Corporation on strategic branding, taking into consideration the comments and decisions made at the Court of Common Council meeting on the 6th March 2025 and the deferring of the decision to agree the Strategic Branding Review recommendations. The action was to return to the Policy and Resources Committee with updated proposals, including a discussion on the place brand.

For ease, the two recommendations in the original report were:

- The adoption of a co-branding model with City of London Corporation institutions, funded programmes and entities.
- Roll-out of a 'descriptive' logo that includes the City Corporation's full name.

The City Corporation's previous investment to develop its business-to-consumer (B2C) place-brand ('CityofLdn') is now being reviewed concurrently with the Strategic Branding Review. Part of this work proposes to consolidate the 'CityOfLdn' brand through partnering with external organisations. Options are presented to align the outputs from the Strategic Branding Review and the 'CityOfLdn' merger in a timely manner.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve the proposals in Appendix 1 and delegate the approval of the detailed design guide, once completed, to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Communications & Corporate Affairs Sub-Committee, the Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee, and the Executive Leadership Board.
- Members are asked to approve Option 1 regarding the place brand, and delegate the authority to ensure that the CityOfLdn place brand is aligned with the output from the Strategic Brand Review to the Town Clerk, the Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee and Deputy Chair of Policy, in consultation with the Chair of the Communications & Corporate Affairs Sub-Committee and Chair of Culture, Heritage and Libraries.

Main Report

Background

Strategic Branding Review

1. An audit and review of the City of London Corporation's brands took place in 2024 and proposals were subsequently developed in consultation with Members and senior officers from across the City Corporation. The proposals centred on two clear recommendations:
 - The adoption of a co-branding model with City of London Corporation institutions, funded programmes and entities

Fig 1: examples of the co-branding model:



- Roll-out of a 'descriptive' horizontal-format logo that includes the City Corporation's full name

Fig 2: existing 'vertical' and new 'horizontal' logo:



2. The proposals were considered and approved by the Policy & Resources Committee in February 2025. In March 2025 the Court of Common Council asked the Policy and Resources Committee to consider the matter further.
3. An update was provided to the Communications & Corporate Affairs Sub-Committee in May 2025, where a Member queried the inclusion of the City Corporation's full name in some versions of the logo.

Place brand ('CityOfLdn')

4. Destination City (Phase One) included a separate place brand with a distinct brand identity, which includes a circular 'roundel' logo that was created for the City Corporation's visitor-facing channels.
- *Fig. 3: existing circular 'roundel' logo used on the visitor-facing website and social media channels:*



5. As part of this, a website was established (www.thecityofldn.com), accompanying social media accounts (e.g. Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, X) and a newsletter created. The roundel is also used on printed material.
6. In line with existing City Corporation guidelines, whenever the City of London place brand is used externally the content also features the City Corporation crest

with the words 'delivered by', as the funder and main organisation behind marketing efforts.

7. The Destination City Independent Review 2024:
 - **Reported that** – some years ago, with the support of the City Corporation, New London Architecture (NLA) launched a comparable One City website and social media channels (www.onecity.london) which the City Corporation continues to financially support. The two platforms currently have differing strengths (e.g. One City has 156,000 Instagram followers and thecityofldn.com has 57,000 monthly views, and over 15,000 subscribers across newsletters to both platforms).
 - **Recommended to** – reevaluate the social media strategy and the possible partnership approaches to this where duplication currently exists, focus effort on a comprehensive calendar of events, and achieving an enhanced sense of the City of London as the capital's 'Old Town'.
8. After the review, the Culture Team retained the responsibility for maintaining the visitor-facing channels (website, social media and newsletter). The functionality for a calendar of events was implemented.
9. A project to merge thecityoldn.com and One City websites and social media platforms is underway and is due to complete early in 2026. Part of this project involves presenting options for the look and feel of the integrated brand entity, including but not limited to, the question of retaining the roundel, and how to incorporate relevant brand aspects from each site. This is a partnership approach to develop a brand that reflects the City as a place.

Current Position

Strategic Branding Review

10. Officers have subsequently held further consultations and discussions with several Members and senior officers. These clarified that the shorter logo version – stating 'City of London' – will remain available for use. In any application the most appropriate logo version will be selected taking into account: the context; guidelines in the detailed style guide that will be developed in order to implement the proposals; and, as necessary, discussion with relevant Members.
11. Officers have begun scoping work for a detailed design guide, believed to be the City Corporation's first since 1991. The design guide will ensure consistent implementation of the proposals across the City Corporation, and will also include guidelines around use of colours, fonts, layouts and other visual elements – ensuring more consistency in our printed and digital public-facing documents and other communications outputs, while remaining true to our distinctive and established visual identity. The objective is for this to be in place by March 2026.

Place brand ('CityOfLdn')

12. The City Corporation and the NLA co-commissioned a piece of work in partnership to merge the websites (www.thecityofldn.com and www.Onecity.london), associated social media platforms and newsletters.
13. The project will deliver a merged website and social platforms (in keeping with the existing blueprint rather than a full-feature build). The output must be compatible with the City Corporation's work on the digital review, brand strategy, and crucially—as a partnership—the merger needs to be mindful of internal and external stakeholder needs.
14. The vision for the place brand and the new merged entity will be a partnership approach, with the City Corporation being one of the partners. The place brand, specifically the roundel, that City Corporation has used for four years was aimed at changing perceptions and positively influencing visitors by positioning the City of London as a place vibrant with culture, where the old meets the new. The NLA has been on a similar journey with the One City brand, having developed its brand for around 10 years.
15. Consultants engaged by the Culture team are developing two brand options: one that is based on the roundel logo; and, one that does not include the roundel logo. The project needs a decision to be made by end of December 2025 ahead of developing and implementing the merged place-brand website and social media platforms.
16. Deleting the roundel and replacing it with the City Corporation crest would remove an essential element of the current place brand's identity. It would also require further consultation with our key partner in the consolidated place brand website, including the NLA, BIDs and City Property Association. External advice from a brand value creation agency advised that deleting the roundel is the least favourable approach from the point of view of retaining the existing subscribers and follower base, and it would diminish the value that has been developed by City of London Corporation and the NLA.

Proposals

17. The proposals from the 2024 Brand Review were developed in consultation with Members and senior officers from across the City Corporation and centred on two clear recommendations:
 - The adoption of a co-branding model with City of London Corporation institutions, funded programmes and entities
 - Roll-out of a 'descriptive' horizontal-format logo that includes the City Corporation's full name.
18. The co-branding model was proposed to:

- Raise the profile of the City Corporation's activities and investments by ensuring wider recognition of its positive contribution to the economic, social and cultural lives of London and the nation
 - Help external stakeholders better understand the relationship between a funded/supported institution and the City Corporation
 - Encourage a One City Corporation ethos among everyone employed by the City Corporation in line with the ambitions of the Corporate Plan and People Strategy 2024-2029
19. The descriptive logo was proposed to provide a horizontal-format logo that is more suitable for – and will therefore appear more prominently in – many graphic design applications, such as posters or websites. The descriptive logo included the City Corporation's full name to provide greater visibility of the City Corporation's involvement and investment at local, London and national levels. As stated above, the shorter logo version – stating 'City of London' – will remain available for use. In any application the most appropriate logo version will be selected taking into account: the context; guidelines in the detailed style guide that will be developed in order to implement the proposals; and, as necessary, discussion with relevant Members.
20. The detail of the proposals, and examples of how they would be applied, were included in previous papers on this subject and are shown in Appendix 1. The departments, institutions, initiatives and programmes to which they will apply are listed in Appendix 2. The exact wording to be used in the co-branding model ('Supported by...'; 'Funded by...'; 'An initiative by...'; etc) will be agreed with each department, institution, etc, subject to their own governance procedures as required.
21. As part of the implementation of the new branding approach, consideration should be given to opportunities for monetising the use of the City Corporation's logo in appropriate contexts. This could include licensing arrangements for commercial filming, events, or partnerships where the logo carries significant brand value. Any such approach would need to be governed by clear criteria and approval processes to protect the integrity of the brand while generating potential revenue streams that support the City Corporation's objectives.
22. Members are asked to approve the above proposals and the commencement of the accompanying detailed design guide.

Options on place brand future

23. Members are asked to consider the following options for the future of the place brand:
24. Option 1:
- Implement the proposals from the overall Strategic Branding Review.
 - On the place brand, continue the work to develop options for the visual identity of the merged place-brand website and social media platforms for a subsequent decision by end of December 2025.

25. Option 2:

- Implement the proposals from the Strategic Branding Review.
- On the place brand, merge the CityOfLdn and One City channels, delete the roundel and adopt a visual identity that is consistent with the main 'City Of London' corporate brand.

26. Option 3:

- Implement the proposals from the Strategic Branding Review.
- Continue to merge the CityOfLdn and One City channels, remove the roundel ahead of reviewing final options and retain a visual identity based on the words "City of London". The crest would not be used to replace the roundel, but the crest would be used in-line with co-branding approach.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Financial implications – none. The new brand and identity will be rolled out digitally and signage and hard copy, printed products updated as they naturally come up for renewal. For the website and platform merger project, further delays would mean continued cost pressures for dual running (for City Corporation and NLA platforms). If decisions not made in time or require website and platforms to change again outside of the existing project, then this will require further investment.

Resource implications – the roll out of the new brand guidelines and identity will require resource from the corporate communications and engagement Team and communications and marketing, digital and employee engagement leads across the City Corporation to update digital assets and collateral as required and when they are renewed.

Legal implications – there have been ongoing discussions with the Comptroller and City Solicitor to ensure that the legal entity and contractual arrangements of the City Corporation's institutions and initiatives are correctly described. Any intellectual property decisions will also be agreed with the Comptroller and City Solicitor and are part of a separate piece of work being led by the Chamberlain.

Risk implications – for the website and platform merger project, there is a risk that deleting the existing roundel prematurely and other elements of the existing brand will erode brand value. External brand consultants have advised the City Corporation to be cautious as this cannot be reversed.

Equalities implications – the detailed design guide will incorporate best practice around accessibility.

Climate implications – none

Security implications – none

Charity Implications - The Natural Environment Charity Review considers charity branding and identity as critical to success of future philanthropic fundraising plans for those sites, particularly the ability to identify primarily as charities 'supported by' the City of London in signage and literature as they move to a grant funding model"

Conclusion

27. The Strategic Branding Review sets out a clear approach to strengthen the City Corporation's identity and ensure consistency across all communications. By adopting a co-branding model and introducing a descriptive logo, the proposals will enhance recognition of the Corporation's role and contributions. Aligning these changes with the ongoing place-brand merger will create a unified and partnership-driven identity for the Square Mile, supporting our strategic objectives and delivering greater impact for stakeholders.
28. For the website and platform merger project, the City Corporation has already invested in developing its business-to-consumer (B2C) offer. It was previously agreed to amplify through this brand, website and platform to drive advocacy as the gateway to the physical customer experience. Fundamentally, the website and platforms have now grown to represent more than just the City Corporation – collectively they are now a place brand for the Square Mile that is open to partnership working and support which deserve a unified approach to branding.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Details of proposed co-branding solution
- Appendix 2 – Institutions, Facilities, Programmes and Initiatives in scope

Background Papers

Strategic Branding Review

- [Policy & Resources Committee](#) 13 February 2025
- [Court of Common Council](#) 6 March 2025
- [Communications & Corporate Affairs Sub-Committee](#) 29 May 2025

Place Brand ('CityOfLdn')

- [Proposals for the implementation of Destination City](#), 17 November 2022
- [Destination Brand Identity and Destination Website](#), 11 May 2023

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