

Committee(s): Culture, Heritage and Libraries – For Decision	Dated: 19/01/2026
Subject: City Arts Initiative – Governance Proposal & Terms of Reference Update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Vibrant Thriving Destination & Flourishing Public Spaces
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?	n/a
Report of: Gregory Moore, Deputy Town Clerk	For Decision
Report author: Emma Markiewicz, Head of Profession (Culture) Joanna Parker, Principal Planning Officer, Environment	

Summary

This report summarises recommendations and a proposal for a new governance arrangement for temporary public art applications and the updated Terms of Reference for the City Public Art Panel (previously City Arts Initiative).

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Review and approve annual amendments to the updated City Arts Initiative Terms of Reference (ToR) for 2026- 2027. Proposed significant changes include:
 - An updated governance framework for temporary public art proposals to delegate authority directly to the Head of Profession for Culture, temporary is defined as 1 year from installation to deinstallation;
 - To amend the name of the panel from City Arts Initiative to City Public Art Panel;
 - To reduce the subcommittee elected CHL Members on the City Public Art Panel from four to three.

Main Report

Background

1. The CAI was established in 2011, originally administered by the Town Clerks Department in conjunction with the Environment Team. The administration of CAI was moved to Destination City under Innovation & Growth in 2022. Following the Destination City Review, it since moved with the Culture Team to Town Clerks in 2024.

2. The CAI has been chaired by Joanna Parker, Principal Planning Officer, Environment since October 2023. It is made up of officers from across Environment, Planning, Heritage Estates, Culture, Health and Safety and the Media Team. There are also external panellists who have an expertise in outdoor and visual arts.
3. The Chair and Deputy Chair of CHL are currently permanent members of the CAI and historically each year up to three CHL Members are elected to serve a one-year term on the panel. This is done via a nomination process by CHL each May. In May 2025, CHL agreed the following four CHL Members to be members of the CAI:
 - Brendan Barners (CHL Chair)
 - Suzanne Ornsby (CHL Deputy Chair)
 - Gaby Robertshaw
 - Tessa Marchington
4. The CAI panel was originally set up to review the quality, delivery, and management of new public art on City land and buildings and to provide recommendations to the Culture, Heritage, and Libraries Committee (CHL) on proposals for new public art in the City. The CAI remit has been expanded to include proposals on private land as far as possible. The CHL Committee approval of the panel recommendation gives the green light of support for the project but does not guarantee the project will go ahead – other licences and permissions from Highways and Planning may also need to be gained.
5. The role of the CAI in reviewing public art is non statutory and advisory.

CAI Terms of Reference

6. The CAI panel annually reviews the ToR which was last approved by the Committee in May 2025. The current ToR have been reviewed and amended early in the calendar year as the existing Chair will step down in February 2026, and the current delegated decision-making process urgently requires reform.
7. The proposed amendments to the ToR are largely refinements and clarifications including: the responsibilities of the panel and decision-making criteria; the panel's remit including to provide early guidance on emerging proposals; meeting protocols; the roles and responsibilities of the panel Chair, panel Deputy and panel members; and what is scoped in and out as public art.
8. The ToR more clearly defines the panels role as a non-statutory body and the advisory role it plays in terms of: vetting quality, deliverability, and maintenance. The panel also provides additional signposting for applicants through the Corporation processes and aspiring to ensure the equitability and quality of any works that are to be installed in the public realm.
9. The current ToR requires the CAI panel to review CoL Blue Plaque applications and make recommendations to CHL for approval. In line with the outcome for a rebooted Blue Plaques Programme and Panel being presented at the 19 January Committee, the terms of reference for the public art panel shall be updated accordingly and reference to Blue Plaque recommendations will be removed. The Culture Team will continue to support the Blue Plaque Programme, and it is proposed it will have representation on the newly formed panel.
10. The three key changes to the CAI ToR 2026/27 are addressed in turn through the report and comprise:

- An updated governance framework for temporary public art proposals to delegate authority directly to the Head of Profession for Culture, temporary is defined as a maximum of 1 year from installation to deinstallation;
- To amend the name of the panel from City Arts Initiative to City Public Art Panel;
- To reduce the number of CHL Members on the City Public Art Panel from four to three.

11. The CAI Chair and Deputy have reviewed a range of sources where there are examples of good practice for other public art panels, and these have guided the updated draft ToR. The draft ToR has included consultation with the CHL Chair and Deputy Chair and existing CAI panel members.

Amendments to the Governance Framework for temporary public art

12. At the CHL Committee meeting on 18 March 2024, Members approved the CAI's recommendation to move to a delegated authority model for certain CAI applications with authority delegated to the Town Clerk. This process was introduced at the request of members and applicants to avoid unnecessary delays for temporary and uncontentious artwork. The approved criteria to meet a delegated referral include:

1. Installation less than 1 year;
2. Reputationally uncontentious;
3. Meeting 1 and 2 where a decision is urgent to support delivery.

13. This delegated authority process has not worked as efficiently as needed to allow for quick decisions to be made on temporary public art proposals. There are multiple layers to the process which take weeks rather than days to turn round decisions. Examples of current inefficiencies include the Snoopy trail and Barbican Delcy Morelos which met all the delegated criteria, but it was deemed quicker by Town Clerks to refer via the CHL committee report rather than the delegated route which resulted in time delays to applicants.

14. The CAI Chair and Deputy Chair work proactively with applicants and stakeholders to reduce risk and build in efficiencies such as encouraging pre-application meetings early on in the project process. However, officer experience reveals external organisational timelines can be beyond the control of the panel which does mean that we can receive applications for public art where there is limited time to go through the usual approval process via CHL. This is particularly the case for temporary installations. There are often also additional layers of procedures for external public art applicants who also are required to undergo other signoffs from different Corporation departments (such as Highways and Planning).

15. The current delays in our response to the applicant can aggravate risks. These risks include financial to the delivery partner. In addition, the process is complicated and more costly with increased staff time and resource with more steps in the process. This brings with it a reputational risk with the arts and cultural sector and/or the applicant.

16. CHL Committee has already approved a move to a delegated authority model for those temporary public art proposals which are short-term and low risk (see March 2024 background paper) and agreed the delegated criteria which would remain unchanged.

17. Officers propose to further streamline and simplify the process for temporary public art proposals which would give the Head of Profession for Culture rather than Town Clerks the delegated authority to approve the public art panel recommendations for temporary low risk artworks. This would reduce risk to delivery partners, create a more transparent user-friendly process and provide cost savings for staff.

18. Members should note delegated models like this currently exist in the Corporation e.g. The Planning Division have an officer delegated process for statutory decisions. Moving to an officer delegated process such as this for temporary public art applications would allow a much more agile approach to decision making which removes barriers for applicants to activate the public realm whilst still ensuring quality is maintained via the public art panel scrutiny

19. Comparison of existing and proposed process is set out below and further details are available in Appendix 2.

Current delegated process approved by CHL March 2024	Proposed streamlined delegated process
Delegated Criteria: 1. Installation less than 1 year; 2. Reputationally uncontentious; 3. If a decision is urgent to support delivery and criteria 1 and 2 are met	Delegated Criteria (no change): 1. Installation less than 1 year; 2. Reputationally uncontentious; 3. If a decision is urgent to support delivery and criteria 1 and 2 are met
<i>CAI panel review of temporary artwork proposal and agree recommendation to support or not – current panel includes 4 CHL Members.</i>	<i>CAI panel review of temporary artwork proposal and agree recommendation to support or not – proposed panel includes 3 CHL Members</i>
<i>Delegated report to Head of Profession for Culture.</i>	<i>Delegated report to Head of Profession for Culture and delegated decision issued back to officers.</i>
<i>Delegated report to Town Clerks.</i>	<i>CAI delegated list of decisions reported to next CHL for information.</i>
<i>Delegated report referred to Deputy Town Clerk and subsequent consultation with CHL Chair and Deputy Chair.</i>	
<i>Deputy Town Clerk signs off report and delegated decision issued back to officers.</i>	
<i>CAI delegated list of decisions reported to next CHL for information.</i>	

20. Temporary proposals which are deemed high risk or high profile with reputational impact will still be referred to CHL Committee at the discretion of the CHL Chair and Deputy Chair and CAI Chair. It has been agreed, for example, due to the high-profile nature of Sculpture in the City panel recommendations on the final shortlist of artworks will still be presented to this Committee.

21. Recent examples which met the criteria and could have been decided under delegated authority via the Head of Profession for Culture, and those which did not and would

continue be referred to CHL for decision are outlined in the governance framework in Appendix 2.

22. There are no significant financial costs related to the set-up period for the new governance process. It is proposed that this change could commence 1 March 2026.

Change of name from CAI to the City Public Art Panel

23. It is recommended that the name of City Arts Initiative is be changed to City Public Art Panel. The decision was agreed unanimously by the CAI panel to ensure the language and purpose of the panel has greater clarity with stakeholders and is more user friendly. This has been bench marked against other public art panels.

24. There would be some necessary changes to CHL ToR, the CAI website which has a planned refresh anyway as well as other CAI references across the Corporation, but this would not incur significant costs. It is proposed that this change could commence from 1 April 2026.

Reduction in number of CHL Members on the Panel

25. It is proposed to reduce the number of CHL Committee Members from four to three. This recommendation is being put forward to strengthen the independent expert nature of the panel to ensure there is an equal weighting of representation amongst panel members. This has also been benchmarked against other local authority public art panels which indicate that political Members usually sit on public art panels in an observatory capacity only.

26. It is proposed that CHL Chair and Deputy Chair continue to serve as panel members along with one additional CHL Member. It is proposed that this change is implemented at the annual CHL Sub Committee elections 2026.

Proposal

27. The recommendations are:

1. To approve the updated Terms of Reference for 2026-2027 including the following significant changes:

- i. Approve an officer delegated process via the Head of Profession for Culture for low-risk temporary (less than 1 year) public art proposals to be implemented from 1 March 2026;
- ii. Approve the change in name from City Arts Initiative to City Public Art Panel to be implemented from 1 April 2026;
- iii. Amend the number of CHL panel members to a maximum of three including the Chair and Deputy Chair of CHL from May 2026 at the subcommittee member elections.

Other matters

28. The Committee are advised that Joanna Parker is stepping down as Chair of the CAI as the 2-year term expired in October 2025. A new Chair has been recruited via an expression of interest and interview process. The Chair will be in post for 19 February 2026.

Strategic implications

29. Financial implications – No significant immediate financial implications have been identified. All public art applications have funding confirmed.
30. Resource implications – The updated governance process will significantly reduce the amount of staff resource currently required within Town Clerks and for the CAI Chair and Deputy Chair to sign off on temporary artwork proposals. The proposal will introduce a more agile approach to approving applications whilst still ensuring quality is maintained.
31. Legal implications – No legal implications have been identified.
32. Risk implications – No risk implications have been identified. The City Arts Initiative has Health and Safety representation on the panel. The panel ensures that all artworks installed in the Square Mile meet the panel's criteria to ensure high quality.
33. Equalities implications – No equalities implications have been identified. The City Arts Initiative has an access and inclusion officer present on the panel, and the panel reviews applications in terms of accessibility and inclusivity.
34. Climate implications – No climate implications have been identified. The CAI consider the environmental impact and sustainability credentials of applications.
35. Security implications – No security implications have been identified.

Conclusion

36. The City Arts Initiative recommends the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee to approve the updated Terms of Reference which includes an amended governance process, change in panel name and reduction in CHL Member representation on the panel.
37. The updates which are recommended support the panel and public art service to provide an efficient and accessible process for stakeholders approaching the City Corporation which encourages high quality applications for public art to be placed in the Square Mile.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - City Public Art Panel Composition & Terms of Reference 2026-27

Appendix 2 - City Public Art Panel Proposed Governance Framework 2026-27

Background Papers

- [City Arts Initiative – Delegated Authority Proposal – March 2024](#)
- [Appointment of Subcommittees May 2025](#)
 - [CAI Terms of Reference 2025](#)
 - [City Arts Initiative Delegated Authority Criteria 2025](#)