

Committee(s)	Dated:
Planning and Transportation Committee	22/06/2026
Subject: Celebrating Heritage SPD	Public report: For Decision
This proposal: • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • Provides statutory duties	This report relates to the statutory planning function
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:	Katie Stewart, Executive Director of Environment
Report author:	Tom Nancollas, Assistant Director (Design)

Summary

A new Celebrating Heritage SPD has been prepared to provide guidance on the implementation of new policies relating to heritage within the City Plan 2040. The document has been prepared in close consultation with Historic England. It sets out the expected role of heritage assets in future placemaking within the Square Mile – and how they will be celebrated by development. Building on consultation and engagement processes in Autumn 2025 and Spring 2026, this report seeks authorisation to adopt the Celebrating Heritage SPD by the Government's deadline of the end of June and to be used in planning decisions within the Square Mile from the date of adoption of the City Plan (anticipated late July/early August 2026).

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Approve the adoption of the Planning Obligations SPD with the adoption date to be no later than 30 June 2026
- Agree that the proposed implementation date of the SPD will be the date of adoption of the City Plan 2040.

Main Report

Background

1. Members of the committee approved formal consultation on a new Celebrating Heritage SPD on 13 March 2026. The SPD relates to the application of policies within the City Plan 2040, most notably policy S11: Historic Environment; HE1: Managing Change in the Historic Environment; HE2: Ancient Monuments and Archaeology; and, though less directly than the others, to HE3 Setting of the Tower of London World Heritage Site.
2. The Archaeology and Development Guidance SPD (2017) provides a framework for archaeological projects associated with development in the City of London. This new SPD is intended to supplement this guidance and bring it up to date rather than a replacement.
3. Following Government policy changes in Autumn 2025 the final date for the adoption of SPDs is 30 June 2026. As the adoption of the City Plan will follow in late July/early August the implementation of the guidance will need to be delayed until this date.

Consultation and process

4. The SPD was prepared using the results of two rounds of engagement: early informal engagement in Autumn 2025 and formal Regulation 12 consultation in March/April 2026. The results of the consultation and engagement are set out in the Engagement Summary at: <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/assets/Services-Environment/SPD-Autumn-Engagement-What-We-Heard.pdf> and the formal Consultation Statement included at Appendix 2.
5. Early pre-consultation engagement on the SPD took place with Historic England, the Greater London Authority, the City Property Association (CPA), St Paul's Cathedral, Bevis Marks Synagogue and the Diocese of London.
6. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening opinion was also sought from the statutory Environmental Bodies in Autumn 2025. Comments received confirmed that a full SEA was not required (see Appendix 3), so has not been prepared.

Changes made post consultation

7. The SPD sets out principles for how development might best celebrate the City's heritage by putting heritage assets at the heart of placemaking, and how development might be designed to be characteristic of the City, drawing upon the Square Mile's tangible and intangible quirks and idiosyncrasies, so that it might ultimately be sympathetic, in the more general sense, to City's heritage assets and overarching character.
8. The SPD contains provisions for archaeological features and artefacts on development sites and how these, and wider archaeological processes, might be celebrated in development proposals. Advice from the City's Archaeology Advisor, and wider Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS) colleagues, has informed this section of the document.

9. The SPD includes case studies which illustrate the guidance therein. These have been carefully chosen and revised and refined following feedback from a number of consultation respondents.
10. The final SPD is included at Appendix 1. A series of changes have been made to the consultation draft SPD to reflect the comments emerging through the Regulation 13 representations. These changes are set out in Section 4 of the Consultation Statement.
11. The key amendments to the draft have been made in response to issues raised by numerous consultation respondents, including Historic England, statutory amenity societies, and important City occupiers including the Cathedral, the Synagogue and the Churches. These amendments included making edits to Principle One, refinements to the supporting text of Principle Eight and the deletion of some Case Studies and inclusion of others. As well as this, the draft text has been refined and clarified in relation to language, definitions and terminology.
12. In revising the draft SPD following the consultation, officers have worked closely with Historic England, who have provided substantial input into the final text here proposed for adoption. Officers consider that the collaboration with Historic England on this document has been exemplary. In further recognition of this, Historic England will be providing a foreword to the document, currently indicated by a placeholder, with a final version of this to be circulated as an addendum report.

Implementation and next steps

13. As the new Celebrating Heritage SPD provides guidance relating expressly to Policies S11, HE1 and HE2 of the City Plan it can only be used in planning decisions once the City Plan has been adopted. Subject to member approval the SPD will be adopted before 30 June 2026 but will not be fully implemented until the date of the adoption of the City Plan 2040. Subject to member approval the SPD will be adopted before 30 June 2026 but officers are recommending that its implementation is conditional on the prior adoption of the City Plan 2040 and that it is not fully implemented until this date. This will provide certainty for developers currently within the application process.
14. In accordance with Regulation 11 of the Regulations an Adoption Statement will be prepared and made available on the Corporation's website to confirm the date of adoption and implementation; modifications made to the SPD following consultation; and notice of any person wishing to pursue judicial review on the process of adoption.

Corporate & Strategic implications

15. The City Plan 2040, and the SPDs which provide guidance on the application of the policies have been prepared in accordance with corporate and strategic policies, in particular the Corporate Plan.

Financial implications

16. No financial implications.

Resource implications

17. No resource implications.

Legal implications

18. The SPD has been prepared under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012. Legal advice has been sought in relation to the timing of the SPD adoption in relation to the City Plan adoption. The intention is that the SPD will be adopted in June 2026 (ahead of the Government deadline) but will not come into effect until the date of the City Plan's adoption. It is noted that at the time of adoption an SPD must not conflict with the adopted development plan, which at this time is the City of London Local Plan 2015. As the SPD is not intended to support the Local Plan 2015 and will not be applied until the City Plan 2040 has been adopted, it is not considered that there is any conflict with the Local Plan 2015.

Risk implications

19. None.

General implications

20. There are not considered to be any other implications relating to the content of the proposal.

Equalities implications

21. The Public Sector Equality Duty is an ongoing requirement and is taken into account by officers throughout the preparation of planning policy documents. A Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared alongside the SPD which concluded no negative or adverse impacts on those with protected characteristics (see Appendix 2 to Planning and Transportation Committee item, 13 March 2026).

Climate implications

22. None

Security implications

23. None

Conclusion

24. The Celebrating Heritage SPD has been prepared in accordance with the regulations and procedures. The SPD will be used as a material consideration in planning decisions once adopted and the implementation date has passed.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Celebrating Heritage SPD – Adoption version
- Appendix 2 Celebrating Heritage SPD – Consultation Statement
- Appendix 3 SEA Screening responses to the Air Quality, Celebrating Heritage, Planning Obligations and Offices SPDs

Background documents

- Report to the Planning and Transportation Committee on 13 March 2026- Celebrating Heritage SPD

Report author

Tom Nancollas
Assistant Director (Design)

E: Tom.Nancollas@cityoflondon.gov.uk