CULTURAL STRATEGY

City of London | 2026

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Juxtapostion of heritage and modernity

Executive Summary

Culture has never been more important to the City of London. It is fundamental to the City's success as an economic power house and a compelling place to visit, a meaningful place to work and a great place to live. This Strategy sets out a clear ambition: **to be recognised not only as a global financial centre, but also as the world's most culturally vibrant, proudly cosmopolitan and historically significant business district.**

The Moment is Now

The City has extraordinary cultural assets and is investing in culture at an unprecedented scale through the renewal of the Barbican, the relocation and expansion of the London Museum, and a growing wave of cultural infrastructure across the Square Mile and beyond. This Strategy responds to that moment, providing a shared framework for the next 5+ years to maximise the impact of these investments and realise their full potential.

Understanding Culture

Within the City of London Cultural Strategy, culture is understood in its broadest sense. It encompasses not only arts and heritage, but the wider social, civic and everyday experiences that shape life in the City, including learning, wellbeing, public life, identity, creativity and connection.

A Distinctive Cultural Identity

Founded 2,000 years ago, the City of London is the core from which the modern metropolis of London developed. Unlike many global business districts, which were planned and built primarily for commerce, the City has been evolving over centuries as a place of trade, migration, innovation and exchange. Each generation has left its mark, creating a depth of heritage, culture and human stories that cannot be manufactured.

This blend of old and new, tradition and innovation, local and global, reflected in everything from medieval churches and historic alleys to contemporary architecture and public spaces, is what gives the City of London its uniquely distinctive character.

As the historic heart of London and the world's most influential business district, the City's cultural assets contribute not only to the capital's identity, but to the international reputation of London as a place of culture, creativity, innovation and economic heft.

An Extraordinary Cultural Offer

Today, historic landmarks such as St Paul's Cathedral, the Guildhall, Tower Bridge and the Royal Exchange stand alongside major cultural institutions including the Barbican Centre and the London Museum. The Guildhall School of Music & Drama and the London Symphony Orchestra sit alongside independent venues and heritage attractions such as Dr Johnson's House, Theatre Deli, Bishopsgate Institute and Charterhouse. Centuries-old traditions, from the Lord Mayor's Show to the Sheep Drive and the Hog's Head Ceremony, continue to shape the City's identity, while neighbouring destinations including the Tower of London and Tate Modern form part of a wider cultural ecosystem.



St Paul's Cathedral, NLA, Photo by @descurran

Collectively, these institutions, landmarks and traditions create a cultural offer that is unparalleled and serves a diverse residential community, hundreds of thousands of workers and millions of visitors each year.

The Opportunity

While the City is globally known for commerce and finance, its cultural strengths are not always equally understood, experienced or celebrated. This Strategy is not about creating culture where none exists. It is about fully recognising the City's existing assets and unlocking their full potential.

Our Priorities

This Strategy has three priorities:

- ***Champion the City's Character:*** Celebrate the stories, traditions and experiences that make the City unique, supporting a more distinctive, nuanced and evolving global identity.
- ***Balance the Cultural Mix:*** Create the conditions for culture to thrive at every scale, supporting a more varied, experimental and resilient cultural ecosystem.
- ***Access Culture with Ease:*** Make culture easier to discover, navigate and experience, supporting a cultural offer that is more visible, accessible and part of everyday life.

The Difference We Want to Make

Through these priorities more investment will flow into the Square Mile, more people will discover, experience and return to the City for its cultural offer, while a broader mix of artists, organisations and ideas will be supported to thrive. Culture will become more visible, accessible and integrated into everyday life, supporting wellbeing, learning and social connection. More people will feel welcome, represented and able to access the opportunities the City offers, ensuring culture in the City is shaped by and relevant to a broader range of people.

From Ambition to Action

This Strategy sits alongside the City of London Corporation's strategic ambitions for growth; the Square Mile as a destination (Destination City), its global competitiveness for business (Competitiveness Strategy) and its long-term evolution as a sustainable and heritage-led place (City Plan 2040).

The City of London Corporation already invests around £145m into culture. The Cultural Strategy is not about expending more money but about leveraging and utilising the wonderful cultural assets the City already has to greater effect.

Supported by a Delivery Toolkit that translates ambition into action, the pages that follow set out a practical framework for coordinated action.

A Shared Strategy

This Strategy was produced in the same way it is intended to be delivered: openly and through shared ownership. The City of London Corporation commissioned and convened the Strategy, but it is not a strategy for any one organisation. It is a shared invitation to work together, think bigger and act collectively. By working together across culture, business, education, development, hospitality and civic life, we can create something far greater than the sum of our parts.



Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Spring Season



x3 MORE LIKELY TO FEEL INSPIRED

Workers exposed to cultural experiences in the workplace report significantly higher levels of inspiration.

Source: Brookfield Properties x The School of Life



2 IN 3 OF INVESTORS PRIORITISE WELLBEING

Features that support the physical and mental health of building users influence real estate decision-making worldwide.

Source: CBRE Global ESG Survey 2022



64% WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY

Access to cultural and social activity supports day-to-day performance, helping workers collaborate, focus and sustain productivity.

Source: Brookfield Properties x The School of Life

The **Case for Culture** in a **Global Business District**

The City of London's position as a global business district has never depended on financial infrastructure alone. From its origins as Londinium to the coffee houses of the seventeenth century, the City has long functioned as a place where exchange is enabled by strong social and cultural conditions. Today, culture operates as a form of soft infrastructure, shaping how effectively the City competes for talent, investment and global relevance.

Earning the Commute

This is particularly significant in the context of hybrid working, where the City must now 'earn the commute'. Approximately 676,000 workers travel into the Square Mile, yet attendance is increasingly shaped by choice.

Cultural activity plays a measurable role in that decision. Research by Brookfield Properties and The School of Life found that workers are almost three times more likely to feel inspired when exposed to cultural experiences in the workplace, while 64% report that cultural and social activity helps them work more effectively. Access to these experiences also increases preference for office-based work.

A Healthier Workforce

Poor mental health has significant implications for workforce wellbeing and productivity. Research by King's College London into central London's workforce found that employers reported that poor mental health contributes to lower morale, reduced productivity and long-term sickness absence, while the Health and Safety Executive estimates that stress, depression and anxiety accounted for 16.4 million working days lost in 2024/25 across Great Britain.

Against this backdrop, The World Health Organization's 2019 Arts and Health report identifies consistent associations between engagement in arts and heritage and improved mental health, whilst the rise of social prescribing reflects increasing institutional recognition of culture's role in supporting wellbeing.

Workers themselves recognise this, with 77% believing cultural activity contributes directly to their wellbeing.

CBRE's 2022 Global ESG Survey found that features supporting the physical and mental health of building users influence the real estate decisions of around two-thirds of investors and occupiers worldwide, reinforcing that culture is no longer a 'nice to have' but an increasingly important factor in occupier decision-making.

A Global Differentiator

Beyond its benefits for workers and employers, the City's cultural offer represents one of its most underleveraged competitive advantages internationally. The City hosts over 180 foreign banks, with 37% of London Stock Exchange listings being international, supported by a workforce of 330,000 foreign-born workers.

In a market where financial infrastructure is increasingly comparable, distinctiveness becomes critical. The City's institutions, heritage, traditions and contemporary programmes offer a depth and identity that no other global financial centre can replicate.

Culture's role in the City of London is not supplementary but systemic. It shapes how the City attracts investment, retains talent and differentiates itself globally. The opportunity is not to create culture where none exists, but to deploy an already substantial base more effectively: making it visible, accessible and embedded within everyday experience. It is one of the clearest routes through which the City can strengthen its position as the global business district.

SHAPED TOGETHER

This Cultural Strategy has been shaped through one of the **most extensive cultural engagement processes** the City has ever undertaken.

Many Voices, One City

The City of London is experienced differently by different people. For some, it is a place of work. For others, it is home. For many, it is a destination to discover. Understanding culture in the City therefore means understanding these different experiences and perspectives. This Strategy has been shaped by listening to a broad range of voices, including those who already feel connected to the City and those who do not yet see themselves reflected in it.

A City-Wide Conversation

Between February and May 2025, a structured consultation programme combined evidence and lived experience. Forty-seven existing datasets were analysed alongside 742 survey responses, 10 focus groups involving 178 participants, more than 50 one-to-one conversations and 85 creative consultation contributors. Residents, workers, young people, cultural leaders, businesses, developers, educators and international partners all took part. This phase uncovered both pride and challenge, celebrating what is already strong while identifying where culture could be more visible, inclusive and connected to everyday life.

From Consultation to Co-Creation

From June to November 2025, the process moved into co-creation. Thirty-seven structured sessions brought together more than 350 people across civic, corporate, cultural and community sectors. Through the Cultural Strategy Development Group, Officer Strategy Group and Member Strategy Group, participants worked side by side to test priorities, refine commitments and build consensus. Go & See sessions at Dr Johnson's House, St Paul's Cathedral and Guildhall Art Gallery grounded the work in lived experience, while Action Planning Sessions stress-tested ambition against delivery reality. As one participant described it, this was *"A watershed moment. A really bold & brave level of engagement - which in this area is unprecedented."*



Cultural Consultation, St Botolph's Without Aldgate, Photo by Luke Bligh

OUR VISION

The City of London will be recognised not only as a global financial centre, but also as the world's most **culturally vibrant, proudly cosmopolitan and historically significant business district.**

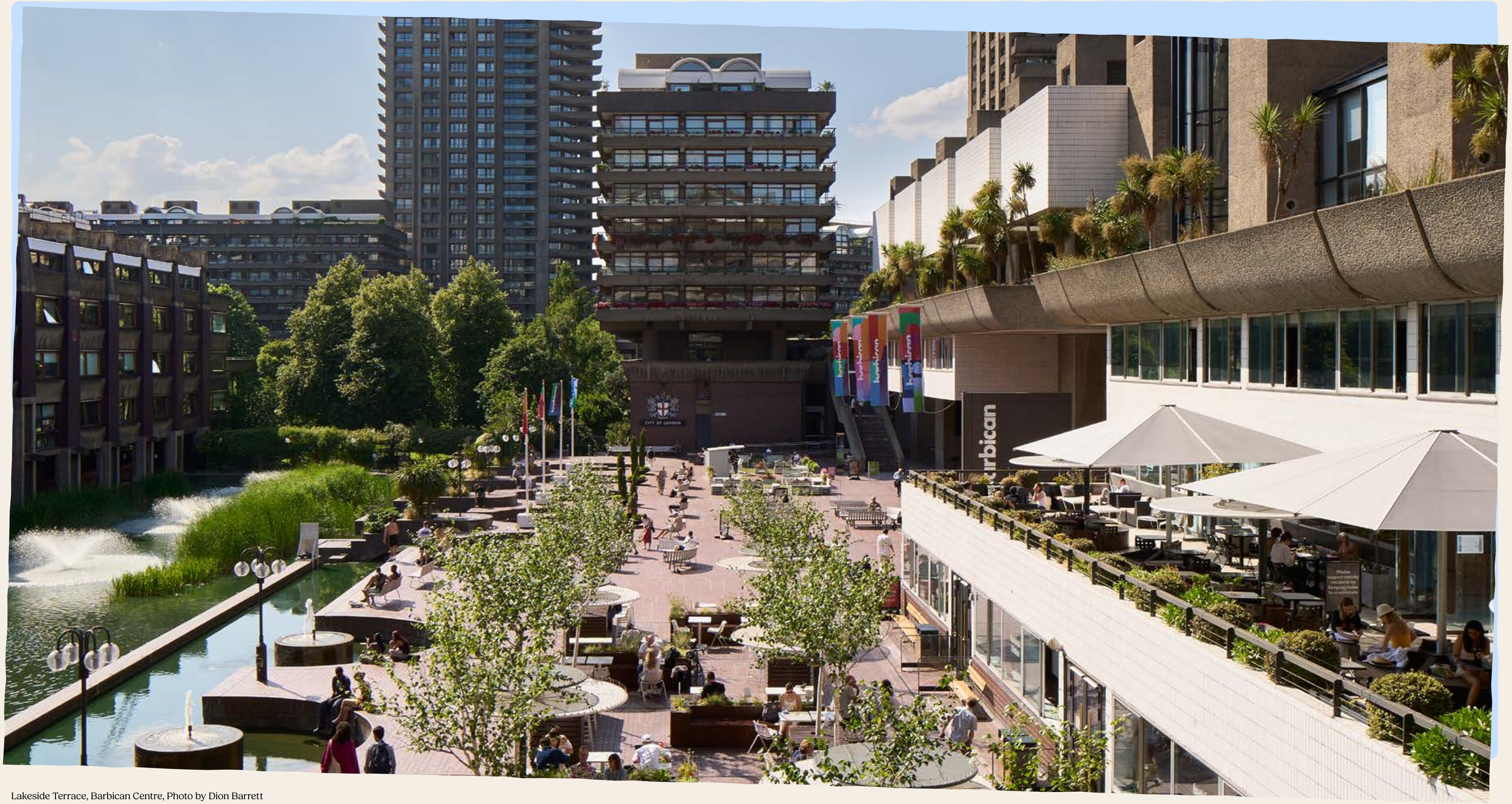
We will build on centuries of history, heritage and tradition by **celebrating what makes us distinct**.

We will futher strengthen our position as the international economic power house and as a driver of innovation by **embracing creative risk and backing bold ideas**.

We will champion our place at the heart of London by **reflecting its people, its diversity, and widening access to the wealth of opportunities the City has to offer.**



Fabric x St Paul's, Patti Smith, Photography by @benedictpriddy



Lakeside Terrace, Barbican Centre, Photo by Dion Barrett

OUR PRIORITIES

1

CHAMPION THE CITY'S CHARACTER

Celebrate the stories, traditions and physical character that make the City unique, supporting a more distinctive, nuanced and evolving global identity.

2

BALANCE THE CULTURAL MIX

Create the conditions for culture to thrive at every scale, supporting a more varied, experimental and resilient cultural ecosystem.

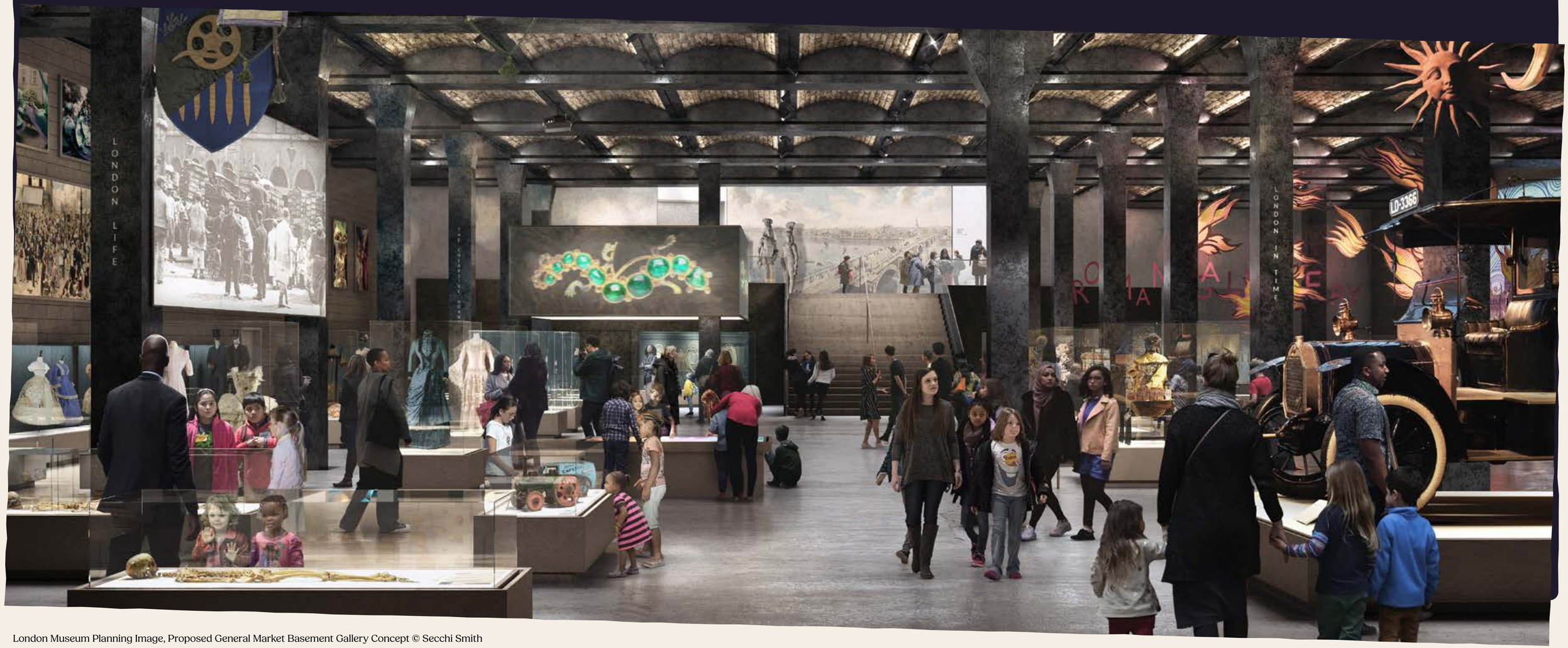
3

ACCESS CULTURE WITH EASE

Make culture easier to discover, navigate and experience, supporting a cultural offer that is more visible, accessible and part of everyday life.

PRIORITY 1

CHAMPION THE CITY'S CHARACTER



London Museum Planning Image, Proposed General Market Basement Gallery Concept © Secchi Smith

EMBRACE CULTURE AS A DEFINING STRENGTH

Position culture at the heart of the City's global identity, represented across commerce, investment and diplomatic engagement.

Why this matters: *Culture strengthens how the City is seen globally, helping it stand out, build influence and attract international opportunity.*



76%

of executives rank talent attractiveness as their top priority when choosing a business district. The same research concludes that **districts must offer culture, leisure and placemaking to remain attractive** to companies, employees and investors.

(EY.COM)

*"Culture should be more than an ambition - it's a segment of the economy and **an opportunity for growth."***

PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT FOCUS GROUP

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

SHORT TERM:	Develop a shared narrative for the City's cultural identity as a global business district. Create clear messages, stories and evidence that articulate how culture contributes to the City's distinctiveness, competitiveness and global reputation. Begin embedding these messages within place promotion, destination marketing and investment activity. Establish a cultural fund to receive any financial contributions in relation to new development as payments in lieu of an onsite cultural contribution.
MEDIUM TERM:	Champion culture through civic leadership and advocacy. Equip elected Members, ambassadors, partners and senior leaders with shared messages that position culture as a defining strength of the Square Mile. Ensure culture is consistently represented within strategies, campaigns, investment narratives and external engagement.
LONG TERM:	Establish culture as one of the defining characteristics that sets the City apart from other global business districts. Through international partnerships, industry events and the work of cultural institutions and partners, ensure the City's cultural strengths are visible to global audiences and recognised as part of its international reputation.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Culture is consistently represented in how the City promotes itself, attracts investment and engages with global audiences
- More people recognise culture as one of the defining strengths that distinguishes the City from other global business districts
- International partnerships and engagement activity strengthen the profile and reach of the City's cultural offer

SHARE THE CITY'S MANY STORIES

Work with artists, historians, archives and communities to shape a contemporary City narrative that connects with audiences worldwide.

Why this matters: *When the City reflects more voices and histories, it becomes more inclusive, relevant and engaging to wider audiences.*



61%

of adults say arts and culture help them **understand different perspectives** and points of view

(Arts Council England)

"The City could do more to acknowledge complex histories, including those linked to finance, colonialism, and migration."

HERITAGE FOCUS GROUP

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

SHORT TERM:	Review how the City's stories are represented across cultural activity, heritage sites, archives, public spaces and storytelling platforms. Work with communities to identify where the experiences and contributions of people from different ethnic backgrounds, faiths, genders, generations, disabilities, sexual orientations and socio-economic backgrounds are missing, overlooked or underrepresented.
MEDIUM TERM:	Work with artists, communities, archives and cultural organisations to co-create new approaches to storytelling, interpretation and cultural programming. Test how a wider range of histories, lived experiences and contemporary perspectives can be researched, shared and experienced in ways that are relevant, inclusive and innovative.
LONG TERM:	Make inclusive storytelling a long-term principle of how the City researches, interprets and shares its culture and heritage. Over time, this will help ensure a wider range of histories, perspectives and lived experiences are reflected across cultural activity, public spaces and heritage programmes.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- The City offers a richer and more relevant heritage experience for wider audiences
- More people report feeling welcome and included in the way the City tells its stories
- A broader range of histories and perspectives is visible in cultural interpretation and storytelling

BRING THE CITY'S HIDDEN GEMS INTO PUBLIC VIEW

Work with partners to bring the City's hidden gems into public view, revealing the award-winning architecture, traditions and experiences that make the Square Mile unique.

Why this matters: *The City's architecture, heritage and traditions attract visitors, extend activity and strengthen cultural identity.*



40%

of global travellers say **"one-of-a-kind" experiences** influence their travel and spending decisions.

(Mastercard Survey)

*"Many of the City's most distinctive cultural assets - from its churches and guildhalls to archaeological remains - are **hidden in plain sight.**"*

HERITAGE FOCUS GROUP

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

SHORT TERM:	Identify under-recognised architectural assets, heritage sites, events, collections and ceremonial traditions across the Square Mile that express what makes the City distinctive. Map what exists, clarify ownership and access constraints, and agree a shortlist of priority assets and experiences with the greatest potential for public discovery.
MEDIUM TERM:	Bring the City's distinctive spaces, architecture, traditions and experiences into public view through routes and trails connecting culture, history, architecture and contemporary life. Deliver a quarterly programme of 'Secret City' events aligned with major citywide programmes such as Open House, London Festival of Architecture and London Fashion Week. Offer guided, self-guided and digital formats.
LONG TERM:	Broker long-term partnerships to open up distinctive spaces for culture on a regular basis, including one-off and limited-run experiences that pair unusual locations with new audiences. Explore appropriate commercial uses and extended opening opportunities where they support conservation and ongoing public access.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Audiences explore the City more deeply, including different neighbourhoods, landmarks and cultural assets
- More of the City's distinctive spaces, collections and traditions are opened up and experienced by wider audiences
- The City attracts more audiences interested in its architecture, traditions and cultural experiences

PRIORITY 2

BALANCE THE CULTURAL MIX



Leadenhall Market: pop-up store

CREATE SPACE TO SUPPORT NEW CULTURAL IDEAS

Work with landowners, developers and partners to make cultural space easier to access, use and sustain, supporting new ideas while strengthening the City's cultural infrastructure.

Why this matters: *Creating space for culture supports experimentation today while strengthening cultural infrastructure for tomorrow.*



13,780

artists are on studio waiting lists and occupancy rates are at 95 per cent, suggesting demand is high and sustained.

(GLA Cultural Infrastructure Plan)

"Meanwhile cultural use is an effective way to activate underused sites, attract footfall, and ***strengthen a sense of place*** *ahead of permanent occupation"*

PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT FOCUS GROUP

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

SHORT TERM:	Establish a clear, city-wide approach to cultural space. Support the development of a Cultural Space Framework for the Square Mile and produce practical guidance explaining how organisations can access spaces, understand permissions and costs, and bring new ideas to life.
MEDIUM TERM:	Make cultural space easier to find, access and activate. Maintain a database of vacant, underused and community spaces, broker partnerships between landowners, developers and cultural organisations, and support experimentation through flexible approaches to permissions, licensing and meanwhile use where appropriate.
LONG TERM:	Create clearer pathways for successful projects or organisations to grow or transition into longer-term cultural homes. Use evaluation, planning routes and partnerships with developers to help retain cultural organisations, replicate successful models and embed experimentation as a recognised part of the City's cultural infrastructure.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- More independent cultural and creative organisations and freelancers are attracted to and retained in the City
- More cultural spaces are available, accessible and actively used across the Square Mile
- Culture is increasingly embedded within development, planning and long-term city growth

BUILD EARLY CONNECTIONS TO CULTURE

Work with education partners to give young people opportunities to explore the City's culture, building confidence and a sense of belonging.

Why this matters: *Early cultural experiences shape who feels confident engaging with culture later in life.*



380,000

young people live in the City's surrounding boroughs, representing a **significant future audience** for the City's culture.

*"We have a **national responsibility** to inspire the next generation...deeper links with schools across London would strengthen young people's connection to the Square Mile"*

CULTURE FOCUS GROUP

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

SHORT TERM:	Support the Education Strategy to further strengthen the Cultural and Creative Learning Forum as the central coordination point for cultural education in the City. Work with schools, livery companies and cultural organisations to clarify existing provision, improve visibility, and make routes into City-based cultural learning clearer and easier for teachers to navigate.
MEDIUM TERM:	Take a more evidence-led approach to widening participation in cultural learning. Map cultural education provision across the City and neighbouring boroughs, identify gaps, and work with Cultural Education Partnerships and local communities to extend reach beyond the Square Mile. Strengthen relationships with delivery partners to support repeat engagement rather than one-off visits.
LONG TERM:	Embed long-term relationships between schools and the City's cultural institutions, creating opportunities for young people to help shape cultural learning and engagement. Support the Education Strategy to use evidence, partnerships and the City's convening role to champion cultural learning nationally, helping ensure creativity and culture remain embedded within education policy and practice.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Cultural partners build stronger long-term relationships with schools
- Children and young people from all backgrounds become more familiar with, and help shape, the City's cultural and creative opportunities
- Learners build cultural confidence and are more likely to continue engaging with culture and creative opportunities

CREATE PATHWAYS INTO CREATIVE CAREERS

Create new routes into creative work by combining hands-on cultural experience with skills development supported by City employers and institutions.

Why this matters: *Clear pathways and paid opportunities open up creative careers to more people while strengthening the City's future talent pool.*



53%

of creative organisations report **gaps in business-related skills**, particularly marketing and communications.

*"The City is uniquely positioned to **blend business and creative learning**"*

CREATIVE CAREERS ACTION PLANNING SESSION

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

SHORT TERM:	Position the City as a clear starting point for creative careers. Work with employers, cultural organisations, education providers and partners to explore how creative opportunities can be better coordinated, promoted and signposted, making routes into creative careers and training easier to find and access, particularly for young people and career-changers without existing networks.
MEDIUM TERM:	Convene employers, cultural organisations, education providers and funders across the City and neighbouring boroughs to co-design post-16 pathways combining paid experience, skills development and accreditation. Test how placements, apprenticeships, training and qualifications can align across organisations to reduce reliance on informal networks and one-off opportunities.
LONG TERM:	Launch a flagship, City-wide entry programme into creative careers, bringing together the City's cultural institutions and business community to offer paid experience, accredited learning and progression opportunities across multiple organisations, exposing participants to the breadth of creative, commercial and civic practice the City can offer.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- More people are aware of, and able to access, routes into creative careers
- Paid experience, accredited learning and development opportunities open pathways for people facing financial or social barriers
- Cultural and creative organisations benefit from a broader and better-prepared talent pool

PRIORITY 3

ACCESS CULTURE WITH EASE



Historic Royal Palaces and Luxmuralis

MAKE THE CITY'S CULTURE EASY TO FIND AND FOLLOW

Coordinate cultural communications, mapping and wayfinding across the Square Mile so people can see what's on and explore the City's culture with ease.

Why this matters: *The City already hosts an extraordinary range of cultural activity. Making it easier to find and follow will unlock its full potential.*



81%

of 18-34 year olds cited ***'lack of awareness'*** for not engaging in the City of London's cultural offer.

"There are brilliant things happening that no-one knows about"

PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT FOCUS GROUP

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

SHORT TERM:	Build culture directly into the City of London Corporation's Communications Strategy. Cultural content features across major channels, with clear guidance for teams and partners on how to promote cultural activity. Culture is positioned as a core part of how the City communicates, not an add-on.
MEDIUM TERM:	Develop a dedicated Cultural Communications Action Plan. Set out shared messaging, branding and audience targeting, supported by a digital and physical cultural map of the Square Mile. Cultural organisations, ambassadors, voluntary groups and partners work to a shared framework, making it easier to recognise what's on and where.
LONG TERM:	Design cultural discovery into the City's streets and public spaces. Align communications, maps and wayfinding with clearer signage, coordinated information points and intuitive routes that encourage exploration between venues, public spaces and neighbourhoods. Over time, following culture across the City becomes simple, consistent and part of everyday movement.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Culture is clearly visible in City of London communications and promotion
- Cultural venues, events and experiences are easy to find across digital and physical platforms
- Cultural promotion is better coordinated across partners and targeted to priority audiences

GET THE BASICS RIGHT

Improve essentials like seating, lighting, toilets and accessible public spaces so cultural experiences across the Square Mile are comfortable and easy to use.

Why this matters: *Comfortable, well-designed amenities make it easier for people to spend time in the City and enjoy its cultural offer.*

*"Poor signage, confusing navigation, and closed public toilets discourage visitors and **reduce dwell time**"*

YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES FOCUS GROUP

*"Lack of toilets, seating, and child-friendly spaces makes the City **difficult to enjoy** as a family"*

PLACE, LEISURE AND TOURISM FOCUS GROUP

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

SHORT TERM:	Improve the visibility and reliability of essential amenities. Public toilets, seating, picnic spots and blue badge parking are clearly mapped and promoted through trusted City platforms. Ensure that information is easy to find, inclusive and helps people plan visits with confidence.
MEDIUM TERM:	Improve the quality and experience of key amenities. This includes artist-led and design-led improvements to existing public toilets and seating, helping them feel safer, more welcoming and better used. Treat amenities as a visible and valued part of the City's cultural infrastructure.
LONG TERM:	Embed everyday amenities into long-term planning and delivery. Create an evidence base for amenity provision to inform planning guidance, ensuring toilets, seating and accessible spaces are considered essential infrastructure that supports culture, access and participation over time.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- More people are aware of the facilities that support a comfortable day out in the City
- More people report that visiting the City is convenient and welcoming
- Partners increasingly recognise the role of public amenities in supporting cultural life

EXTEND CULTURE BEYOND BUILDINGS

Support cultural activity in public spaces so it becomes a natural, visible and accessible part of daily life in the City.

Why this matters: *Visible, everyday culture invites wider audiences to engage and feel included in the City.*



38%

of 25-44 year olds are more likely to attend **outdoor city cultural events and festivals**. This is the age range most reflective of City workers.

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*"Culture in the streets and public spaces around where work takes place would make the City feel **more sociable**, **enjoyable**, and **less transactional**."*

CITY WORKERS FOCUS GROUP

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

SHORT TERM:	Build on existing programmes to test more cultural activity in streets and public spaces. Work with major institutions to deliver curated, well-managed outdoor activity that fits the City context and builds confidence across teams and partners.
MEDIUM TERM:	Expand outdoor cultural activity through informal, experimental use of public and ground-floor spaces. Pilot work with BIDs, businesses and cultural partners, mapping suitable locations and providing clear guidance to help artists and organisers navigate permissions and delivery.
LONG TERM:	Reduce barriers to outdoor culture by streamlining permissions and testing time-limited changes to street use. Introduce clearer, consistent licensing and pilot temporary street closures or car-free periods, using learning to inform longer-term public realm practice.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- More cultural activity takes place in public spaces throughout the year
- Culture is more visible in everyday life and reaches broader audiences
- Cultural activity in public spaces is easier for partners to deliver

ACHIEVING IMPACT

Priorities

Champion the City's Character

Use the City's distinct cultural character to enhance its global appeal

Balance the Cultural Mix

Help culture thrive at every scale

Access Culture with Ease

Make culture visible, accessible and part of everyday life

Priority Outcomes

The City becomes known for culture as well as commerce. Cultural organisations attract new audiences, partners and investment, and the City's cultural strengths contribute to its reputation and appeal.

Measures to include:

% of people who associate the City with culture as well as commerce | % of audiences who feel represented in the City's cultural offer | Visits to heritage and cultural assets

There is a wider and more relevant mix of cultural activity. More people find things that interest them, and more artists and organisations can start, grow and stay in the City, strengthening the talent pipeline.

Measures to include:

Sqm of cultural space created, retained or activated | Number young people participating in cultural activity | Number of people supported into creative careers

Culture is easier to find and take part in. More people know what's on, more people take part, and visits are longer, more frequent and support the City's wider economy.

Measures to include:

Number of visits to cultural discovery platforms | % of visitors who report that the City is convenient and easy to visit | Hours of outdoor cultural programming

Strategy Impacts

Social

Wellbeing
Equitable Cultural Participation
Physical & Mental Health

Economic

Visitor Spend
Workforce Productivity
Investment

Place

Footfall & Vibrancy
Attractiveness
Pride in Place

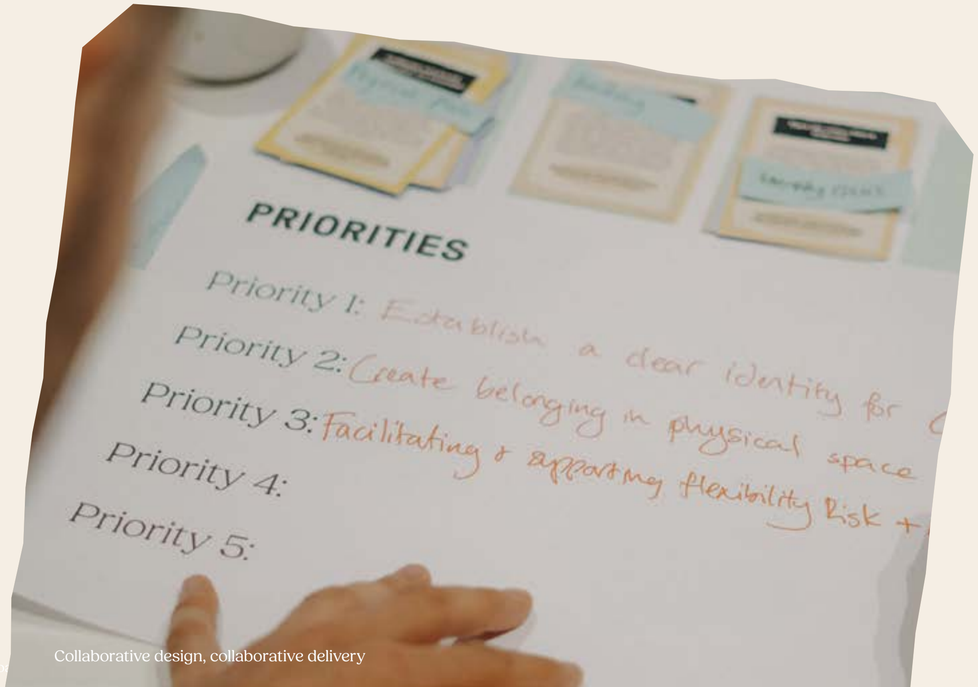
Cultural

Engagement & Opportunity
Diversity & Innovation
Resilience

DELIVERY TOOLKIT

The Delivery Toolkit translates the Cultural Strategy into practical action. Designed for anyone commissioning, funding, delivering or shaping culture in the City, including City Corporation and institution teams, cultural organisations, developers, BIDs and partners, it provides a set of shared tools to support decision-making, collaboration and delivery.

Rather than prescribing a single approach, it offers flexible guidance that can be applied across different places, projects and scales. Building on the Strategy's co-creation process, the Toolkit is intended to be used collectively, supporting a model of shared delivery where partners work together to test ideas, align activity and deliver impact over time.



Collaborative design, collaborative delivery

Delivery Toolkit

Audience Playbook: A guide to the City's cultural audiences, supporting audience development, programming, communications and marketing.

Finding Funding: A practical guide to funding opportunities, helping organisations and practitioners identify appropriate routes to support cultural activity.

Investing in Alignment: A shared framework for funders, commissioners and investors to align cultural investment with the Strategy's priorities and ambitions.

Measuring Success: A shared approach to monitoring, evaluation and impact, helping partners evidence progress and demonstrate value.

Working Together: A framework for collaborative delivery, setting out how partners contribute, share learning and support implementation over time.

Working with Place: A practical framework for applying the Cultural Strategy at a local level, helping cultural activity respond to the distinct character of different parts of the City.

Supporting Evidence

Research & Insight Report: Analysis of the City's cultural context, opportunities and challenges, drawing on policy, data and comparative research.

Consultation Findings Report: Detailed findings from engagement with residents, workers, cultural organisations, businesses and partners.

Audience Insight Report #1: A review of existing audience research, ticketing data and market intelligence relating to culture in the City.

Audience Insight Report #2: Primary audience research exploring cultural behaviours, perceptions and opportunities for audience growth.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Cultural Strategy and Delivery Toolkit was commissioned by the Head of Profession for Culture at the City of London Corporation. The work was shaped through a wide-ranging process of collaboration and co-creation.

We are grateful to the many local residents, workers, students, freelancers, artists, creatives, educators and community participants who gave their time, shared their experiences, and offered insight into how culture is lived, felt and made across the City. Their voices sit at the heart of this strategy, even where they are not named individually.

We also thank the organisations listed for their openness, generosity and expertise. Through consultation, challenge, partnership and shared ambition, they have helped to shape a strategy that reflects the City as it is now, and as it could become.

This is not a strategy owned by one organisation. It is a collective piece of work, developed with partners across culture, education, community, business, development and the public sector, and intended to be carried forward together.

An initiative by the City of London Corporation:

CITY OF LONDON

Written & facilitated by Things Made Public CIC:

THINGS MADE PUBLIC

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Age UK City of London
Aldgate Connect
Andaz London
Area Dean of the City Deanery
Arts Admin
Arts Council England
Artizan Street Library and Community Centre
AXA IM
Barbican Centre
Barbican and Golden Lane Neighbourhood Forum
Barbican Immersive
Babes in Development
Bank of England Museum
Bidvest Noonan
Bishopsgate Institute
Bloomberg
Bombas & Parr
Boxhall
British Council
British Land
Brookfield Properties
Broadworks – Hive
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
Carers UK
Central London Alliance
Cheapside Business Alliance
City Bridge Foundation
City Churches
City Guides
City of London Academies
City of London Corporation
City of Westminster
City Pride
City Property Association
CLEAR Network (City of London Ethnicity and Race)
COLAG (City of London Access Group)
Counter Culture
Culture Mile BID
Dance Umbrella
Devonshire Square
DP9
Duckie
Eastcheap Records
Eastern City Partnership
East London Dance
English Heritage
Fabric
Fleet Street Quarter
Founders' Company
Futurecity
Gerald Eve
Goldsmiths' Company
Goldsmiths' Company Charity
Global Cultural Districts Network
Greater London Authority
Greenwich and Docklands Festival
Guildhall Art Gallery & Amphitheatre
Guildhall Events
Guildhall School of Music & Drama
HATCH
Mental Fight Club
Historic England
Hilton Group
Hoxton Hall
H Properties
Intermission Youth Theatre
Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Keats House
Kunstraum
Landsec
Leadenhall Market
London & Oriental (L&O)
London and Partners
The London Archives
London Borough of Camden
London Borough of Hackney
London Borough of Islington
London Borough of Southwark
London Borough of Tower Hamlets
London Central Alliance
London Metropolitan University
London Museum
London Symphony Orchestra
Migration Museum
Middlesex Street Residents Association
Multiplex
New Diorama Theatre
Northeastern University
Open City
Paternoster Square Company
Petticoat Square
Portobello and Golden Lane Community Centre
Publica
Rosslyn
Savills
Shoreditch Trust
Shubbak Festival
Spice Design
St Botolph's without Aldgate
St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation
St Luke's Community Centre
St Paul's Cathedral
Stanhope PLC
Streetsense
Thames Festival Trust
Tower of London
Tudor Rose Court Residents Association
UCL – East Bank
Urban Symbiotics
Wayward
Without Walls
Wisdom Sync
Women's Inclusivity Network (City of London)
Young Employees Network (City of London)