

Committee(s):	Date(s):
EDCOG Chief Officer's Group Culture, Heritage & Libraries Policy & Resources	04 September 2013 13 September 2013 28 October 2013 21 November 2013
Subject: City of London Visitor Strategy	Public
Report of: The Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries	For Decision
Summary	
<p>Through the activities of the Visitor Development team, guided by the corporate Visitor Strategy, the Corporation makes an important contribution to the profile and economy of the Square Mile. This is valued by key partners, and enhances the reputation of London as a world city. The Visitor Strategy was last revised in 2010 and a new version is now proposed.</p>	
Recommendation(s)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Visitor Strategy, 2013-17, should be formally adopted as a corporate strategic document. 	

Main Report

Background

1. Recognising the growing importance of the visitor and tourism agenda to the activities of the City, the first corporate Visitor Strategy was formulated in 2007, and revised in 2010. Following the consolidation of Visitor Services in Culture, Heritage & Libraries in the 2011 corporate reorganisation, and the ongoing developments in policy and priorities, a new version of the Strategy is now due.

Current Position

2. The Visitor Strategy sits alongside, and supports, the corporate Cultural Strategy and Communications Strategy, and reflects key priorities within the Local Plan and the overarching Corporate Plan. It sets out the rationale for encouraging visitors to the Square Mile, identifies target groups and challenges, and defines a work plan for the Visitor Development team and their various partnership activities.
3. The Visitor Strategy is delivered primarily through the work of staff in CHL, just as the Communications Strategy is delivered through the PRO, but it is intended to reflect the work of, and benefit all the departments and activities supported by the Corporation to whom visitors are relevant, as well as external partners around the Square Mile. This new version of the Strategy

has been compiled with extensive informal consultation among the stakeholders involved.

Proposals

4. The Strategy aims to set out clearly and concisely its scope, purpose and objectives, and should speak for itself. Some key points may be brought out:
 - The Strategy brings out the many reasons for encouraging visitors to the Square Mile, including economic and reputational ones, and the ways in which the City makes an important contribution to the wider London agenda in this way, by enhancing the profile of London as a world city.
 - It is explicit in stating that we welcome visitors, including business travellers, event organisers and leisure seekers. Though this may seem self-evident it is an important point of principle to ratify; there is a history of ambivalence in the corporate view on visitors, and a tradition in some areas of discouraging them in order to protect the special nature of the City as a business district.
 - Based on knowledge of the tourism market and our involvement with various partner organisations in the field, the Strategy identifies the areas in which growth is likely and where development effort should be targeted, e.g. business visitors, weekend markets, overseas tourists.
 - This is a destination strategy for the Square Mile as a whole, as well as for those specific attractions which are funded by the Corporation; while we acknowledge the primacy of attention due to CoL activities, we also recognise that they are all best served by creating a sense of an environment with a diverse and vibrant offer.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

5. The Visitor Strategy complements the Cultural Strategy (the cultural activities need visitors, while a vibrant cultural offering helps to encourage them). It is referenced in the Corporate Plan as one of the supporting strategies and is particularly relevant to Key Policy Priority 5 (increasing the impact of the City's cultural and heritage offer on the life of London and the nation). It is also in harmony with the government's Tourism Policy (DCMS, 2011) and with the aims of other overarching bodies such as VisitEngland, London & Partners and the GLA.
6. In February 2013, the City Corporation's Policy and Resources Committee approved funds of £75,000 to secure a three-year Platinum Partnership with London & Partners. The Visitor Strategy builds on the opportunities presented by this partnership and seeks to develop and strengthen our relationships with London & Partners and other bodies delivering promotions for London and the UK in the field of tourism, so supporting KPP5 of the Corporate Plan as referenced in item 5 above.

Implications

7. The delivery of the Strategy depends on an ongoing level of corporate investment in the staff and services needed to undertake the product

development, marketing, information provision and partnership working identified in the action plan. It explicitly recognises the challenging nature of the current funding climate and stresses the importance of developing new revenue streams and taking an entrepreneurial approach. This new version is being produced at a time when corporate priorities are being reviewed, which provides an opportunity both to discuss and to validate the City's policy on visitor development.

Conclusion

8. During the last decade or so, the Corporation's growing recognition of the importance of visitor issues, and its development of visitor services, has led it to create a portfolio of activity which not only supports corporate aims, but makes a valued contribution to wider London and government agendas. The previous versions of the Visitor Strategy have provided a rationale, a plan and a showcase for these activities and this latest updated version is now recommended for ratification and adoption.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Visit the City: draft visitor strategy and action plan for the City of London, 2013-17

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