

## **City of London Cultural Strategy 2018-2022 – Executive Summary**

### **We want to:**

Seize a once in a generation opportunity to reposition the City as a world capital for commerce and culture, harnessing the power of arts, heritage, learning and libraries to make the Square Mile far more open, creative, resilient and entrepreneurial. We will work collaboratively with cultural partners to drive social and economic change and contribute to a thriving city.

### **The City of London Corporation has a unique combination of roles:**

- A major investor in an extraordinary cluster of diverse cultural organisations with considerable profile, reach and influence in London, the UK and abroad
- A convening power that brings together cultural partners in the City with other stakeholders to achieve social and economic impact – being greater than the sum of our parts
- A landowner and planning body which can embed creativity into the urban fabric and act as a beacon of place-based regeneration
- A long term custodian of heritage but also a facilitator of innovation, creative talent and new entrepreneurial ideas
- An independent voice speaking about the role of culture at regional, national and international levels

### **Our values:**

- We believe in the power of innovation and creativity to generate wealth for people and communities in a long term, sustained way – commerce and culture are intertwined throughout the City of London Corporation’s history
- We expect the City of London Corporation and our cultural partners to be open, communicative, responsive and welcoming to a diverse range of people, businesses and visitors
- We are a global, flexible and cosmopolitan City yet have a strong sense of pride in our place, history, neighbourhoods and identity
- We value cultural learning and engagement as an essential part of the cultural experience, but also for the transformative personal, social and economic impact this can have.
- We recognise and embrace the diversity of London’s culture and champion the excellence and innovation that this brings
- We prioritise areas under our direct control but are mindful of our responsibility to work with others to support the wider needs of the capital and the UK
- We seek to be joined up, agile, experimental and generous in our approach as a catalyst and convener at the forefront of cultural, economic and social change

## **Our Strategic Objectives:**

Between 2018-22 we want to...

1. Transform the City's public realm and physical infrastructure, making it a more open, distinct, welcoming and culturally vibrant destination
2. Develop Culture Mile in the north west of the City which will become an exciting destination for London and act as a catalyst for change across the rest of the Square Mile
3. Support cultural excellence in a range of fields and champion an ethos of innovation, creative risk taking and artistic citizenship
4. Support the City of London's Education Strategy through the nurturing of an exemplary Cultural Education Partnership, Culture Mile Learning, and enable our world-leading institutions to cultivate the creativity, skills and knowledge of the next generation
5. Become a leading centre of the digital and creative economy and unlock the creative potential and resilience of individuals and businesses using our estate and resources
6. Promote our cultural, heritage and creative strengths in the UK and abroad
7. Better promote our world class culture and heritage offer and use our wealth of outdoor spaces to widen its appeal to a more diverse audience, enabling communities in the City and beyond
8. Support our cultural organisations to build their capacity to engage with City businesses and employees, so that they can become more resilient
9. Play our part as a catalyst and convener in supporting and connecting with the wider cultural ecology of the capital and the rest of the UK
10. Develop clear leadership on culture: working in collaboration with cultural partners to develop our skills, align our objectives, develop performance measures, communicate our impact and build our capacity to be more than the sum of our parts

## City of London Cultural Strategy

### **Vision**

Throughout history, the City of London has been a place where commerce and creativity have thrived side by side. As well as being one of the world's oldest and most important trading hubs the Square Mile has fostered over centuries the long-term growth of arts and crafts, learning, public entertainment, green spaces, marketplaces, fairs, and pageantry. Since the late twentieth century the City has become a world class centre for culture, with an extraordinary concentration of institutions like the Barbican, the Museum of London, the London Symphony Orchestra and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, as well as a range of heritage assets, libraries, exciting outdoor events and cutting edge contemporary art programmes like Sculpture in the City. Investing over £100m every year, the City of London Corporation is the fourth largest funder of culture in the UK.

The City's support for culture is intrinsic to its strategy because of the core belief that the free exchange of commerce is intertwined with the free exchange of creative ideas. The City has always been a unique meeting place in the world for entrepreneurs, ideas and talent - the original co-working space. Our support for culture also reflects a strong belief in a richer kind of wealth, which includes people's wellbeing, quality of life and sense of place and community.

The City today has the most vibrant ecology of cultural organisations, creative businesses and practitioners anywhere in the UK. We may be a global city but our cultural organisations are also grounded in a strong sense of place and want to serve the diverse people of the city they inhabit.

Our definition of culture is broad and inclusive; it exists in both the buildings and heritage of our great institutions as well as our streets and the informal cultural spaces in between. It is for everyone, not just a narrow elite, and is a powerful driver of social mobility.

However, in recent years, the City's physical infrastructure and ways of working have not kept pace with our needs. Too often our cultural buildings have felt closed and hidden away. We have a rich and varied range of cultural assets and programmes, but we could do much more to promote them in the UK and abroad. We want to cultivate a deeper engagement with communities on our doorstep, enabling them to lead enriched lives and reach their full potential. Our cultural organisations are pioneers in research and experiment, but this is not visible in our streetscape. In short, we need to restate our role as a world capital of both commerce *and* culture.

At the start of the twenty-first century the City is also at a pivotal moment in its history. London is a global leader in finance, creative industries and technology. Despite politically uncertain times, there is a will to reach out to new trading partners and open up to more investment and talent. At home, the arrival of the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) in 2018 will transform the City's connectivity with the South East and bring an entirely new population into the area. Culture will play an important part in these changes.

In light of these factors, there is a once in a generation opportunity to open up the City in radical new ways so that we can welcome more people, stimulate more creative interactions and in doing so, build a sustainable long term future. We want to create a future for the arts, culture and heritage in the City because they are vital to developing our Society, Economy and Environments.

Between 2018-22, we will work with our cultural partners to transform the physical and social environment of the City and make it far more open, creative, resilient and entrepreneurial. We

intend to invest significantly in the urban fabric of the Square Mile to make it more inviting to visitors and reveal the special cultural and historic character of the area. We want to energise people of all ages, especially the young, and inspire them to engage with the learning opportunities all around them and perhaps pursue careers in the creative and tech sectors. We want to reflect the remarkable international quality of our businesses, people and cultural offer in our built environment. Above all, we want to champion excellence and innovation in all that we do.

All this requires purposeful leadership as well as working collaboratively. This strategy sets out the key objectives of our work, the values underpinning our approach, and the practical steps to realise them.

**Catherine McGuinness**

**Lord Mayor**

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5. Become a leading centre of the digital and creative economy and unlock the creative potential and resilience of individuals and businesses using our estate and resources
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7. Better promote our world class culture and heritage offer and use our wealth of outdoor spaces to widen its appeal to a more diverse audience, enabling communities in the City and beyond
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## **Strategic Objectives**

- 1. Transform the City’s public realm and physical infrastructure to make it a more open, distinct, welcoming and culturally vibrant destination**

The City has long been recognised as the financial and business district of London and for over a century the physical infrastructure of the Square Mile has grown up to serve this primary function. However, there is a strong desire today to reposition the City as a centre for both commerce *and* culture, recognising that the area is also the historic centre of the capital and a vibrant cultural destination. There is a need to renew and reconfigure the public realm and make the City more open, welcoming, and conducive to all users’ needs.

## **Priority actions**

- Major investment in public realm improvements across the Square Mile, including better wayfinding and improving physical infrastructure
- Strengthening the visibility of cultural organisations and sense of welcome
- Integrating digital and creative ideas into the urban fabric and creating more connected routes for visitors that reveal the cultural and heritage offer
- Continuing to invest in the City's broad range of cultural assets and partners, drawing on their expertise and entrusting them collectively to deliver world class programmes that keep the City at the forefront of cultural change
- Developing, enhancing and animating open and green spaces
- Emphasise the international character of the City's environment in order to attract businesses and serve their needs

## **2. Develop Culture Mile in the north-west of the City which will become an exciting cultural destination for London and act as a catalyst for change across the rest of the Square Mile**

The north-west area of the Square Mile contains an extraordinary cluster of diverse and collaborative cultural organisations. However for decades the area has suffered from a particularly poor quality public realm and lack of wayfinding, especially by comparison to the neighbouring areas of St Paul's and Tower Bridge. The original design for the Barbican estate deliberately envisaged a separation between its residents and the street level; as a result there is little outward sign of the rich culture and heritage of the area or sense of welcome. As other parts of London have developed or are developing distinct cultural identities (Southbank, South Kensington Quarter, and more recently, the Olympic Park and the Knowledge Quarter), this weak visibility is even more unsatisfactory. In 2013 the City decided to develop the idea of a new cultural hub (Culture Mile) to improve the quality of public spaces, create a distinct sense of identity and arrival, improve visitor experience, encourage more tourism, and facilitate new forms of collaboration between organisations. There is now a collective aspiration to enhance the cultural offer and invite more participation from visitors, residents and businesses. Whilst Culture Mile will be a distinct spatial area with unique licensing and planning conditions, it will act as a centre of energy, activating a similar cultural transformation for the entire Square Mile.

### Priority actions

- Reinforce the partnership of cultural, creative and corporate organisations within and outside Culture Mile, sharing resources and working together to create an 'internationally renowned, distinct, welcoming and vibrant centre for arts, heritage and learning'.
- Make cultural activity and heritage visible in the streetscape, lighting and environment, and ensure the public realm is designed to be conducive to shared programming by Culture Mile members.
- Develop a wider spatial masterplan for the area which recognises 'zones' for particular activities, e.g. an evening economy, protected residential areas.
- Progress unique licensing and planning agreements, to support the delivery of Culture Mile aspirations
- Plan for a new leisure/evening economy and engage with residents and businesses on their views
- Work with cultural partners to develop a world class food offer to enhance the visitor economy

- Learn from best UK and international practice and be inspired to experiment with new ideas and partners

### **3. Support cultural excellence in a range of fields and champion an ethos of innovation, creative risk-taking and artistic citizenship**

It is vital that our investment in culture recognises its intrinsic power and the transformative effect it has on audiences and participants. For our cultural organisations, the belief in risk-taking is core to their business and requires strong investment. We believe cultural excellence can take many diverse forms and this is reflected in the sheer range of cultural venues, activities and programmes we fund; cinema, theatre, music, visual arts, architecture, heritage, street art, libraries, learning and engagement, open spaces, outdoor events, and more. In order to achieve this, there is a need to engage and support the very best creative professionals including artists, educators, librarians, curators, programmers. In addition, there is a need to enable research, experimentation, international and national touring, and joint working to ensure the organisations we fund remain as cutting edge, internationally relevant and as creative as the City in which they are based.

#### Priority Actions

- Supporting our existing cultural organisations with sustained investment and resources, working closely to help them realise their ambitions
- Encouraging new partnerships and international touring to stimulate new thinking and create new income streams
- Facilitate joint working and new programming ideas to capitalise on the potential of Culture Mile and other opportunities in the public realm in the Square Mile

### **4. Support the delivery of the City of London’s Education Strategy by nurturing an exemplary Cultural Education Partnership, Culture Mile Learning, and enable our world-leading institutions to cultivate the creativity, skills and knowledge of the next generation**

The City is a centre of world class culture with millions of people enjoying performances, events and opportunities every year. However equally important, it is the site of possibly the largest collection of cultural learning opportunities for people of all ages. Every day we are building the audiences, artists and creative professionals of the future. As a network, the City’s cultural partners reach millions of people through school visits, large-scale off-site participatory events, learning resources, on-site classes and workshops, and world-class conservatoire education. Our School Visits Fund provides travel grants to enable schools in London to visit cultural organisations in the Square Mile. The Museum of London and Barbican-Guildhall Creative Learning have well-respected schools programmes, outreach events and concerts, the Guildhall School has the largest under-18s offer for specialist music training of any organisation in the UK, and the LSO has pioneered high quality music education in the ten east London boroughs, setting the standard for music hubs around the country. These organisations work with City academies and independent schools but also with schools in the surrounding boroughs, spreading their professional excellence and expertise. They also work with local socially disadvantaged residents, addressing issues of mental health, wellbeing, social cohesion and lifelong learning. Our learning and engagement programmes bring together people from all walks of life and help support social mobility as well as engender a sense of community.

To strengthen the link between the City's Education Strategy and cultural organisations, a new Cultural Education Partnership known as Culture Mile Learning will be created. This will deliver against the Education Strategy and work to encourage deeper collaboration and develop shared programmes and digital resources for greater impact. As the pressure on cultural education in school grows, it will be even more important to engage with headteachers and provide simple and effective routes for support. It is also a priority to offer world-leading higher education and training to future performers, creative professionals, technicians, leaders and teachers, fulfilling their potential as creative citizens. All of this will help the City to achieve its ambition of enriching the lives of people from all walks of society.

#### Priority Actions

- Support initiatives that encourage London schools, especially in disadvantaged areas, to engage with the cultural life of the City; for instance, the Schools Visits Fund.
- Develop a single 'front door' for under-18s offering a mix of formal and informal high quality vocational training across creative skills and performing arts areas.
- Develop a series of innovative initiatives to be delivered as part of Culture Mile Learning, which develop the combined skills needed for 21<sup>st</sup> century success and position the Culture Mile as a learning destination
- Support Culture Mile Learning to develop a sustainable business model and their capacity to work intensively with other London boroughs to address social mobility
- Create a unified digital strategy that amplifies and enhances the world-class offer available to schools and families across the City's cultural organisations and programmes
- Develop the wider physical and digital infrastructure that will enable access to cultural experiences and progression of fusion skills
- Create a strengthened music and performing arts education programme to support London's Music Hubs and local Cultural Education Partnerships, in preparing the ground for the proposed Centre for Music's, Museum of London and wider Culture Mile Learning ambitions
- Develop fast-track programmes to develop new local leadership in City-supported cultural organisations
- Strengthen the role of music and the performing arts across the City of London academies and schools
- Make full use of the rich cluster of creative expertise in the City, particularly through higher education and the world leading training at the Guildhall School.

#### **5. Become a leading centre of the digital and creative economy and unlock the creative potential and resilience of individuals and businesses using our estate and resources**

The City is known for being home to one of the world's largest and most dynamic financial sectors. However, a significant majority of the area's businesses are small and medium enterprises and there is a growing presence of technology and creative start-ups. For centuries the Square Mile has thrived and remained resilient because of its mix of businesses. Increasingly many employers (and their employees) want to be situated in a stimulating and attractive environment, with convenient amenities but also the buzz of independent retailers and creative enterprises. However, there is a need to keep pace in order to maintain the area's appeal and accessibility. Many small start-ups need affordable space to grow and incubate. The cost of operating in London means that maintaining this diverse base is increasingly difficult to achieve and there is a need for the City to manage and 'curate' its own estate in order to support a variety of business types. This can enhance

the vibrancy of the area, grow the creative and digital economy and unlock greater value in the longer term.

#### Priority Actions

- Identify underutilised parts of the estate – especially in the Barbican area - for creative and independent use, as part of a ‘curated’ strategy; making the City more vibrant but also addressing affordability for creative organisations in central London
- Develop a City-led programme of support for emerging creative entrepreneurs which includes access to financial expertise and business advice in the Square Mile
- Integrate the local digital economy into the broader Culture Mile offer

### **6. Promote our cultural, heritage and creative strengths in the UK and abroad**

In 2016 London was rated number one in the Global Power Index for the fifth consecutive time, driven partly by its cultural offer. Increasingly cities and regions are aware of the ‘soft power’ of culture and heritage and harness it to attract tourists, workers and businesses. Whilst London overall has a recognised strength in this area, the Square Mile could work harder to promote its particular character and assets through press activity and profile-raising events. There is also potential to join up more effectively on international engagement, foreign tours and foreign delegation visits which could be coordinated with the Lord Mayor’s Office and other external organisations like London and Partners. In the UK, the City could do more to demonstrate its support for cultural activity across the UK, for instance, developing regional partnerships and reach through Guildhall School Young Artists, which includes the Centre for Young Musicians, Junior Guildhall and Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning programmes.

#### Priority Actions

- Develop a more coordinated international promotions plan which includes culture and joins up on the key messages
- Work proactively with London and Partners, the Mayor of London’s promotional agency, and other organisations such as Arts Council England, DCMS (Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) and the British Council to promote the City’s cultural offer abroad

### **7. Better promote our world class culture and heritage offer and use our wealth of outdoor spaces to widen its appeal to a more diverse audience, enabling communities in the City and beyond**

The success of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games showed how powerful culture could be in promoting the City. The stunning events held in key London landmarks generated significant news coverage and positive feedback. The City has always been home to major public events and shows, for instance the Lord Mayor’s Show but in recent years it has also sponsored a number of one-off ‘cultural spectacles’ to commemorate key events or anniversaries; for instance, commissioning one of the UK’s most well regarded arts producers, Artichoke, to create an event on the Thames to mark the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great Fire of London. Such events can be an effective way to both capture the attention of the international media, but also engage diverse audiences and act like a ‘communal campfire’, bringing Londoners’ together around a shared moment. Similarly, City

workers, visitors and residents are positive about street animation, temporary art installations and outdoor programming on a more regular basis; for instance, lunchtime events in the public squares and parks and outdoor music performances. The City is developing a new outdoor programme to address this ambition. The Sculpture in the City programme has engaged millions of people in high quality art who might not ordinarily visit an art gallery, and it grows bigger each year through partnerships with local businesses and galleries. Culture Mile can also be a focal point for more ambitious outdoor programming which also acts like a 'shop window' for the cultural organisations in the area and attracts new audiences. Crucially, any investment in programming needs a strong marketing and communication strategy to ensure more people are aware of the offer.

#### Priority Actions

- As part of the Visitor Strategy, develop a City-wide marketing and communications strategy to drive visitors', learners' and residents' awareness of the cultural offer, specifically anticipating the increase in visitors with the Elizabeth Line in 2018 and working to engage the existing working population
- Create a commissioning fund to support one-off 'major spectaculars' as well as a new outdoor cultural programme to animate the streets and create a vibrant weekend, early evening and lunchtime environment
- Ensure cross-City departmental support for cultural activity in public spaces (e.g. planning, licensing, policing, etc.)
- Support our cultural organisations, to appeal to a wider audience base through outreach and learning initiatives and working outdoors
- Support outdoor programmes to grow and actively encourage sponsorship and participation from neighbouring commercial partners
- Provide opportunities for our communities to engage with and inform cultural output – engendering a strong sense of ownership, pride of place and widening participation

#### **8. Support our cultural organisations to build their capacity to engage with City businesses and employees, so that they can become more resilient**

The City has a strong relationship with its many businesses but could do even more to engage them with the cultural dimensions of its work. In the future, the City could play a stronger convening role, bringing together businesses and cultural organisations around shared interests and ideas. Ultimately, it is for the cultural organisations to raise their own funds, but a collaborative approach could yield effective results. Culture Mile will also generate a large number of joint projects and promotional opportunities which could create new income generation models across sectors. A strategic, collaborative approach could unlock value for culture and catalyse sustainable long term business models in partnership with the private sector.

#### Priority Actions

- Use our convening power to encourage more networking and collaboration between cultural organisations and businesses
- Create more marketing and promotion opportunities within the City estate and marketing channels to maximise value and achieve shared objectives across cultural and corporate sectors
- Work with cultural organisations to develop new and innovative models of income generation and sustainable corporate partnerships

**9. Play our part as a catalyst and convener in supporting and connecting with the wider cultural ecology of the capital, the rest of the UK and globally.**

The City of London has long supported cultural sites in London beyond the Square Mile, such as the green spaces of Hampstead Heath or heritage landmarks like Tower Bridge and Keats' House. As the funding climate becomes more challenging, this responsibility for the wider region will become even more important. The City's focus will be strategic initiatives which will enhance London as a whole and bolster the City's own cultural offer. For example, the City has been an early sponsor of two schemes led by the Mayor of London; the Illuminated River project to light the central London bridges with an environmentally sustainable artist-led scheme, and the London Borough of Culture competition which will choose its first winner in 2018. Both projects will enhance the capital's attraction to visitors and also benefit Londoners. The City also supports music education in cities and towns throughout the UK through funding for the Guildhall School Young Artists programme (Centre for Young Musicians, Junior Guildhall, Creative Learning), allowing them to extend their unique expertise.

Priority Actions

- Support selected strategic initiatives for London which increase tourism and provide benefits for Londoners, connecting with other relevant cultural destinations such as Knowledge Quarter, North Bank, South Bank
- Engage with local, national and international stakeholders such as the Mayor of London's Office, the Arts Council and DCMS on existing support and opportunities for potential future collaboration

**10. Develop clear leadership on culture: working with cultural partners to develop our skills, align our objectives, develop performance measures, communicate our impact and build our capacity to be more than the sum of our parts**

Whilst the City has the smallest geographical area of any local government unit, it is by far the largest investor in culture. As a key funder, the Corporation plays a key role in the governance and strategic direction of the numerous cultural organisations in the area. This situation means that the Square Mile has the potential to be the most collaborative and strategically coherent network of cultural organisations in the country. It can be a powerful voice in London, the UK and the world.

To be effective in its implementation, however, the cultural strategy will need clear leadership and direction. The responsibility for culture currently sits in the Town Clerk's department and a senior official from either within the Corporation itself or one of the cultural partners will be nominated to lead on the strategy. This nominee will be tasked with monitoring the strategy objectives, but also speaking to external stakeholders and developing partnerships. Whilst it is important to respect the individual autonomy of organisations and recognise their distinct characteristics and priorities, there is also much to be gained from a more collaborative approach based on a set of strategic objectives that can be measured and communicated widely.

The cultural success of the City can only be as good as the people within it – developing their capacity and leadership skills is also a priority.

Priority Actions

- Nominate a senior official from within the Corporation or a cultural organisation to lead on the implementation of the cultural strategy
- Communicate our leadership more clearly to others - publicise the key people working on different aspects of the strategy, and ensure all external and internal stakeholders are aware
- Produce a short annual cultural summary for internal and external stakeholders to publicise activity and achievements
- Build a reputation as a key London partner for developing leading cultural programmes and initiatives, attending events and holding regular stakeholder meetings
- Address the skills and training requirements of our cultural leaders in order to ensure they can realise the ambitions of the Cultural Strategy

**This strategy complements a number of existing and emerging corporate strategies across the City of London Corporation including:**

Corporate Plan – 2018-2023

Visitor Strategy – 2018-2022

The Local Plan

Open Spaces Strategy 2015

Cultural Hub Brand & Identity Strategy

Cultural Hub Property Strategy

Culture Mile Look and Feel Strategy