



City of Westminster

Cabinet Member Report

Meeting or Decision Maker:	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure
Date:	30 September
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Repurposing of unallocated MyWestminster funding towards a dedicated budget for cultural activity
Wards Affected:	All
Policy Context:	Fairer Westminster; WCC Cultural Strategy 2021-25 (Context in report);
Key Decision:	Key Decision required
Financial Summary:	
Report of:	Pedro Wrobel, Executive Director, Innovation & Change

1. Executive Summary

This report recommends repurposing existing unallocated MyWestminster funding towards a dedicated cultural budget to fund cultural activity throughout the city's communities as part of its strategy to create a fairer Westminster.

2. Recommendations

It is proposed that existing unallocated MyWestminster Funds totalling £1.873m are used to fund cultural initiatives over the next four years.

The fund would support the delivery of Fairer Westminster ambitions to widen opportunities for participation in culture, improve the wellbeing of our residents and enhance the local visitor offer. It would underpin the council's work to animate the city in partnership with cultural and community stakeholders by funding content and promoting it effectively to residents, businesses, and visitors to widen access and increase participation.

The table and project descriptions below detail an indicative range of activities a dedicated cultural budget would support.

Project	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total expenditure
<i>Extension of Culture post (PCPO) (inc on-costs/headroom)</i>	-	-	-	£85,000	£85,000
<i>Extension of City Lions programme</i>	-	-	-	£250,000	£250,000
<i>Commissioning budget</i>	£125,000	£125,000	£125,000	£125,000	£500,000
<i>Inside Out funding</i>	-	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£300,000
<i>Culture and Community Grants Programme</i>	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£600,000
<i>Exhibition Road Cultural Group membership</i>	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£40,000
<i>Public art: heritage trails, walking tours and digital commissions</i>	£10,000	10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£40,000
<i>Local Cultural Education Partnership development</i>	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£40,000
<i>Open House participation</i>	£4,500	£4,500	£4,500	£4,500	£18,000
OVERALL TOTAL	£309,500	£409,500	£409,500	£744,500	£1,873,000

City Lions programme and culture staff post

These budget items would be extended until 25/26 to cover the full period of the WCC Cultural Strategy. City Lions is the council's cultural enrichment and creative skills programme for residents aged 13-16. This programme is closely delivered with VCS organisations Dream Arts and Young Westminster Foundation and is on target to engage 1,200 participants by June 2023. The Principal Cultural Policy Officer provides specialist expertise and collaborates on cultural delivery both across council teams and with external stakeholders.

Commissioning

An annual commissioning budget would support high quality and engaging participatory arts activity to engage residents and attract visitors to Westminster, creating a more accessible and inclusive public realm that will add a cultural vibrancy to the streetscape, draw out local stories while supporting the local economy.

Commissions would respond to the council's renewed vision for the City – incorporating themes of greening, innovation, inclusion and diversity and, where appropriate, could be used to raise awareness of pertinent societal issues.

Commissions will specifically deliver on the following Cultural Strategy 'creative placemaking' principles:

- Promote a diverse and truly reflective representation of Westminster communities in the public realm
- Celebrate local identities, cultural assets and activities and use them to promote the area to visitors, businesses and investors
- Attract footfall by encouraging residents and visitors to explore and rediscover the city

The fund could, for instance, be used to subsidise City of Sculpture commissions in new locations throughout the borough, including more deprived zones. (The existing programme in West End/central outdoor locations is self-funding with primarily commercial galleries covering installation and insurance costs, while the council waives location fees)

Commissions will be delivered in partnership with the GLA, community and arts organisations as well as BIDS and landowners. The budget could also be used to enable the Council to respond and participate more actively in third-party proposals that demonstrate a clear and positive benefit to Westminster, for example a cultural event on the scale of Lumiere.

Inside Out

Inside Out brought the vibrant local cultural offer to the streets and open spaces of Westminster in 2021 and won a national ['Hearts for the Arts'](#) Award. The ambition is to establish Inside Out as an annual festival that will take place in August each year from 2023.

Cultural partners are essential to its success and therefore a dedicated grants programme to support partner-led activities would ensure fair and wider access to funding for those cultural organisations, artists and venues wishing to participate as part of the Inside Out festival. There is scope to develop annual themes and we will seek to maximise value for money through venue sponsorship, as was the case with the National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery commissions in 2021 and 2022. A dedicated annual fund with an application and governance process including officer and member panels will be implemented to oversee the allocation of £100,000 with a maximum of £10,000 per organisation.

Applications would be open to cultural organisations or those delivering cultural activities for residents of or visitors to the City of Westminster. This could include venues, Business Improvement Districts, agencies, artists, curators and performers.

Assessment criteria

- Promote the cultural offer of the City of Westminster or a specific venue with the aim of attracting visitors
- Respond to relevant annual festival themes such as greening, innovation, inclusion and diversity
- Be free, inclusive and accessible to all
- Be specifically for the Inside Out programme
- Take place outdoors
- Demonstrate value for money

Culture and Community Grants Programme

This fund will invite local arts organisations, community organisations and schools to apply for grants up to £10k on an annual basis to enable them to deliver WCC Cultural Strategy objectives including wellbeing and arts participation benefits. Officers would assess applications against criteria and relevant Cabinet Members would sign off final decisions.

It will support local creatives and cultural organisations following a period of unprecedented crisis, while drawing upon their existing specialist infrastructure and expertise to deliver participatory projects and co-commissions with residents.

- No other grant fund exists which is focused on cultural and creative benefits to Westminster residents and visitors. This fund would not duplicate the aims of the Government Cultural Recovery Fund to rescue arts organisations.
- Target beneficiaries to particularly focus on are the economically deprived, as well as schoolchildren, 16-25s, over 65s, ethnic minority groups, and those experiencing disabilities and social isolation.
- Project grants programmes are for fixed one-off allocations of funding that do not create the expectation of repeat funding found in, for instance, renewable service level agreements.

Assessment criteria:

- Encourage the co-creation of free and accessible events with resident groups and community champions, for those experiencing social, economic or wellbeing deprivation
- Develop outreach arts activities in community settings including social housing estates, faith venues, schools, hospitals and care homes
- Enable programmes that help young people find their voice
- Share stories of and told by diverse communities
- Improve access to the arts for those experiencing disabilities
- Support creative enterprise and skills opportunities
- Enable active participation in culture to improve physical and mental health
- Employ creativity to enliven high streets and public spaces
- Promote our neighbourhoods, business districts and heritage settings as cultural hubs

- Activities and projects must have capacity for at least 100 people to take part or benefit.
- Activities must have a minimal environmental impact with steps taken to reduce carbon emissions.

Grant Management Process

Annual Activity Plan
Approval of Cabinet Member Report
Establish officer and Cabinet Member panels
Contract, criteria, application form & project monitoring form, website development
Applications open (promotion via website, WCC & partner social media, councillor networks, community organisations, BIDs, local media, Westminster Culture Network, Communities team, Community Champions, Arts Council listings and council external and departmental e-newsletters)
Applications close after 6-week window.
Review: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preliminary review and information checks: Events and PCPO 2. Officer panel 3. Cabinet Member panel
Announcement
Prep (Public Liability Insurance, Risk Assessment Method Statement, suspensions etc)
Roll out
Evaluation following end of grant monitoring forms completed

Exhibition Road Cultural Group membership

Westminster Council recently joined the Exhibition Road Cultural Group who promote education by enhancing collaboration between the world-leading artistic, scientific and cultural institutions in and around Exhibition Road. Membership enables the council to collaborate with ERCG partners on communications, promotions, access to learning opportunities, the delivery of shared objectives and public realm developments to improve safety, welcome and accessibility. No budget currently exists for this or the Open House subscriptions which have historically been funding from service areas, despite being a corporate commitment.

Public art; heritage trails, walking tours and online access

To help visitors navigate public art, local heritage and commemorative sculpture hotspots such as Whitehall, Parliament Square, Oxford Street District, Mayfair and Soho, the council would commission cultural walking tours by Westminster Guides and Open City focusing on untold stories that represent our diverse communities as well as improve digital access to contextual information and maps via virtual tours and QR code signage.

Local Cultural Education Partnership

This would enable development activities for Westminster to establish a new Local Cultural Education Partnership which would create an Arts Council endorsed framework for increasing partnerships between local schools and arts organisations so there is stronger take up of arts programmes by schoolchildren. A New Direction, who supports Children and Young People's creativity across London, would facilitate planning, partnership development, develop terms of reference and share models from other boroughs.

Open House

The council sponsors the City of Westminster's annual participation in London's Open House festival, which opens buildings of architectural, cultural and community interest to the public. This enables venues from across Westminster to take part including Royal Opera House, Wigmore Hall, The Photographers Gallery and many more. In 2019, 82 venues in Westminster participated in the programme. In the absence of a formal budget, these costs have been absorbed by City Promotions, Events and Filming on an ad-hoc basis.

Governance Arrangements

An officer panel, reporting to relevant Cabinet Members, would be established to oversee spend on individual budget lines and monitor impact and assess against value for money criteria. Updates would be provided to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure and Deputy Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage and the Arts, as required.

The panel will also determine in consultation with relevant cabinet members, KPIs and impact measures for evaluation which will likely be based on footfall, dwell time, visitor spend and increased resident participation.

The panel would include representation from a range of directorates and services – reflecting the relevance and significance of culture across multiple workstreams – including, but not limited to; City Promotions, Events and Filming, Policy, Economy, Placemaking, Planning, Communities and Libraries.

3. Reasons for Decision

By investing in collaborations with arts and community partners the council can enable opportunities to extend free cultural opportunities into public spaces and community settings to enable access and engagement for the economically deprived, as well as schoolchildren, 16-25s, over 65s, ethnic minority groups, and those experiencing disabilities and social isolation

A new dedicated culture budget will enable the delivery of the council's cultural objectives towards a Fairer Westminster, nurturing the wellbeing of local residents while enabling both the visitor economy and local cultural organisations to thrive.

4. Background, including Policy Context

The **value of culture** to Westminster is demonstrated by the following contextual data:

- 27% of all London's jobs in music, performing and visual arts are based in Westminster.
- Cultural participation can reduce social exclusion and increase community cohesion and contribute to making communities feel safer and stronger.
- Research into social prescribing has shown a 37% drop-in GP consultation rates and a 27% reduction in hospital admissions.
- Student participation in structured arts activities can increase cognitive ability by 17% and there are direct benefits to wider educational outcomes.
- Westminster Reveals attracted over 250,000 visitors to the West End last summer.
- Inbound tourism totals £18.6bn in London (Great Britain Tourism survey, 2019) and GLA research indicates 80% of tourists give 'culture' as their main reason for visiting.
- For every £1 in turnover directly generated by the arts and culture industry, an additional £1.24 in output is supported in the wider economy through indirect and induced multipliers.

WCC Cultural Strategy 2021-25

The [WCC Cultural Strategy 2021-25](#), published in February 2021, and informed by the [Access to Culture P&S Task Force report](#) of November 2019, aimed to ensure both local communities and visitors benefit from Westminster's world-class cultural and creative offer and work towards civic renewal following the pandemic. The four priorities are:

1. **Culture for All:** Increase access to culture for all, with a specific focus on reaching residents that encounter physical, social and economic barriers.
2. **Resilient Communities:** Support health and wellbeing programmes, deepening relationships between the council's Families, Public Health, Adult Social Care, and Libraries services, cultural partners and health providers.
3. **Open for Business:** Nurture the creative economy to attract new business and investment by increasing opportunities to engage in creative enterprise and the local cultural offer.
4. **Creative Placemaking:** Ensure cultural activations, public art, creative workspaces and diverse resident programmes are integral to planning, public realm and regeneration activities.

5. Financial Implications

No other projects would be adversely affected by the repurposing of the existing MyWestminster funds, including programmes previously funded by MyWestminster.

Financial implications should be completed by the relevant Finance officer. Please consult Appendix 2 for the appropriate contact to support the drafting of the report. All completed reports should be sent to financereports@westminster.gov.uk for the completion of the financial implications section.

6. Legal Implications

The Council has power under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to allocate funding for the promotion of cultural activities in the borough from My Westminster Fund as is being proposed.

While awarding the funding, the Council needs to be non-discriminatory and transparent in its decision making.

7. Consultation

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact:

Michelle Salerno, Principal Cultural Policy Officer, Innovation and Change, msalerno@westminster.gov.uk

APPENDICES

NB: For individual Cabinet Member reports only

For completion by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure

Declaration of Interest

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed:



Date: 12 October 2022

NAME: **Cllr Tim Roca**

State nature of interest if any

.....
.....

(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled *Repurposing of unallocated MyWestminster funding towards a dedicated budget for cultural activity and Westminster Reveals* and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.



Signed

Cllr Tim Roca, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure

Date 12 October 2022

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:

.....
.....
.....
.....

If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Director of Law, City Treasurer and, if there are resources implications, the Director of People Services (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed

from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.