

# The City is buzzing again

**Juliemma McLoughlin spoke to the Architects' livery company a few weeks ago**

I am going to talk to you about how I think the City is going about the business of building well for the future. I am going to share some examples of what my department is doing right now to build a great framework in readiness for the challenges ahead but also about some of the innovative thinking and programmes we are delivering to make a difference.

First off, I wanted to capture some significant stats on the here and now to provide some context for the future.

The latest City activity. Essentially, footfall is some 2/3rd of pre-pandemic levels rising from 1/3rd from January; Underground activity has risen from 25 per cent of pre-pandemic levels in January around 70 per cent today.

The City is outperforming New York and Hong Kong on all metrics.

Schemes granted by the Planning and Transportation Committee in 2021 delivered:

- 423 000sqm of flexible office floorspace including affordable workspace
- 8,400 sqm flexible retail space
- 7,000 sqm community, skills, training, education, and cultural spaces
- 2 re-located, re-imagined and enhanced public houses
- 7 new pedestrian public routes through sites focussing on City landmarks and improving pedestrian permeability and connectivity
- All schemes resulted in an increase in the extent of ground floor public realm over the existing
- three free to visit elevated public roof terraces, roof gardens and viewing galleries, open 7 days a week
- Over 7,000 long and short stay cycle parking spaces
- All major schemes using off site consolidation and no morning, lunchtime, or evening peak hours vehicular deliveries
- The majority of schemes targeting BREEAM "Outstanding"; all others BREEAM "excellent"
- Sensitive restoration of four listed buildings including public access and heritage interpretation

34 major developments were granted permission last year and contributed over £148 million under S106 and CIL including:

- £11.4 million to affordable housing
- £8.8 million in carbon offsetting
- £3.6 million to local skills and job brokerage
- £1.5 million to street and public realm enhancements
- £1.6 million to security improvements
- £500,000 in cycle improvements and cycle hire
- £41 million to the City's Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- £77 million to the Mayoral CIL

The City is still busy building, but it has faced countless chal-



- City Plan, Strategies, and Innovation
- City Resilience
- City Initiatives that are Leading the Way

lenges in the past and has always emerged as a global destination of choice, so it is right that we think about these unprecedented times and how they have reshaped what our audiences want.

I have been in the role of Executive Director Environment for only 10 months and so far, it has been quite a ride. You need good foundations to build well so my immediate challenge was to bring together three big department into one to create the Environment Department

The new Environment Department brings together the Department of the Built Environment, Open Spaces and Port Health and Public Protection to create the largest department

in the organisation with over 850 members of staff based at 25 different locations within the Square mile, London and beyond.

The Environment Department is now a more responsive and coordinated set of front-line services, providing an improved customer journey and more streamlined functions, so we have our good foundations in readiness to face the challenges ahead of us.

Today, we face hard generational challenges without easy solutions, but crucially, we also have a generational opportunity to redefine our City and safeguard the future for years to come.

For the rest of my time with you, I am going to take you through some of the work we are doing on the City Plan, our key strategies, and the innovative work we are doing on things like Heat and Wind mapping and Air Quality. I will then show you some of the things we are doing to make sure we weather the next storm and are more resilient and also how City initiatives are taking a leading role in making us ready for the future.

The Planning Teams have begun working on a new City Plan that needs to have innovation and climate change at its heart. There are no easy answers in London anymore, so the plan needs to work hard to address recovery, health inequality across the City and work with colleagues and partners to tackle the wider causes of poor health by substantially improving the City's air quality, promoting the recreational benefits of a healthy lifestyle, and ensuring inclusive access to good quality open spaces and recre-

**"London is getting its buzz back which is part of its appeal and as workers return in larger numbers every week, the feeling of connectivity is strengthened"**



Juliemma McLoughlin is Executive Director Environment, City of London Corporation

>>> ational opportunities. We will look at thermal comfort, wind effects, radiated light, and produce guidance notes to make clear what public benefits means and looks like in the Square Mile.

We also need to re-set our City Plan and strategies to deal with the challenges the pandemic has left behind and shape our services to deal with the changing needs of the City's diverse communities.

The City Corporation consulted on a draft City Plan between March and May 2021:

1,400 comments have been received, many supportive, but objections and concerns on:

- Tall building locations
- Impact of the pandemic on office and retail demand
- Priority for Net Zero to reflect City's Climate Action Strategy
- Exploring any potential for further supply of housing
- Need for the Plan to address health and inclusivity in more holistic way

There is an enhanced focus on improving our engagement with all stakeholders (including residents, businesses, and developers) and we will be proposing changes to our Statement of Community Involvement to enhance engagement in consulting on schemes, policies and strategies. We have also set up a dedicated Partnership and Engagement team to co-ordinate such engagement. This will include engagement with the Business Improvement Districts which have become a significant dynamic in the City.

City Plan consultation aligns with principles set out in the City's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

The current SCI dates from 2016 but is being updated and will be consulted on in the autumn.

Consultation will ask stakeholders how they want to be consulted on planning matters and will cover issues such as:

- Format of consultation - in person meetings/seminars?
- Use of digital technology
- Use of social media
- Ambition to be inclusive and at leading edge in consultation procedures
- Plan is being refined to reflect issues raised at consultation
- Greater emphasis on inclusivity and accessibility
- Greater emphasis on climate change
- Working patterns – through business focus group & liaison with representative bodies, looking at:
  - o Change in working patterns/hybrid/remote
  - o Flight to quality buildings and locations
- Aim for draft Plan for consultation spring 2023
- Public examination late 2023
- Adoption mid 2024

The transport plan is being updated at the same time as the City Plan so both documents will come forward together.

Our Transport Strategy sets out how we propose to design

and manage the City's streets over the next 25 years to ensure the Square Mile remains a great place to live, work, study, and visit.

**Our vision**

We want our streets to inspire – for the City to be known as a place with high quality public realm and innovative approaches to creating more people friendly streets. This can play a part in helping to attract investment, talent, and visitors.

We also want the day-to-day experience of using our streets to be as enjoyable as possible – the walk from tube to desk, for example, should be a great street.

We want to capitalise on our world class connections – recently boosted by the opening of the Elizabeth line.

And we want the City to be accessible to all; our streets and transport networks must be inclusive environments where everyone feels comfortable and confident travelling.

To achieve this vision, the Strategy includes ambitious proposals to:

- Prioritise the needs of people walking, make streets more accessible and deliver world-class public realm
- Make the most efficient and effective use of street space by significantly reducing motor traffic, including the number of delivery and servicing vehicles in the Square Mile
- Eliminate death and serious injuries from our streets through measures to deliver safer streets and reduce speeds
- Enable more people to choose to cycle by making conditions for cycling in the Square Mile safer and more pleasant
- Improve air quality and reduce noise by encouraging and enabling the switch to zero emission capable vehicles

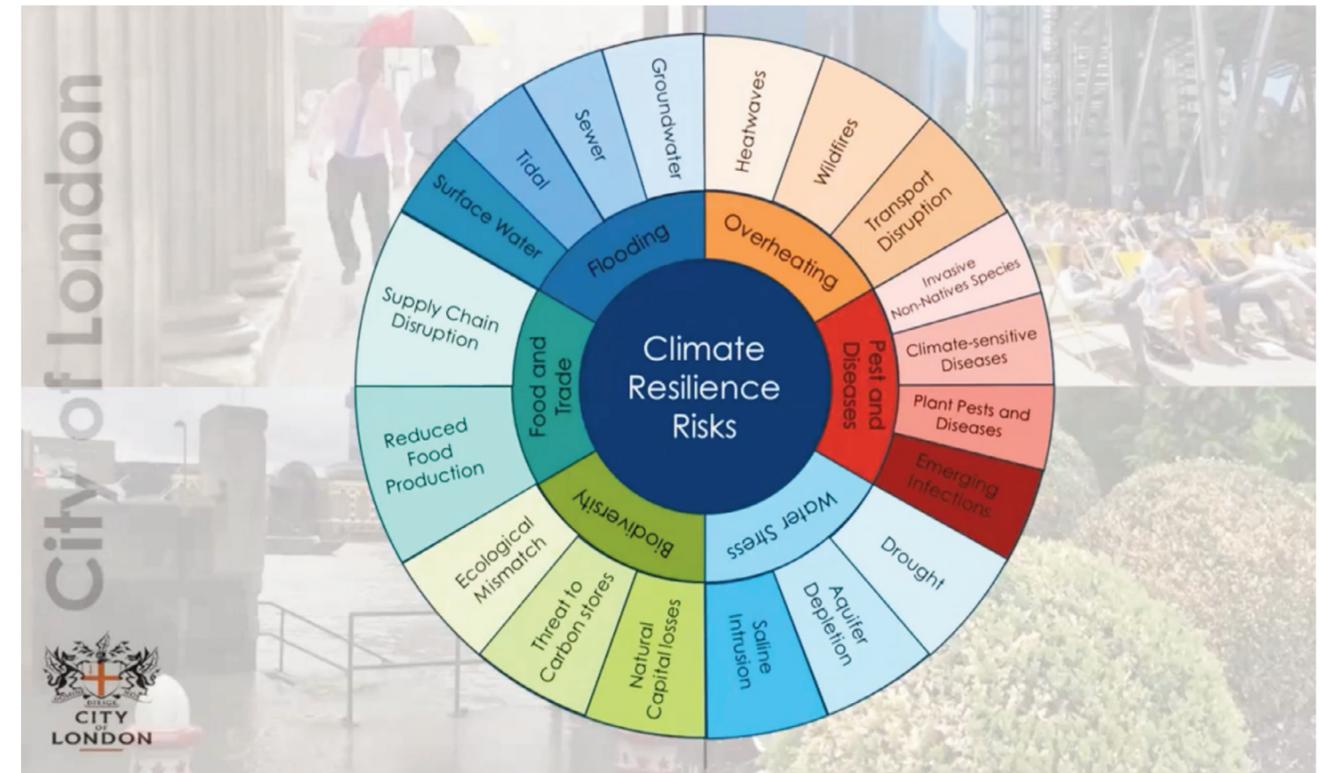
These proposals are as important now as they were when the Strategy was adopted in 2019.

High quality streets and public spaces are a key part of the City's offer to residents, workers, businesses, and visitors. We must move quickly to deliver a healthier and more inclusive environment for all.

The first phase of the Pedestrian Priority Programme is focused on retaining some of the temporary changes delivered through our Covid-19 response. This has the potential to accelerate delivery of both the Transport Strategy and our Climate Action Strategy.

Experimental traffic orders are currently in place on Cheapside, Threadneedle Street, Old Broad Street, Kings Street, King William Street and Old Jewry. Chancery Lane will follow shortly. The measures are being retained on an experimental basis in the first instance, providing the opportunity for consultation and monitoring prior to making any permanent changes.

We expect to begin construction of the All Change at Bank project in the autumn. This will further improve the experience of walking around Bank junction by closing some arms of the junc-



tion to motor traffic, widening pavements, and reducing the width of crossings.

The project will also create a number of new public spaces at the heart of the City.

We will soon consult on the potential to introduce a permanent zero emission street on Beech Street, building on the experimental scheme, shown here, which concluded in September last year.

Restricting use of the street to zero emission capable vehicles only led to a significant improvement in air quality. These kinds of restrictions help encourage the adoption of zero emission vehicles, but we must also enable the switch by providing charging infrastructure.

I am pleased to say that the final checks on our rapid charging hub in Baynard House car park are underway. The hub, which has six rapid chargers and capacity for a further four, is due to open imminently.

Cleaner vehicles are part of the answer but overall, we want to see a reduction in the number of motor vehicles – of all types – using our streets.

Our aim is a 50 per cent reduction by 2044, which would replicate the reduction that has happened over the last 20 years. Shown in the bottom line on this graph.

You will see that drops in traffic have tended to coincide with major policy interventions, such as the introduction of the congestion charge, or global events such as the global recession in 2008.

It remains to be seen what the long-term impact of the pandemic will be on traffic levels, but we expect to see a sustained drop as we have previously.

You will also note on this graph the very significant growth in people cycling over the same time period. Something we are keen to continue by making our streets safer and more attractive places

to cycle, allowing more people to choose this great mode of transport. We will also continue to expand cycle parking across the City both on-street and in new developments.

New technologies might also play a key role in reducing the use of cars and taxis for travel. We are participating in the London E-scooter Hire Trial and have worked closely with TfL and London Councils to ensure the safe and appropriate use of hired e-scooters in the Square Mile.

The City's streets not only provide the backdrop to everyday life in the City but can also provide a great space for events that bring fun and playfulness.

A more active role in curating activations and placemaking is something we know we need to do to support the City's ongoing recovery.

I am looking forward to working with the City's BIDs and others to support the use of streets as part of the Square Mile's wider cultural and leisure offer to residents, workers, and visitors. More on BIDs later.

Moving on to our innovative City Lighting Strategy which provides full and flexible control of the LED fittings.

The Strategy looks at a shift of thinking in celebrating and balancing of light and darkness.

Brightest is not necessarily the best, and thanks to remotely operated lighting which complements the look of historic buildings, we can provide the right light in the right place and at the right time, improving energy usage and helping to tackle light pollution.

This also allows us to improve the environmental impact of light, health & wellbeing, and to protect wildlife – without compromising safety and security.

The strategy looks at lighting qualities: intensity, colour, scale, darkness, verticality, and balance. It also provides key recommen-

## Heat Stress from Climate Change: projected heat stress areas



>>> dations regarding technical, functional, and environmental requirements

The strategy proposes an approach based on Character Areas: The City is made up of a series of character areas, each with distinct attributes which contributes to the experience of being in the City. The Strategy therefore aims to accentuate and celebrate the unique qualities of each area in maintaining some distinction after dark. This is to help avoid homogeneity and enhance people's experience of the public realm at night.

The Strategy has identified 12 character areas and here is the example of Culture Mile.

Led by the City of London Corporation, Culture Mile is a learning destination and cultural district that stretches from Farringdon to Moorgate.

Culture Mile is working with a range of local businesses and communities to create a vibrant area in the north west corner of the Square Mile and an area where we want to celebrate the rich history and architecture, as well as support the night-time economy and working activities (the Smithfield Meat Market) on a day-to-day basis.

And have the possibility to organise "Special Event Lighting" to make the area more welcoming, support the City recovery post pandemic and the objectives of Destination City.

The City has been delivering many innovative lighting projects including Illuminated River and has recently announced that it is looking at replacing the 25 year old current lighting system of St Paul's Cathedral with a new energy efficient LED scheme. (The City has looked after the external Lighting of St Paul's since 1966).

The new lighting scheme will enhance the Cathedral's night-time appearance and has the potential to deliver a 68 per cent reduction in annual energy and maintenance costs and a 66 per cent reduction in CO2 emissions. The design delivers objectives of the City Lighting Strategy and the Climate Action Strategy.

We have secured some funding for the relighting of St Paul's Cathedral – further external sponsorship is still to be sorted.

Complementing the Local Plan and its guidance notes, the City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy was adopted in

October 2020 with some tough goals to achieve.

- Net zero by 2027 in the City Corporation's operations
- Net zero by 2040 across the City Corporation's full value chain
- Net zero by 2040 in the Square Mile
- Climate resilience in our buildings, public spaces, and infrastructure

Our strategy pushes the boundaries with stretching targets for carbon emission reduction but also preparing the City for the climate risks we are facing from hotter drier summers, warmer wetter winters, more frequent extreme weather events and sea level rise.

We have identified six main risks: flooding, overheating, new and emerging pests & diseases, water stress, biodiversity loss and disruption to food trade and infrastructure. The outer ring of this risks wheel shows some of the issues we need to address through our architecture and public realm.

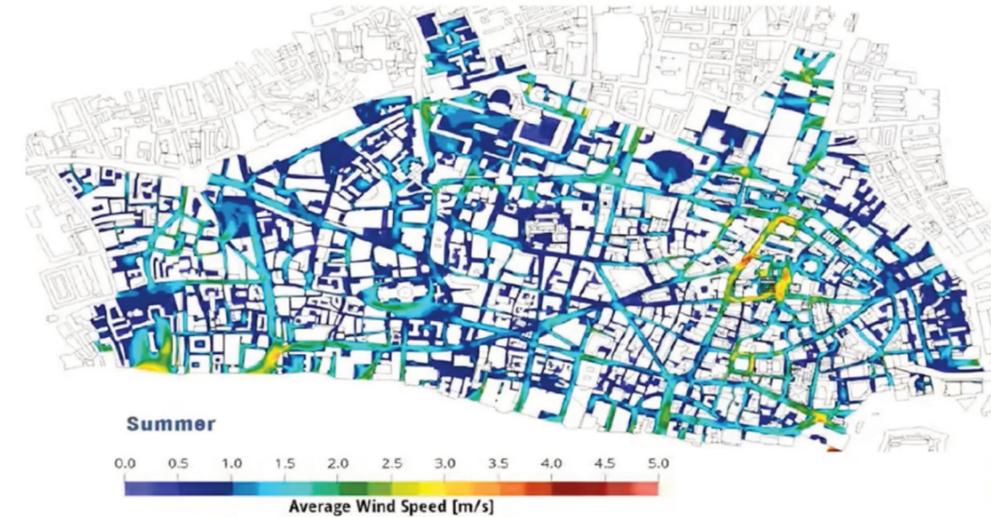
I outline some of the work we have progressed to address these climate risks. Firstly, our Riverside Strategy provides a framework to ensure that the City remains safe from sea level rise. The flood defences along the riverside will need to be raised by up to one metre later this century. This has obvious implications for riverside developments which architects need to address in their designs.

The riverside strategy will require flood defence raising to be phased in over the coming decades as developments come forward or repairs are needed to existing flood defences. Integration of key benefits such as biodiversity enhancement and accessibility will be key to successful evolution of the riverside to address climate risks

We are working with a variety of academic and commercial partners to install a network of sensors to help us monitor the overall impact of climate change in the Square Mile and to evaluate the interventions we are piloting. As far as possible this data will be open source so that others can benefit from our findings

Even before our Climate Action Strategy, the City was carrying out internationally ground-breaking work using complex algorithms and data sets to enhance our understanding of the

## Heat Stress from Climate Change (Cooling effect of wind)



microclimatic qualities, resilience, and comfort of our public spaces.

Our work on Thermal Comfort combined data sets on climate and microclimate to gain a holistic overview in the "real feel" and comfort of the City's public realm throughout the day, months, and season to inform planning decisions and policies. In particular we are keen to better understand which parts of the City are likely to experience heat stress during the projected hotter summers due to climate change.

The data sets we have merged are sun to ground, temperature and humidity by season using climate models. The other key data set is wind as shown here, which, although unwelcomed during the winter months resulting in cold stress conditions is a welcomed ally in addressing heat stress. You can see how wind conditions in the City overall is fairly tranquil, but the City cluster area of tall buildings is windier

The heat stress map on a hot summer's day from 2020. This excludes tree cover, so we are able to understand the baseline conditions.

There are significant heat stress areas, but you will also see that the City cluster area is more comfortable on hot days as a result of the wind conditions you saw in the earlier slide as well as the shading impact of the tall buildings

The forecasted 2080 heat stress map reflects the projected global temperature rise in London. The heat stress areas are more pronounced, but again, the City cluster presents a shadier and breezier area in the hot summer months. This understanding allows us to develop a tree planting strategy and other shading and cooling initiatives.

We are also working with the British Geological Survey on our Cubic Mile below ground mapping project which will help us to identify where there are opportunities for climate resilience measures such as Sustainable Drainage (SuDS), tree planting and cool spaces for refuge from increasing summer temperatures. These projects will assist the City in evolving strategies to ensure our public realm is resilient to Climate change.

The new Environment Department brought Gardens and Cleansing together in a merger that enables identification of com-

mon issues around:

- Maximising resources
  - Addressing anti-social behaviour
  - Fleet optimisation
  - Contract management
  - Maintenance of the street scene
  - Utilisation of smart technology and data to report and resolve issues
  - Identify "hotspots" of anti-social behaviour, streets and areas below standard, litter etc. to better adapt and flex resources
- We have got some smart tech as well:
- Big belly bins let us know when they are full, push jobs directly to crews in-cab systems and are reported on using KPIs
  - Mobile devices and platforms can be used to report issues which feed into business information software

This is particularly relevant in the current circumstances where we are moving away from Monday – Friday, 9-5 which created predictable patterns and rush hours.

Flexible working means that patterns are unpredictable, and we have to be able to better adapt resources to respond to peaks and troughs.

Having all teams under one operational umbrella means that issues can be addressed collaboratively.

For example, public realm improvement schemes can be designed with input from City Gardens on appropriate planting to consider climate adaption/mitigation as well as considerations for ongoing maintenance requirements.

Schemes can also be looked at to prevent careful littering, ensure cleansing can be carried out using existing types of equipment and schedules, and the equipment used does not damage materials.

The teams can also continue with educating residents through different avenues.

There is still a place for face-to-face engagement – we host tech take back events where residents and workers can drop off old electrical equipment which can be handled safely, securely wiped and donated to charity.

Give and take days where residents can donate and collect any

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>>> unused items. These events have proved extremely popular and provide a valuable touchpoint with communities.

We will also step up a gear when we talk with businesses to promote best practice. Some of the biggest blue-chip companies in the world have their head offices in the Square Mile, our CCAS rewards and shares examples of best practice in resource management, air quality, climate change etc. encouraging companies to compete against each other and push the envelope about what is possible.

The City as a place of business is more important than ever as a driver of the national economy so needs to be supported by City Corporation services that enable continual innovation and the development of new business areas, including in tech and creative sectors. New sectors will be a big focus, so we encourage use of B grade floor space with SMEs, creative and tech sectors who enjoy the quirkiness the city offers.

Four new BIDS with a possible fifth in the Autumn gives us a great opportunity to develop a strategic partnership to bring together senior representatives from the City Corporation and the BID levy paying community, representing a range of business sectors that fall within the footprint of the four City BIDs as well as the CPA.

The BIDs Strategic group will help to provide direction for the future of the Square Mile, respond to local priorities and engage more effectively with local concerns and the wider stakeholder community. The partnership will promote collaboration and provide opportunities to steer the strategy and vision for the City of London.

The group will be an influencer, not an operational organisation. It will bring together a selected group of business members to work in partnership, identifying strategic city challenges that will benefit from collaboration, and prioritising them based on where the partnership can add most value. We can look at how we spend CIL and develop some priorities.

The deliverables and outcomes will, of course, need to focus on the BID themes.

We have had our first meeting of the City BIDs Strategic Partnership and agreed the Terms of Reference, so we are up and running with Keith Bottomley, Deputy Chairman of Policy, as Chair.

**The City of London concession Wi-Fi and network design to support 5G**

The physical network has been designed with users' different needs in mind, including the use of dark fibre. Our current pilot will confirm the design suitability and will deliver 5G in time to support smart city initiatives in the future.

It is important that we have minimal disruption for the City.

So, all parties (e.g. cabinet installation contractors, ancient monument archaeologists etc) will complete works in tandem,

making the most of the permits secured and reducing city disruption. The network design has factored in the future upgrades, or works that will be needed in the next decade, that can be carried out in days rather than weeks or months.

Another important factor was the efficient use of the existing street assets so wherever possible the network uses existing signage, wireless or street lighting poles by multiple mobile network operators.

**Goals**

- Provide improved world leading wireless connectivity - WIFI, 4G & 5G coverage
- To ensure the Square Mile is amongst the first to adopt full 5G coverage
- Free CoL WIFI network deployed as part of the Concession agreement
- Installation of 5G network on Queen Victoria Street

**Developing a Circular Economy Strategy to replace our existing Waste Strategy is also a key priority.**

Our current waste strategy mainly dealt with domestic waste which is a very small amount in comparison to the amount of commercial and construction waste generated in the City.

The new strategy will have a much broader scope and look at how we can firstly ensure that our own operations are being delivered utilising circular economy principles: through staff training and awareness raising, ensure staff are aware of what CE is, and get them to think how this can be applied in their areas

The Strategy will also look at how we can influence others including developers through Circular Economy Statement feedback, encouraging the use of material passports and material exchanges.

Procurement through our supply chain- inserting CE clauses in contract specifications.

So, this first project case study is really nice. As part of the Thames Tideway tunnel project, there are a number of large out-fall pipes being constructed, one of which is in the City at Blackfriars bridge, which involves the removal of several hundred granite blocks, up to a metre wide and weighing about a ton each - some of which are architecturally significant.

The team really wanted to find new uses, so we explored numerous avenues including cutting them up and using them for granite paving sets in the City, using salvage companies to place them on various building projects and even the possibility of harnessing the lithium in them for batteries.

But following several meetings, we have an agreement with Elmley Nature reserve on the isle of Sheppey. The blocks will be transported there by river and used as sea defences, bird hides and a visitor centre

Also, in June we published a draft Planning Advice Note set-



ting out a more disciplined approach for exploring options of re-use, retrofit before demolition is considered to respond to the whole life carbon of a building or scheme. This is a key priority for us.

**This next example is about what we do to provide sustainable clothing to our outdoor staff.**

The new uniforms they will be wearing will be made from recycled plastic bottles, made in factories using renewable energy and they have a system in place for recycling old uniforms.

This next project comes from a circular economy training day and working with Veolia who deal with our waste collections and disposals of recyclable materials. The team came up with the idea of using cans collected from City residents in the façade of the building which sits adjacent to our waste transfer station at Walbrook Wharf!

Now, whilst there could be some arguments about if a can is better being turned back into a can or the façade of the building, the real aim of this project was to encourage discussion and challenge traditional thinking on what a building material can be.

We are also hopeful that we are going to be using City residents' food waste to provide the compost for the living wall.

In September 2020, the City Corporation commissioned an Independent Review to set out a renewed vision for the City to be a leading destination for workers, visitors, and residents. Set in the context of Covid, the Review recognised the incredible challenges the pandemic continues to present for the City's businesses and its negative impact on the overall vibrancy of the Square Mile.

Our new Destination City initiative responds to this challenge by focuseing on Visitor Economy sectors:

- Culture
- Hospitality
- Retail

- Heritage
- Sport
- Tourism

So, I have reached the topping out part of my time with you.

I think you can see that my first ten months have been busy, and I hope this has given you a glimpse at how I am planning to build well for the future City of London.

The signs of recovery are already there to see so we can allow ourselves to be more optimistic as the dark times pass. For nearly a millennium the City Corporation has sat at the heart of our nation's capital and has endured. It should not be a surprise that we are bouncing back strongly again and through all our collective efforts it will be a better City. More enlightened, welcoming, more socially and economically inclusive, celebrating diversity, cleaner and greener, more sustainable with a richer economic base merging its key business function with culture, retail, F&B, with more visitors and a dynamic vibrancy to become a seven day City.

London is getting its buzz back which is part of its appeal and as workers return in larger numbers every week, the feeling of connectivity is strengthened, but I want to make sure the quantity and quality of new development, meets the growing needs of business which will support and strengthen opportunities for the continued collaboration and clustering of businesses that is vital to the City's operation and it's pre-eminence.

Now is not the time to be insular or elitist. The City must set the pace for being welcoming to all and broaden our appeal so we are welcoming people to The City who until now think we are only a place of work. We are so much more than that so I want both UK and international visitors to enjoy our world class architecture, heritage and cultural assets. We need to ensure the City is not a Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday location so looking after our SMEs, BIDs and young dynamic workforce is all part of our future and wider relevance to London and the UK. ■