

# BID PROPOSAL



CITY  
RIVER  
PARTNERSHIP

City River  
Partnership

# BID PROPOSAL

## Foreword

In 2024, the City of London Corporation commissioned a feasibility study to test the appetite of local business to work together in the area that has become known as the 'City River Partnership'.

The study explored whether the business community would support the development of a Business Improvement District (BID) along this iconic stretch of the river. As a partnership, we have welcomed this opportunity and brought together a diverse mix of organisations, including property owners, occupiers and St Magnus the Martyr Church to develop a bold vision for a transformational Business Improvement District. This shared vision will not only unlock the full potential of this strategically important area, but will make it a beautiful and inspiring place to be, as befits one of the most recognisable locations in the world. Every world class city has a 'shopfront' and the river and north bank from Tower Bridge, past Monument and along to Blackfriars Bridge is undoubtedly the 'shopfront' of the City of London. It is the view that everyone knows. We need to make it beautiful, safe, purposeful and of service to the whole community.

The publication of this proposal marks a defining moment in the partnership's journey – setting the stage for the Summer 2026 ballot and a new era of collective action and place-based investment.

Establishing a BID here is far more than a procedural step – it is a catalyst for long-term transformation at the very heart of the City. The Thames has always been a defining feature of London's identity – a place of connection, commerce, and culture. Now, the City River area stands poised to become a stunning exemplar for world cities everywhere, a dynamic engine of regeneration and renewal. This BID offers a powerful platform to accelerate growth, attract sustained investment, and deliver high-impact enhancements to the urban environment – while responding decisively to the complex and evolving challenges facing businesses and communities in today's rapidly changing world.

This is a vote of confidence in the City River area, with a strong development pipeline, continued investment, and a growing City workforce, the momentum is clear and we can harness this energy to accelerate the delivery of change. The City of London Corporation continues to advance development proposals that will contribute towards meeting a projected demand of 1.2 million square metres of Grade A office space by 2040 – equivalent to around 150 football pitches, with hundreds of thousands of square metres already approved and under construction. The City's vibrancy cannot come from business alone

and the interconnectedness of our working and personal lives means that creating places that we love both day and night, 7 days a week requires thoughtful attention to the needs of all that are living, working and visiting here - by 'all', we must include wildlife and nature and the habitat this provides as well as the built environment.

This proposal outlines how a BID, in close collaboration with the City Corporation, can play a central role in shaping a dynamic, inclusive, and future-ready business environment – one that reflects the ambitions of our stakeholders and the unique character of the City River area.

The absolute priority for the board is a detailed and comprehensive feasibility study into Lower and Upper Thames Street; the clear consensus is that flow to and from the riverfront is severely impacted by this major artery. The board recognises that solutions to this issue are likely to be complex and long-term, however, understanding what the options could be will allow the BID to work closely with all stakeholders in truly regenerating and transforming this location.

The success of the Strand Aldwych project further west which was spearheaded by the Northbank BID is a really good local example of how a collective approach, working with a multitude of diverse stakeholders, can effect major change in the area, in turn transforming one of London's busiest and most polluted streets into a vibrant destination.

As we look to the future, the opportunity before us is clear: to shape a district that reflects the ambition, energy, and potential of the City River area itself. The City River BID is our vehicle to deliver that change – through investment, collaboration, and bold thinking.

We are ready to lead on your behalf and with your support at the ballot we will turn this bold vision into a reality that serves the whole community and our unique natural environment.

**Jo Upton, Chair**  
City River Partnership



# Background

London exists today because of its frontage along the Thames River from Temple and Blackfriars to the Tower of London.

This section of river, today known as the City River area, was the main point of international trade and exchange from the foundation of Roman Londinium, and over the centuries that have followed has been the single factor that has driven the development of the markets, guilds and institutions that now form the City of London.

For over 2,000 years, the City's economic success depended on the Thames' ability to move people, goods, and power. Medieval quays such as Queenhithe and Billingsgate, located along this stretch of the Thames, were once among the busiest ports in Europe, handling the food, fuel, and raw materials essential to London's growth as a commercial centre. The riverside is London's original high street.

**Not only is the City River area a competitive asset that differentiates the City of London from other global centres, it also provides an unrivalled platform for:**

- Cultural programming
- Visitor engagement and attraction
- Showcasing high-quality public realm investment

The City River area enhances the Square Mile's investment offer by providing a compelling, authentic narrative rooted in trade, law, and global exchange which is reflected in the City's modern role. Furthermore, global firms looking to locate in the Square Mile benefit from the City River area's embodiment of the ideas of longevity, stability, and international influence.

In March 2024, with support from the City Corporation, a big step forward was taken towards realising the potential of this area when a voluntary business partnership was established to deliver an initial programme of activities around shared objectives, and to investigate the appetite for and feasibility of establishing a business improvement district in this dynamic area.

## What the City River Partnership has achieved

Since its formation, the City River Partnership has focused on building a strong foundation for place identity and destination awareness despite limited financial resources. At this early stage, partnership efforts have centred on developing relationships with local businesses, charities, and ward Members elected to represent the area within the City of London. This has resulted in the creation of an extensive business database spanning large corporates to independent traders. The City River Partnership has used this database to create a solid communications platform.

Engagement with businesses has highlighted a strong need for more food, drink, and leisure options across the footprint and the development of a more diverse day to evening offer. Currently, limited permeability and low footfall make commercial viability challenging, but expanding food and beverage, and leisure uses would boost vibrancy, attract workers, and create the kind of curiosity and interest that attracts visitors.

Increasing footfall and spend in the local economy has been supported by a series of events and activations since 2024. This included a high-profile collaboration with the Thames Festival Trust on the Thames Lens photography competition which provides an opportunity for non-professional photographers to display their work celebrating the Thames landscapes, wildlife, people, and industries while at the same time animating the public realm. The City River Partnership also delivered a programme of festive events in 2024 and 2025 aimed at workers and visitors, including lunchtime workshops for workers and a festive trail designed to support retailers and hospitality venues and highlight local heritage assets such as St Magnus Church and St James Garlickhythe. Alongside this, the City River Partnership has embedded ESG and workforce wellbeing through initiatives such as the City Summer of Sport in 2024 and 2025.

Safety, stewardship, and inclusion have been central to the City River Partnership's activity since its inception with a dedicated ambassador scheme. The City River Partnership has worked closely with the City of London Police to deliver phone marking activations across the area with 500 devices marked using tamper proof, traceable technology to deter theft, improve recovery rates, and support stronger enforcement outcomes.

## A Business Improvement District to Transform the City River area

Although the City River area has a rich history and has long played a pivotal role in the development of the Square Mile, the area has not benefitted from a collective vision in recent years. While the recent completion of the Riverside Walk now allows continuous movement along the full length of the river, the route is not always obvious or easy to navigate, and access from the wider City remains constrained by the major east-west transport corridors of Upper and Lower Thames Street and to a lesser extent Cannon Street. These heavily trafficked vehicular routes limit permeability and make the City River area feel disconnected from the rest of the Square Mile. As a result, the City River area has yet to realise its full potential as a destination and attraction.

The City River Partnership believes that through the collective action of businesses in the area and by working in partnership with the City Corporation and its institutions, it is possible to regenerate and

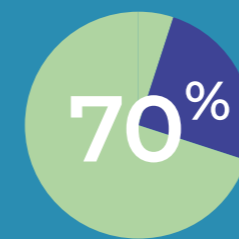
re-imagine this important part of the Square Mile. However, the partnership model that has been delivering on improving the business environment has limitations that a business improvement district (BID) does not.

**The advantages of applying a BID model to the City River area include:**

- Access to a **fixed five-year revenue stream**, enabling targeted investment to address priorities identified by the local business community and the City Corporation.
- A **five-year funding horizon** that supports medium-term decision-making and enables delivery of complex projects, including public realm improvements, events, and activations.
- The deepening of the impact of an organisation that is **business led and locally governed**, and the creation of a strong collective voice to lobby, advocate for, and strategically position the City River area.
- **Financial and operational agility** which allows funding and support to be mobilised quickly and transparently.
- The promotion of a **collegiate approach to regeneration**, that leverages business expertise, stakeholder relationships, local authority leadership and community insight to deliver change that could not be achieved by individual organisations alone.
- Delivery of targeted additional services through **enhancing, complementing, and accelerating** local authority policies and programmes with business-led investment.
- **Preservation of the local business ecosystem**, in a way that recognises the critical role of small businesses – particularly pubs, independent shops, and hospitality venues – in the character and success of the area.



# The City River area in Numbers



of respondents explicitly support the establishment of a BID

A Perception Analysis conducted in August 2025 gathered responses from **93** businesses across the City River area, representing a strong response rate from the estimated **190** businesses that will be eligible for the BID levy. A further **350** smaller businesses are also located in the area but fall below the proposed rateable value threshold for the BID levy. Data from Costar estimated that businesses in the City River area employed **49,000** people, of whom **97%** work in the corporate sector and **3%** in hospitality and retail.

Across the whole City River area, respondents consistently identified lack of green space (**69%**) and conflict between road users (**61%**) as the most pressing issues, followed by air quality (**41%**) and traffic congestion (**40%**). These challenges are closely linked, reflecting an environment that is heavily dominated by motorised traffic, with limited greenery and competing demands between vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. While the aggregate data highlights common challenges, significant variation emerges when results are analysed by zone.

In and around the Blackfriars area, the lack of green space is a key concern, and was cited by **78%** of corporate and **60%** of hospitality businesses. Conflict between road users is also a major issue, particularly for hospitality operators. Traffic congestion and air quality complete the top four concerns. The data indicates that businesses in the Blackfriars area associate environmental quality and movement as interlinked problems, shaped by commuter pressure and the area's role as both a working environment and visitor gateway.

The Cannon Street area is characterised by conflict between road users, closely followed by lack of green space. Traffic congestion is significant, underscoring the role of Cannon Street as an inter-modal hub in a critical east-west movement corridor where safety, accessibility, and environmental relief are sought simultaneously.

On the eastern end of the City River area near the Tower of London, the need for greening is most acute, with **85%** of corporate respondents and **50%** of hospitality businesses identifying lack of green space as a priority. Hospitality businesses in this part of the City River area also report very high concern around traffic congestion (**100%**), reflecting operational impacts on servicing, deliveries, and customer access. While conflict between road users is less prominent than in Cannon Street, the data shows that the Tower zone faces compounded pressure from high visitor volumes, congestion, and limited visible greenery.

When asked about preferred initiatives, the strongest support across the City River area was for more greening and planting, followed by placemaking installations such as seating, public art, and planting. In the Blackfriars area over **80%** of both hospitality and corporate sectors supported greening initiatives, while the focus in the central area of the City River area was on events and street level activations (**61%**) and placemaking interventions (**54%**), reflecting demand to animate what is currently perceived as a functional corridor. On the Eastern edge of the City River area, greening again scores among both corporates (**85%**) and hospitality (**83%**), alongside strong support for placemaking and heritage-related interventions.

Beyond physical change, businesses surveyed also expressed strong demand for improvements in public realm management, placemaking, safety, identity, and engagement. Survey findings record that **83%** of respondents identified riverfront activation, greening, events, and improved cleanliness as key public realm priorities. In addition, **84%** of surveyed businesses highlighted events, activities, improved access, and retail provision as factors that would encourage them to spend more time in the area. On safety, **77%** supported homelessness initiatives, **74%** backed visible security patrols, and **42%** prioritised improved lighting. Survey questions on identity and promotion revealed overwhelming support for seasonal events (**91%**), on-street activations (**88%**), and improved digital and social media promotion (**86%**).

Finally, **70%** of respondents explicitly support the establishment of a BID, indicating strong backing for a structured, collective delivery model.



**In summary, the Perception Analysis revealed the following key findings which form the basis for a proposed programme of activity for a future City River BID:**

- Businesses across the City River area consistently identify limited green space, conflicts between different road users, traffic congestion, and air quality as the primary challenges affecting day-to-day experience and attractiveness of the area.
- Activation and placemaking are seen as essential to increasing footfall and dwell time, with events, cultural activity, improved access, and better connections to the river highlighted as key drivers of vibrancy beyond core working hours.
- Safety and stewardship are viewed as foundational, with businesses emphasising the importance of visible presence, better lighting, cleaner environments, and coordinated approaches to managing anti-social behaviour and supporting vulnerable people.
- Businesses show clear support for coordinated engagement, advocacy, and identity-building initiatives, recognising the value of a collective framework to represent their interests, deliver shared priorities, and strengthen the City River area's profile as a distinct and competitive location.

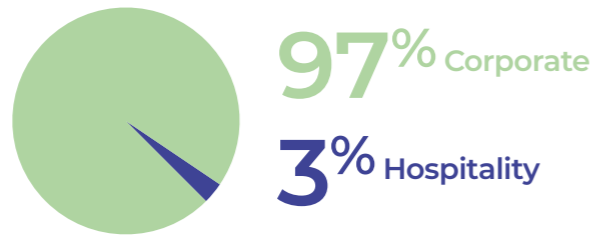


# The Numbers

Throughout the Summer 2025, a comprehensive consultation exercise was undertaken in a form of a Perception Analysis.

## Employees in the area

### Split of workers by sector



## Top 4 issues in the area



Overall

## Section 1: Blackfriars Zone

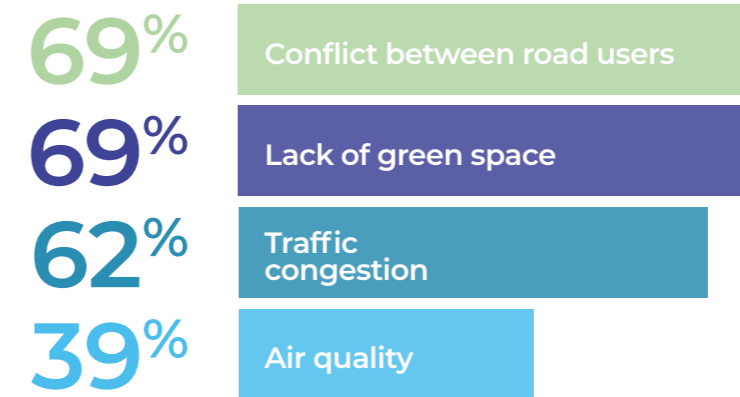


Corporate



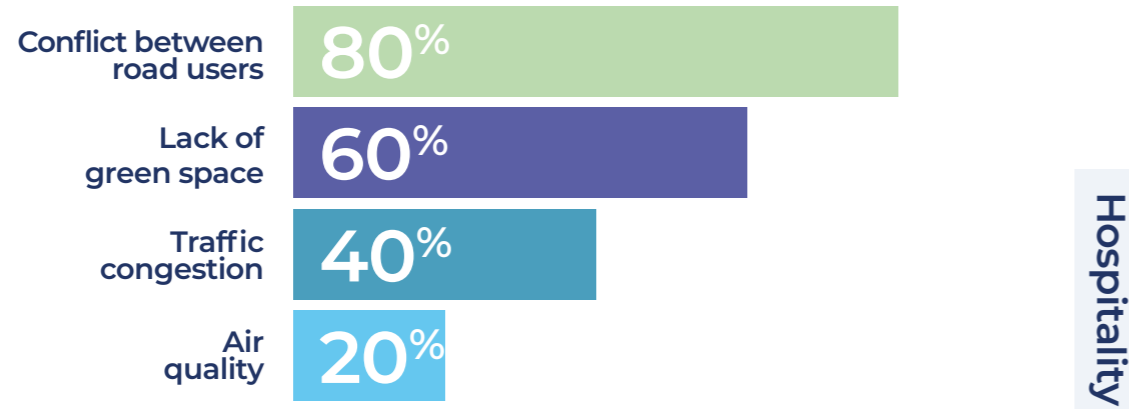
Hospitality

## Section 2: Cannon Street

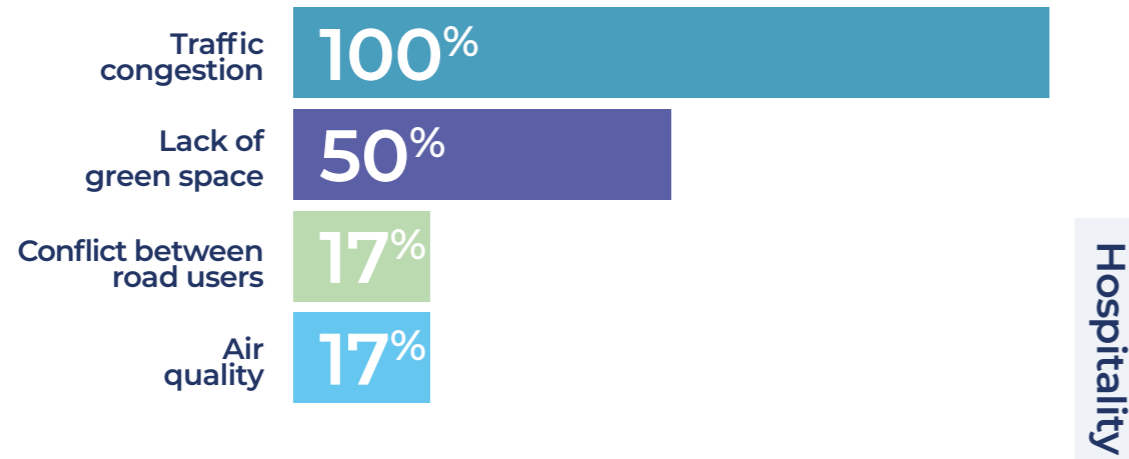
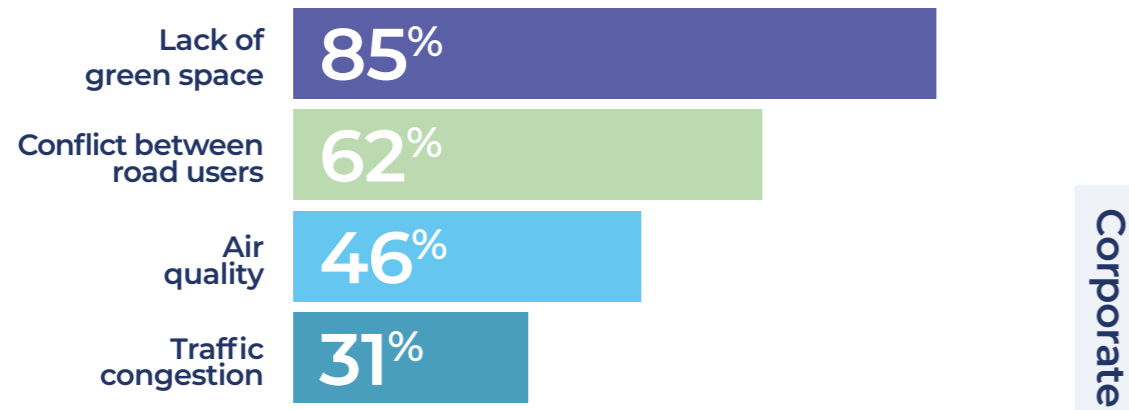


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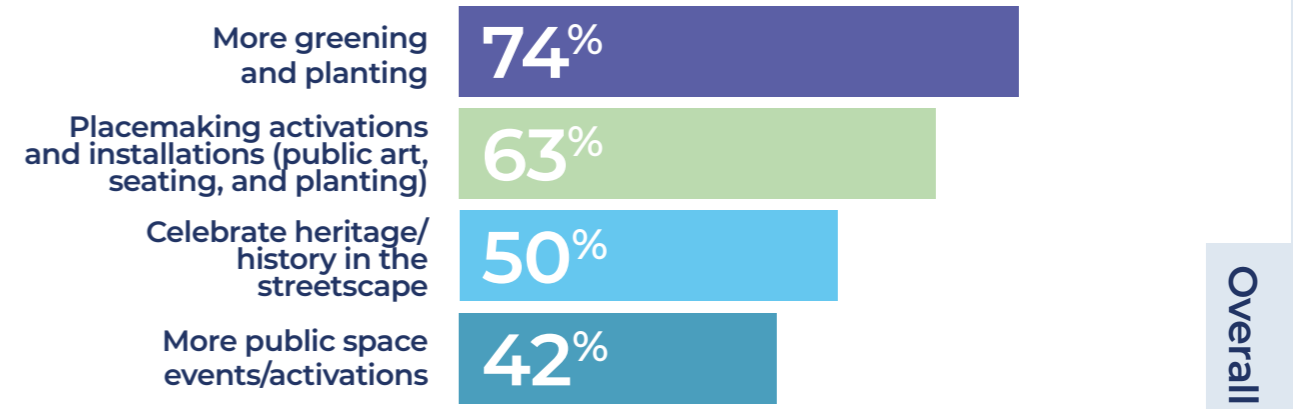
### Section 2: Cannon Street



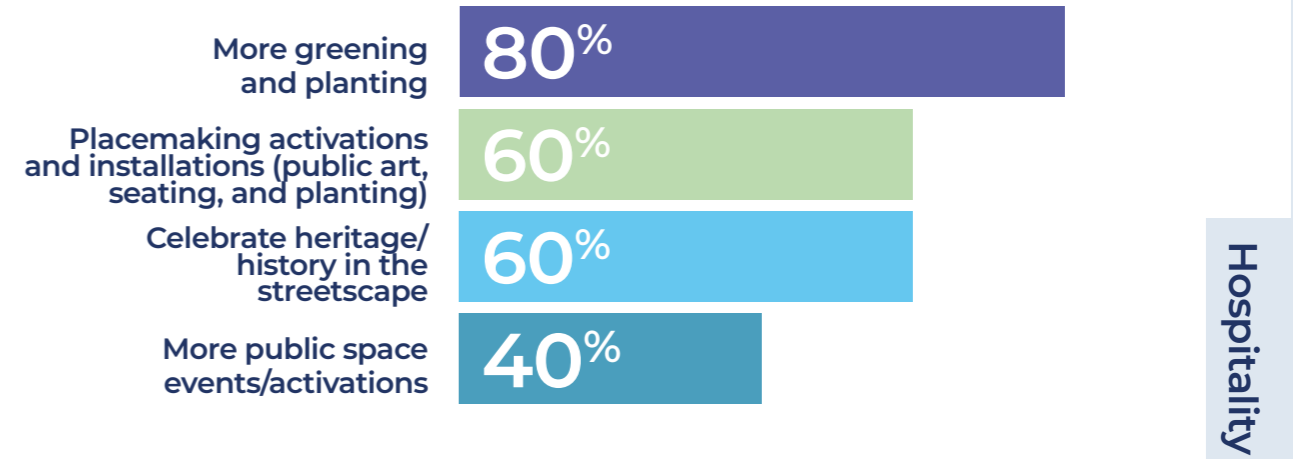
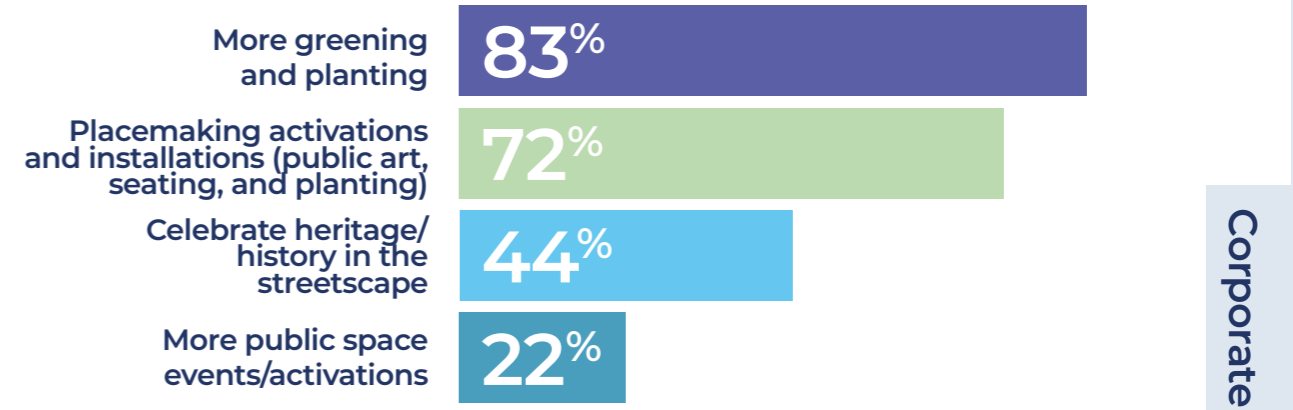
### Section 3: Tower Zone



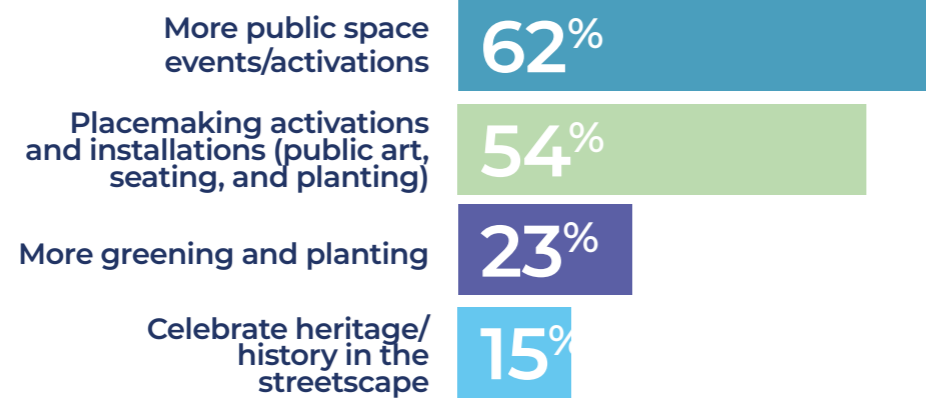
### Top 4 initiatives



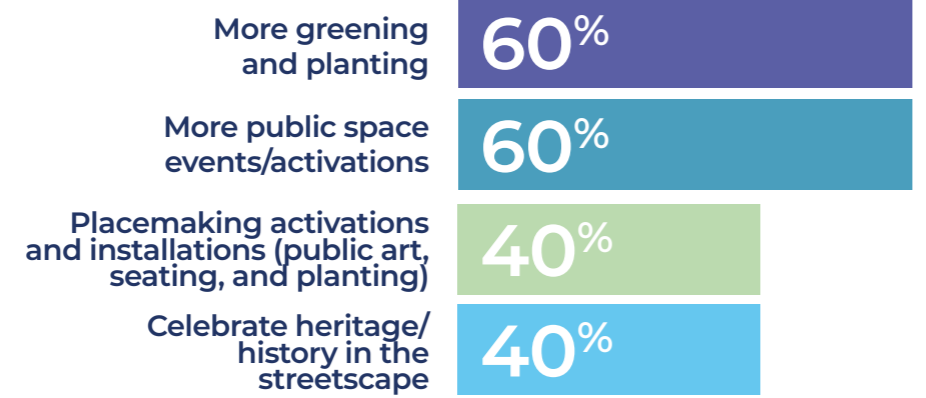
### Blackfriars Zone



### Section 2: Cannon Street Zone

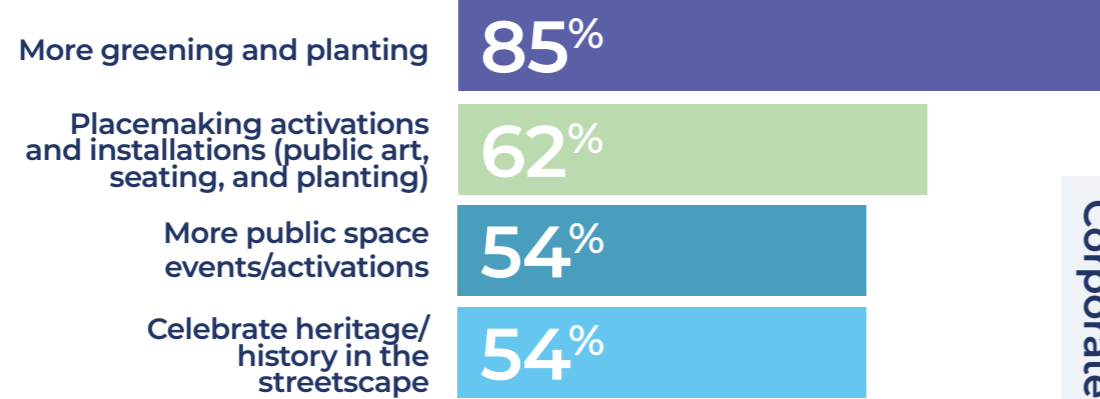


Corporate

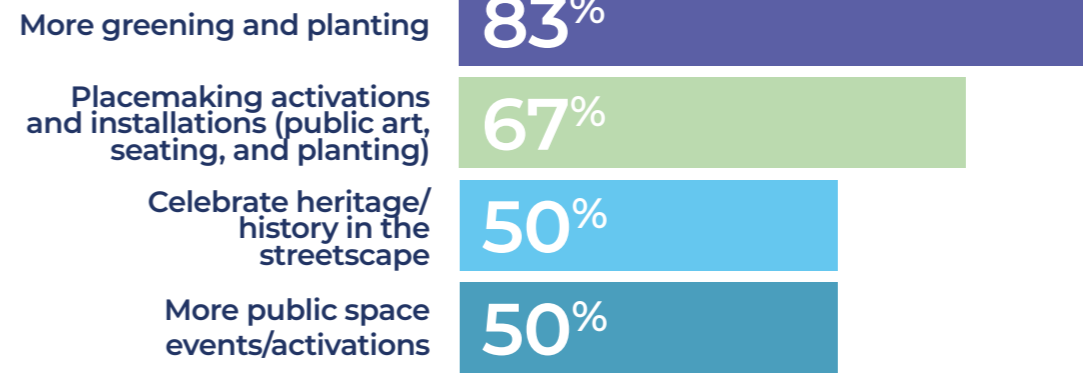


Hospitality

### Section 3: Tower Zone

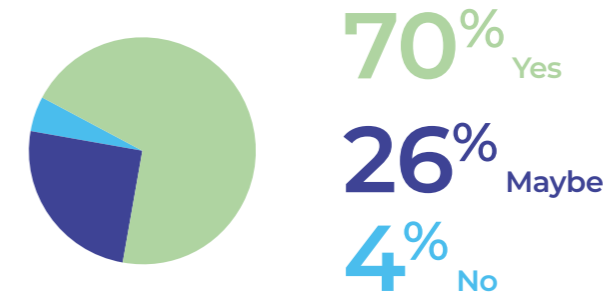


Corporate



Hospitality

In principle, would you support the establishment of a BID to improve the City River area?



What would encourage you to spend more time in the area at lunchtime, evenings and weekends?





We asked which initiatives were most important to help strengthen the City River identity?

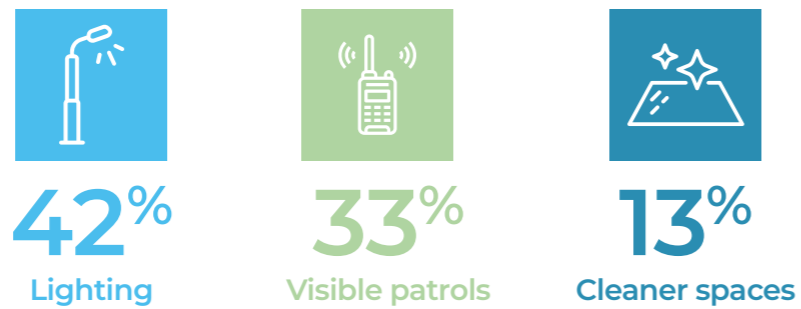


- 91%** Seasonal events
- 88%** On-street events and activations
- 82%** Networking events
- 77%** Website

We asked which safety initiatives were most important to local businesses, to help prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and enhance collective resilience to major incidents?



Suggestions on what we could do to make the City River footprint safer



Any other ways in which the City River Partnership could promote the area? The most common responses were:

**86%**  
Improved social media presence



**64%**  
Local attractions and events



**57%**  
Street food markets



# A VISION FOR THE CITY RIVER AREA

The vision of the proposed City River BID is to:

Reconnect the River Thames and the City by creating a greener, safer, and more vibrant riverside area that reflects its history, supports its future and meets the needs of its workers, residents and visitors.



DELIVERING  
THE VISION



# RE-IMAGINING

From Corridor to Destination



The City River area is one of the most historically significant and distinctive parts of the Square Mile, yet its potential is not being fully realised. Despite the presence of world-class heritage assets, major employment centres, and the River Thames itself, the area functions largely as a corridor rather than a destination. Movement-dominated streets, limited green space, and fragmented connections along, and to, the river have resulted in underused public spaces, suppressed footfall, and a weak sense of arrival and identity.



Heavy east-west traffic routes create physical and perceptual barriers between the City and the riverside, limiting safe pedestrian access and contributing to conflicts between road users. These conditions, combined with inconsistent wayfinding and limited animation, mean that the river often feels disconnected from daily City life, even for those working nearby. The public realm is hard-edged in character, offering few opportunities to pause, dwell, or enjoy the river environment, particularly during peak periods or warmer months.

At the same time, the City River area's rich history – as a centre of trade, movement, and civic life – remains largely hidden in the everyday experience of the area. The lack of a coherent narrative, visible storytelling, and joined up interpretation means that the area's heritage does not translate into a strong destination offer that includes high quality food and beverage outlets, economic benefit, or sense of pride for businesses and communities. This limits the area's ability to attract visitors, support local hospitality, and extend activity beyond core working hours.

Operational pressures further compound these challenges. Servicing and logistics are heavily reliant on road-based movement, intensifying congestion and undermining air quality in an already constrained environment. Meanwhile, the River Thames, historically the City's primary transport and trading route, remains underutilised as a modern functional asset for business.

The City River area is now at a pivotal moment, with several sites already undergoing transformation including Sugar Quay, Custom House, St Magnus House, and Millennium Bridge House, with forthcoming changes in the area around Puddle Dock and Walbrook Wharf. While there are key stretches of the riverside such as Hanseatic Walk that function reasonably well in public realm terms, there remain key locations like Old Billingsgate, Fishmongers' Hall, and the areas flanking Southwark Bridge where there is significant untapped potential, particularly for economic activity such as food and beverage which is fundamental in attracting footfall to the area. All these locations present an exciting opportunity to develop the area as a destination by introducing new cultural activity, commercial vibrancy, and a high quality public realm.

## What we will do

- Commission a comprehensive study to identify, prioritise, and cost opportunities for public realm improvements along the east-west corridors that dominate the City River area. The study will support the future development of a Healthy Streets Plan and focus on enhancing pedestrian safety, upgrading accessibility, improving lighting and permeability, reducing conflict between road users, and removing physical and perceptual barriers that currently limit access to the City River area from the rest of the Square Mile and limit its role as destination.
- Increase the attractiveness of the area by delivering a programme of greening initiatives, including tree planting in partnership with the City Corporation Gardens team, and enhancement where appropriate to the network of 34 parks and green spaces across the City River area. This will be complemented by a pilot programme of nature-based solutions, such as green seating, shaded areas, and planted structures, to support cooling, biodiversity, and climate resilience while improving comfort and dwell time in heavily used streets and City River area locations.
- Enhance movement to and along the riverside through a coordinated wayfinding strategy that combines high quality permanent signage with flexible, temporary interventions and establishes the City River area as a distinct destination in the Square Mile. Wayfinding will improve legibility, reduce the impact of major transport corridors, and actively promote awareness of the river as a destination, while amplifying the City River area's history and character. This will include heritage trails and curated experiences along the full length of the City River area, connecting key gateways from the newly created Bazalgette Embankment through to the Tower of London and Tower Bridge.
- Undertake a feasibility study to explore opportunities for businesses and visitors within the Square Mile to make greater use of the River Thames for freight and logistics, and as a mode of transport for visitors and workers. The study will assess operational, environmental, and commercial viability, with the aim of reducing road congestion, improving air quality, and re-establishing the river as a functional asset in support of modern business and tourism activity.

Together, these interventions reconnect the Square Mile to its river, greenery and humanise the streetscape, tell the story of place, and modernise logistics, turning a fragmented corridor into a welcoming, well-managed, heritage-rich destination that works better for businesses, workers, residents, and visitors.



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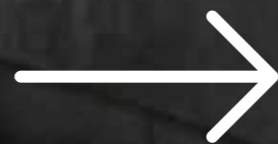
*The City River Partnership played a key role in working with the Corporation of London and businesses to repair and rectify the spotlights at Steelyard Passage. They look great and definitely provide a greater sense of security in this section of the area. We also really see the value of the ambassador programme – they are the eyes and ears of businesses in the area.*

**Steel Yard**

# 2.

## PROMOTING

The Riverside Revealed



The City River area has exceptional assets in the form of global heritage, major employers, independent hospitality, and the River Thames itself, but they don't currently link to create a strong, joined up destination offer. Its identity is fragmented and under-promoted with no clear, consistent brand that ties the area together, amplifies its story, or helps people discover what it offers. As a result, footfall is lower than it could be, which further weakens the local retail and hospitality ecosystem.



Coordinated campaigns and shared messaging are needed to ensure that major cultural moments, heritage assets, and programmed events reach a diverse audience at scale, and to ensure that the City River area's offer is not overshadowed by better known parts of the Square Mile and the South Bank. The area's rich history remains largely unknown and not part of everyday experience, with the result that the City River area's role in the evolution of the Square Mile is not translated into a compelling, competitive identity.

On the ground, the visitor experience is uneven and insufficiently supported. Accessible information, a welcoming presence, and rapid responses to issues such as wayfinding, cleansing needs, and low level anti-social behaviour is needed to encourage exploration, spend, and repeat visits. This is especially acute during evenings and weekends, when visible stewardship and customer care are most critical to converting passing footfall into spend.

The evening and weekend economy, particularly with respect to food and beverage uses, is underdeveloped and a curated offer that connects culture, hospitality, and heritage in a coherent calendar is needed. Without a coordinated approach to activation, the City River area remains quiet outside working hours with missed opportunities to extend trading hours, spread footfall, and showcase the area's unique character in ways that benefit businesses and communities.

### What we will do

• Develop a clear identity for the City River area and use that as the basis for the development of a brand and destination strategy for the City River BID that positions the Thames as the area's unifying spine. The strategy will enable the promotion of businesses and heritage assets through a coordinated mix of digital channels, social media, and high-quality physical materials such as visitor maps, guides, and wayfinding content, strengthening the area's visibility and sense of place.

- Deliver joint marketing and promotional campaigns with neighbouring City BIDs, the City of London Corporation and its institutions. These partnerships will amplify the City River area offer, promote shared events and programming, and position the area as an integral part of the Square Mile's wider cultural, leisure, and business ecosystem.
- Expand and strengthen the existing City River Partnership's ambassador team to play a more prominent role in shaping the visitor experience. Ambassadors will provide information on local attractions, heritage sites, independent retail, and hospitality offers; report anti social behaviour and public realm maintenance issues; and deliver a visible, reassuring presence for workers, residents and visitors
- Work in partnership with cultural organisations, hospitality venues, and local businesses to develop a coordinated evening and weekend calendar of events with specific focus on animating the City River area beyond core working hours. This will include curated events, cultural programming, and seasonal activations run by the BID as well as organisations based in the City River area designed to increase footfall, extend dwell time, and support local businesses by encouraging people to visit, stay, and spend.

The City River area's core challenges of weak identity, limited reach, an uneven on-street experience, and a thin out of hours offer need to be tackled. The proposed branding, joint marketing, enhanced ambassador service, and coordinated evening and weekend programme directly address these gaps and will contribute to turning the City River area into a recognised, welcoming, and animated riverside destination that people can easily find, understand, and enjoy. The development of a strong brand will also position the City River area as a more attractive and vibrant employment centre that draws in a dynamic workforce and supports a thriving, successful business environment.



*The Westin London City is proud to stand alongside the City River Partnership in reimagining the riverside as a place where people feel connected, inspired, and restored. We believe this space has the power to bring communities together, celebrate culture, and create moments of wellbeing that touch everyone who visits.*

**Commercial Director – The Westin London City Hotel & Residences**

# 3. ENLIVENING

Bringing Life, Care and Confidence

Place quality is not determined by physical infrastructure alone. While buildings and the public realm provide the setting and context for the experience of a place, this experience is also shaped by how it is managed, animated, curated, and made to feel safe and welcoming.



The perception analysis makes clear that confidence and reassurance are preconditions for successful activation and the emergence of the City River area as an attractive destination. Businesses and visitors consistently highlight the importance of visible safety, rapid response to minor issues, and coordination with police and support services. When this is absent or fragmented, public spaces feel uncertain and unsafe, discouraging use regardless of their physical quality. In this context, community safety initiatives, Safe Havens, and structured partnership forums are not simply risk management tools but are critical enablers of use, vitality, and economic activity.

Similarly, challenges such as rough sleeping require compassionate, coordinated management, not displacement or avoidance. Inclusive stewardship, early intervention, and partnership with specialist services are essential to maintaining a welcoming public realm that works for everyone. Left alone, these issues undermine confidence and place reputation, but addressed in a proactive and progressive way they reinforce a sense of care, responsibility, and civic pride.

## What we will do

- Develop and deliver a coordinated programme of seasonal events and activations throughout the year aimed at workers, residents, and visitors in a way that strengthens local identity and supports footfall and spend for City River area businesses.
- Host and support cultural, creative, and sporting events on and along the River Thames, both within the City River area footprint and across the wider Square Mile. Delivery will be in collaboration with the City of London Corporation, the City Belonging Project, neighbouring BIDs, the Port of London Authority and cultural partners, reinforcing the river as a shared civic stage and re-establishing it as an active part of everyday City life.

- Support the effective operation of the City of London Police cluster panel model, which aims to enhance community safety through local collaboration and shared problem solving. Three panels operate across the City River area (Fleet, Monument, and Bank) and the BID will play an active role in coordinating business input and supporting collective responses to local safety issues.
- Work alongside the City of London Police to deliver practical community safety initiatives, including phone and cycle marking events and violence against women and girls (VAWG) awareness campaigns. These initiatives respond directly to business concerns around visible safety and deterrence, while building confidence and reassurance in public spaces.
- Support the delivery and expansion of Safe Havens and related night time economy safety initiatives, ensuring the City River area remains welcoming, well managed, and safe during evenings and weekends. This work will complement efforts to grow the area's evening economy by providing the reassurance needed to encourage longer dwell time.
- Assist with the coordinated management of rough sleeping by working in partnership with the City of London Corporation's homelessness and rough sleeping team, alongside charities supporting vulnerable people. The programme will promote early intervention, signposting, and compassionate responses, recognising that inclusive stewardship is essential to delivering a safe, welcoming, and well functioning public realm.

By embedding urban management as a core function in addressing key issues across the City River area, it becomes an active place with a strong identity and ensures that public realm investment delivers genuine social and economic return.



*1 Tower Place. By working closely with the City River Partnership, we aim to support businesses in the area and collaborate on delivering both quick wins and sustainable medium- to long-term plans for the future. This year, the City River Partnership team has also taken part in our annual 'Waste Awareness Day' event and generously sponsored a smoothie bike hire, which was greatly appreciated by the building occupiers' staff.*

**General Manager – CBRE**

# 4.

## CONNECTING

Where Community Belongs



The City River area is home to a diverse mix of global corporates, small and medium-sized enterprises, hospitality operators, cultural institutions, and civic organisations. This concentration of activity is a major strength which needs to be used to catalyse opportunities for collaboration, shared learning, and collective action.

The perception analysis shows a strong appetite among businesses for deeper connections with one another and with the wider community, particularly around inclusion, wellbeing, skills, and social responsibility. However, without a clear local framework to convene and support this activity, engagement remains uneven and often reliant on individual capacity. Smaller businesses, in particular, can struggle to access City-wide initiatives or to participate meaningfully in programmes that promote inclusion, volunteering, and community engagement, despite a clear willingness to do so.

This lack of structured connection also limits the City River area's ability to reflect the diversity of its workforce and communities through visible activity in the public realm. Important cultural moments and campaigns risk passing unnoticed at a local level, weakening the sense that the area is an open, welcoming place that values the people who work, live, and visit there.

While there is strong interest in responsible business practices, ESG leadership, and collaboration across sectors, businesses often lack the connections necessary to learn from peers, develop partnerships, or align efforts. This reduces collective impact and limits progress on shared priorities that are central to the long-term success of the City River area, and the Square Mile more generally, as a compelling business location. Building these connections can happen through formal programmes and events, as well as through more informal interactions such as social events like group runs.

Challenges around workforce resilience, skills development, and wellbeing further highlight the need for stronger connectivity with employers facing increasing pressure to attract and retain talent, support staff progression, and respond to mental health needs in high-intensity working environments. Coordinated networks to broker training opportunities, promote wellbeing initiatives, and align with City-wide strategies such as the Suicide Prevention Action Plan enable businesses to fill these gaps.



### What we will do

- Establish a City River area corporate volunteering and community network, building on and complementing the City Belonging Project's work to create a more inclusive Square Mile and their associated City Belonging Networks. The programme will ensure a strong and visible offer within the BID area, supporting key cultural and community moments. This activity will help businesses engage meaningfully with the local community while reinforcing the City River area as an open, welcoming, and socially responsible district.
- Support and amplify the work of charities based or operating in the City River area including the Royal Society for Blind Children and the City Bridge Foundation.
- Deliver a programme of networking and peer to peer events for businesses, building on and promoting the established work of Heart of the City and the SME Gateway to support responsible and sustainable business practices, as well as skills and employment programmes. These events will connect corporates, SMEs, hospitality operators and the City Corporation, creating opportunities to share best practice, collaborate on ESG priorities, and strengthen business to business relationships across the City River area.
- Identify, broker, and support access to relevant training and skills development opportunities for employees working in the City River area. This programme will focus on enhancing workforce capability, supporting staff wellbeing and progression, and helping businesses attract, retain, and grow talent, contributing to the long term economic resilience of the City River area and the wider City.
- Coordinate and support activity aligned with the City of London Corporation's Suicide Prevention Action Plan and the work of the City Bridge Foundation. This will focus on the role businesses can play in awareness, early intervention, and safeguarding, helping to embed a compassionate and responsible approach to wellbeing across the City River area.

These activities enable the development of stronger, more visible networks that bring businesses together with communities, charities, and civic partners. By building these connections through volunteering, networking, skills development, and wellbeing collaboration, the City River area can move from being a collection of neighbouring organisations to a connected inclusive community, that supports both people and the long term success of the area.



*As Chair of the City River Partnership, I want to reaffirm the City River board's commitment to strong governance – ensuring transparency, accountability and strategic oversight. Looking ahead, the board will agree the future management arrangements of the BID to secure best value and uphold our standards. The board is committed to engaging all stakeholders to ensure the BID reflects shared priorities and delivers meaningful impact.*

**Jo Upton, Chair**



## BID Governance

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) have numerous advantages for the area in which they operate as they aim to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, drive economic growth and trade, improve social wellbeing, provide a voice for local businesses and enhance the public realm through investment in capital projects and place management. There are over 300 formal BIDs in the UK, with more than 70 of those in London alone.

BIDs are a tried and tested model for generating private sector investment and supporting shared goals. It is a transparent model for delivering change with a clear governance structure.

The City River Partnership team has engaged extensively with the City of London Corporation around the services that it provides as part of its local authority function. In seeking to improve the business environment in the City River area, a future BID will build on and advance the strategies and policies outlined by the City Corporation in its Policy Baseline document. The City River BID will also seek to build on and enhance the services provided by the City Corporation and outlined in City River area Schedule of Standard Services which will form part of a future Baseline Agreement.

## The Board

The City River BID board will be made up of 10-12 director level representatives from the different sectors that make up the BID levy paying community to ensure balanced representation around the table.

An elected ward member from the City of London Corporation and officer will be appointed as observers on the board. Once the board has been elected a chair and vice chair will be appointed. The chairperson will be nominated by the board on a two-year basis. The board will be supported by steering groups which oversee the delivery of activity, these will be made up of representatives from the wider stakeholder community.

These arrangements will be detailed in a set of Articles of Association. The BID finances will be independently audited and reviewed each year, and these will be presented at the AGM.

## The Executive Team

In the event of a successful ballot, an Executive Team will be appointed by the board of directors. This team will be responsible for the day to day delivery of the BID as instructed by the board.

## BID Levy Explained

The BID process is governed by the Local Government Act (2003) and the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations (2004). Business Improvement District (BIDs) are business led collectives developed in order to improve a geographically specific area. BIDs are established after a successful ballot process of eligible businesses. A successful ballot requires that a majority of eligible businesses voting in the ballot vote in favour of establishing a BID, AND that this majority represents more than 50% of the rateable value of businesses voting in the ballot.

The City River BID (through the Corporation of London as the BID Proposer, BID Body and Billing Authority) proposes to charge a levy on all eligible businesses occupying a property with a rateable value equal to or greater than £200,000. In the event of a successful ballot, the BID levy becomes mandatory for all defined ratepayers.

## Equality and Diversity Statement

We are committed to making equity, diversity, inclusion, equality, and belonging central to everything we do. Our board, committees, and activities will reflect the diversity of local businesses, residents, and visitors, with transparent recruitment, inclusive engagement, and accessible events and spaces for all.

We will champion workforce and supplier diversity, support underrepresented groups, and embed universal design principles in all public realm improvements. Measurable EEDI objectives will guide our work, with annual reporting to ensure accountability and real impact across the community.

## BID Levy Rules

**1.** The City River BID proposes a 1% levy, fixed for 5 years, charged to all business with a rateable value equal to or greater than £200,000. In order to calculate your BID Levy please multiply your rateable value by 0.01 or 1%.

**2.** The rateable value will be based on the official Valuations Office list on 31 March 2026. Any hereditaments entering the rating list after the 31 March 2026 will adopt the rateable value from the effective date that it's brought into the rating list.

**3.** The BID process is governed by Government legislation and regulations. As such, once a majority vote has been achieved, the BID levy becomes mandatory on all defined ratepayers.

**4.** The first year levy will begin on 05 August 2026 and will be prorated to 31 March 2027. The intervening years will follow the fiscal year covering from April to March each year. The final year will be prorated following the same principle and will be prorated for the part year to 05 August 2031.

**5.** BID levy will be charged in advance in full for a year. Refunds may be due if the liable account holder moves out within the financial year. The new liable party will be billed from when they enter the rates system with the local authority.

**6.** The term of the BID will be for a period of five years from 05 August 2026.

**7.** A threshold of rateable value will be applied, exempting any business hereditament within the defined BID area falling below this rateable value from liability for the levy. The threshold for the City River BID is £200,000.

**8.** The BID levy will assume a growth rate for inflation of 3.5%. The board will be required to decide on whether to apply an increment based on an annual review and prevailing economic conditions. The financial table included in this document assumes an increment from year 3 of the BID term.

**9.** Charities receiving mandatory charitable relief will receive 80% relief on their BID levy.

**10.** A ratepayer, whether it be landlord or the occupier, will be liable to pay the BID levy on an unoccupied hereditament. There will be no reduction in levy as a result of void periods.

**11.** No other rates relief for empty buildings will be applied. The landlord will pay the levy in the absence of an occupier.

**12.** There will be no VAT charged on the BID levy.

**13.** The levy per hereditament will be capped at £30,000.

**14.** BID levy operates independently of Business Rates. The BID levy will be applied irrespective of the property or hereditament status.

**15.** The threshold difference reflects the current and projected rate of commercial growth in the BID area.

## The Closed Year Rule

Where the hereditament is deleted and removed from the Valuation List, any resulting credit will only be refunded for the year in which the Valuation Office Agency notify the Local Authority of the deletion. Previous years will not be refunded.

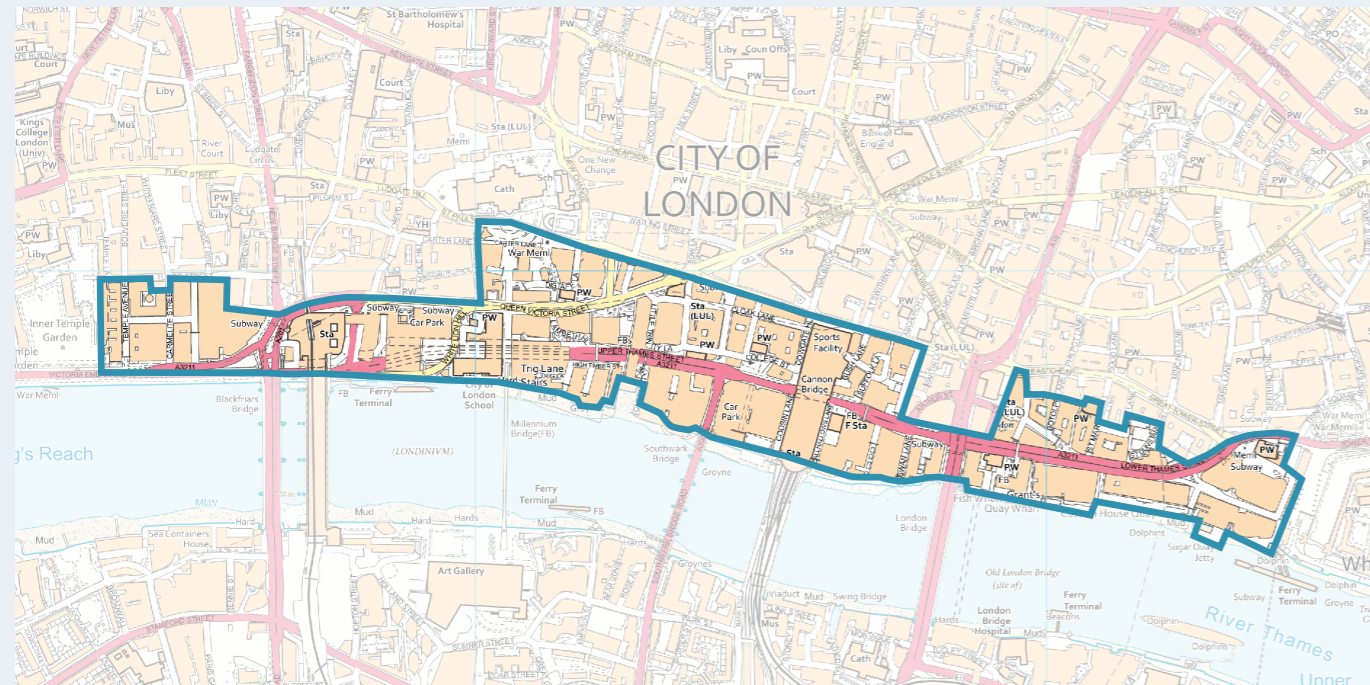
## BID Budget

INCOME	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	TOTAL	TOTAL
Levy Income (95% collection rate)	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,345,500	1,392,593	1,441,333	6,779,426	96%
Voluntary Contributions	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	250,000	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,350,000</b>	<b>1,350,000</b>	<b>1,395,500</b>	<b>1,442,593</b>	<b>1,491,333</b>	<b>7,029,426</b>	<b>100%</b>
Re-imagining	410,400	410,400	424,232	438,548	453,365	2,136,945	30%
Promoting	269,325	269,325	278,402	287,797	297,521	1,402,370	20%
Enlivening	205,200	205,200	212,116	219,274	226,683	1,068,473	16%
Connecting	205,200	205,200	212,116	219,274	226,683	1,068,473	15%
Staffing and Overheads*	192,375	192,375	198,859	205,569	212,515	1,001,693	14%
Contingency**	67,500	67,500	69,775	72,130	74,567	351,471	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,350,000</b>	<b>1,350,000</b>	<b>1,395,500</b>	<b>1,442,593</b>	<b>1,491,333</b>	<b>7,029,426</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Executive team consisting of BID Director, Manager, Events & Marketing and Project Assistant supported by specialist staff.

\*\* Comprises 5% allowance for irrecoverable levy.

## BID map & streets



Allhallows Lane	Distaff Lane	Laurence Pountney Hill	Queenhithe
Angel Lane	Dowgate Hill	Laurence Pountney Lane	Scott's Yard
Bell Wharf Lane	Fishmongers' Hall Wharf	Little College Lane	Sermon Lane
Bennet's Hill	<b>Fish Street Hill</b>	Little Trinity Lane	Skinners Lane
Blackfriars Passage	Friday Street	<b>London Bridge</b>	<b>St. Dunstan's Alley</b>
Blackfriars Underpass	Fye Foot Lane	<b>Lovat Lane</b>	St. Dunstan's Hill
Booth Lane	Gardners Lane	<b>Lower Thames Street</b>	<b>St. Dunstan's Lane</b>
Botolph Alley	Garlick Hill	<b>Millennium Bridge</b>	<b>St. George's Lane</b>
<b>Botolph Lane</b>	Gloucester Court	Miniver Place	<b>St. Mary at Hill</b>
<b>Bread Street</b>	Godliman Street	<b>Monument Street</b>	<b>St. Paul's Churchyard</b>
Broken Wharf	Gophir Lane	Old Billingsgate Walk	Stew Lane
Bush Lane	Great St. Thomas Apostle	Old Fish Street Hill	Suffolk Lane
<b>Byward Street</b>	Great Trinity Lane	Old Watermens Walk	Swan Lane
<b>Cannon Street</b>	Hanseatic Walk	Oystergate Walk	Tallis Street
Carmelite Street	High Timber Street	Paul's Walk	Temple Avenue
<b>Carter Lane</b>	Huggin Hill	Peter's Hill	Three Quays Walk
Castle Baynard Street	<b>Idol Lane</b>	Petty Wales	Trig Lane
Cloak Lane	John Carpenter Street	<b>Pudding Lane</b>	<b>Upper Thames Street</b>
College Hill	Kennett Wharf Lane	Puddle Dock	<b>Victoria Embankment</b>
College Street	Knightrider Court	<b>Queen Street</b>	Vintners Court
Cousin Lane	<b>Knightrider Street</b>	Queen Street Place	Water Lane
<b>Cross Lane</b>	Lambeth Hill	<b>Queen Victoria Street</b>	White Lion Hill

\* Streets highlighted in **bold** indicate streets that are only partially covered by the BID Boundary.



## What happens next?

Businesses across the proposed City River BID boundary will now be asked to vote 'yes' or 'no' to endorse this BID proposal. This is your opportunity to have a say in the future of your area. The City River Partnership will go to ballot on 05 June 2026 with the first term due to commence on 05 August 2026.

The City of London Corporation is responsible for managing the ballot process and will send out a ballot paper to each eligible business.

Members of the partnership team will contact businesses within the BID boundary to discuss the business plan. It is important that each business nominates a named contact who will receive the ballot paper and is authorised to vote on behalf of that organisation.

For any BID to proceed, two independent outcomes must be satisfied:

- Those voting in favour must exceed those voting against, in essence 51% yes votes at turnout;
- The total rateable value of those properties/ hereditaments voting in favour must exceed the total rateable value of those voting against– i.e. the aggregate rateable value must also be 51% or above.

## All you need to do now is:

- Take time to read, understand and consider what this BID proposal means to your business and the wider City River area;
- Your ballot papers will be sent to you ahead of the ballot opening on 05 June 2026. Ballot papers will contain all voting procedure information and proxy or replacement paper information.
- All voting papers must be returned by 07 July 2026 with the result announced on 08 July 2026;
- Remember voting YES will provide many services and projects to your business and to the area to secure the future potential of the City River area.
- A resulting vote in favour will allow the pledges in this plan to be set in motion with a 5-year term commencing on 05 August 2026.



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