

City of London Corporation Education Services Company PIP funded Feasibility Study

Final Report

July 2020



Background

As a contribution to its education, skills and cultural and creative learning strategies for 2018-23, and to inform its broader vision, as part of a PIP bid, the City of London Corporation (henceforth 'the City') has commissioned Education Development Trust and the ISOS Partnership to carry out a feasibility study. The purpose of the study was:

To explore the potential for an Education Services Company (ESC) to support the City's Family of Schools and additionally support and provide services to other schools across London and beyond.

Following discussions with the Education Strategy Unit, the study also explored other potential ways for the City to harness its educational, cultural and business assets and expertise to improve outcomes for learners. Over time, with agreement from the City, the original brief evolved towards exploration of alternatives to an ESC.

To gain a deeper understanding of possible foci of activities the City could undertake, the study tested the feasibility of a greater City role in the following areas:

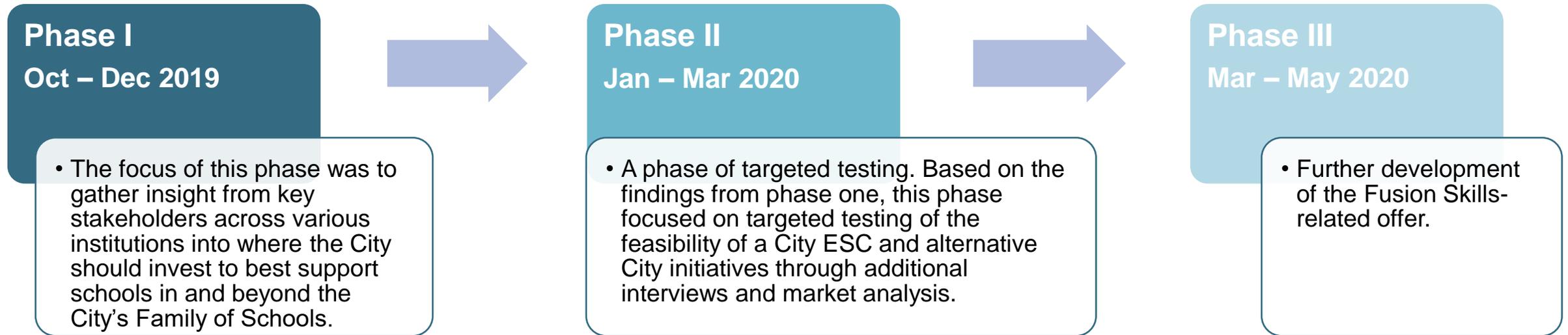
- Back-office support to schools (e.g. finance, HR, facilities management, etc.)
- School Improvement support
- Added value and Innovation (i.e. career learning, cultural learning and fusion skills)

These were examined across three potential beneficiary groups: the City of London Family of Schools, Livery Company supported schools and schools across London, England and beyond.

The study commenced in October 2019 and was completed in May 2020. The following slides provide an overview of the process, findings and recommendations.

Overview of Feasibility Study Process

The study has included three phases –



Across the phases the following activities took place:

- **Initial desk-based research** – this included an understanding of the current City of London offer and assets, research of key initiatives taking place (e.g. Culture Mile), light market analysis and review of strategic documents.
- **Focus Groups** – the study team facilitated three focus groups with an overall attendance of c.30 participants from schools, City businesses, and cultural institutions, each discussing one or several of the potential activity area for the City. This included: cultural learning and Fusion Skills, career-related learning and fusion skills, back-office support and school improvement.
- **Interviews** – the study team interviewed close to 20 stakeholders from a variety of organisations. Some of which include – Headteachers from City of London Family of Schools, representatives of the COLAT, Livery Companies, City businesses, Culture Mile Learning, City cultural institutions, Headteachers outside of London, the Durham commission, etc. The full list of interviewees is included at Annex 2.
- **Targeted market analysis** – a review and analysis of the market in the areas of back office and cultural CPD.

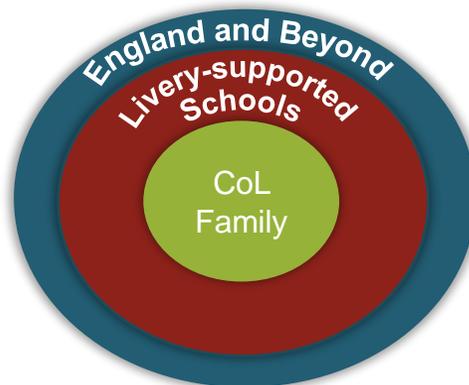
Overall Findings and Insights

Throughout the interviews and focus groups we tested the potential areas of focus for any Education Services Company or the City more broadly: Based on these discussions, we:

- Confirmed that the framework covered the main areas which stakeholders thought the City should consider operating within
- Refined the framework to reflect the views of stakeholders. The activity areas we focused on were:

Activity Area
Non-educational support (e.g. back-office, HR, Finance)
Standard school Improvement support (e.g. peer review, CPD, governor training)
Career-related learning (e.g. create more work experience opportunities for learners)
Cultural learning (e.g. building on current activities and plans within Culture Mile Learning)
Fusion Skills (e.g. Fusion Skills focused CPD, supporting schools in Fusion Skills curriculum design)

We then tested each of these activity areas through the lens of each beneficiary group it would be most relevant for:



Non-Educational Support

Groups	Assets	Needs
City of London Family of Schools and city institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COLAT has developed its capacity and expertise to support its own academies and is moving towards more central procurement/purchasing Some opportunities are offered to other family schools e.g. joint TES advertisements Independent schools receive support from the City HR and Finance Departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual academies still have own finance/business managers and historical contracts – scope to do more together across COLAT Scope to do more with other family schools – opportunities around estate management and potential opportunity to develop links with City provider Skansa
Wider family of Livery-supported schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livery Companies already share and recommend providers to one another informally, which helps reduce risk of low-quality service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Livery Companies expressed an urgent need for high-quality support and advice on non-educational functions especially around legal, HR, finance, health and safety Others were more interested in having access to quality assured external experts in estate management and procurement
Schools across and beyond England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many large MATs will be doing this themselves Other schools may get support still from local authorities and some private companies that provide good non-educational support to schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academies in small MATs or maintained schools without access to support from LA or an ESC are likely to be in need of high-quality support and advice on non-educational functions.

Financial Return on Investment	High
Educational Return on Investment	Low
Demand	Medium
Connection to City assets and practices	Low

Non-Educational Support

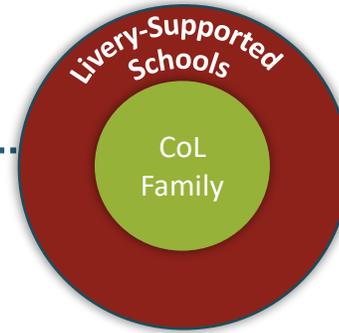
What?

For Whom?

Considerations

Convening

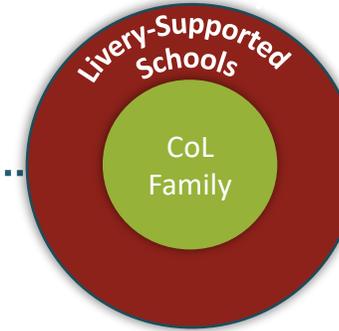
Good practice sharing and encouragement of joint development of back office functions



There is potential to do more to share expertise across schools here and share internal and external expertise.
This could start by mapping expertise and needs in back office functions across family schools.

Brokering and QA

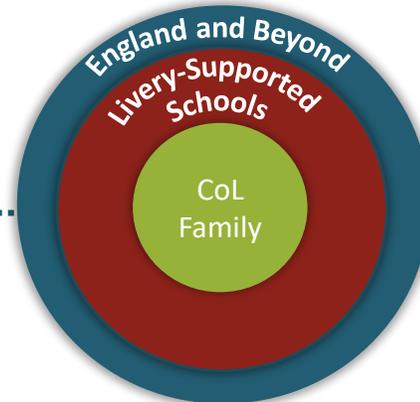
Assist school in identifying high-quality providers in areas such as – legal, HR, health and safety, estate managements, etc.



There is interest from some in having access to common external expertise and potential efficiencies to be gained in joint procurement.
But though potentially beneficial to schools, the City will be required to quality assure recommended providers and risks liability and reputational damage in cases which low-quality service is provided. City businesses could play a role

Creating a service

Create a high-quality non-educational support service that is education sector specific



There is strong demand/interest from some liveries/schools in such a service. But developing this service would likely require significant investment from the City as it requires the development of new expertise.
The COLAT could be an asset to build on here but there are complications around academy related party rules. There was little interest in the City's institutions creating new back office functions. If the City could develop a high-quality offer there would likely be demand from both Liveries/wider group of schools & MATs.

Non-educational support – summary of findings and recommendations

Views on demand for back-office support were mixed.

CoLAT already provides support for other schools in the Family. Independent schools were positive about existing support from the City. Some Livery Companies were interested in the City providing expert support around HR, Finance, and Legal. Others were more interested in the City providing access to quality assured experts in specific areas like property management and bid writing. Nationally, many schools and academies are either providing their own back-office support or get support from an LA or private companies so wider demand seems unlikely.

On the supply side there is limited expertise to draw on and lots of competitors.

Whilst CoLAT has a developing back-office offer, which in time could support more schools, its current focus is on deepening work across the Trust. Some Liveries have access to expertise which they might be willing to share more widely. Nationally, this is already a crowded market with offers from a variety of organisations including private service companies, representative organisations such as ISBL and ASCL and LA Education Service Companies such as Camden Learning and Herts for Learning. We found no evidence of city businesses having an appetite to provide more of their own expertise to help develop a more coherent offer, whether independently or with the City.

Recommendation.

This is not an area the City should prioritise; any development would require significant up-front investment in order to become competitive in the current market and to tailor an offer to uncertain national demand. Instead, time is better spent on deepening CoLAT's work to secure efficiencies across the Family of Schools and sharing of back-office expertise across Livery companies. This could include ideas set out in a recent paper to the City of London and Livery Education network on Governance and Compliance - from creating a centralised HR and legal service or collaborating on procuring external service providers to more of a 'Trustpilot' shared database of expertise and sharing this expertise across schools.

School Improvement

Groups	Assets	Needs
City of London Family of Schools and City institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The COLAT has a strong and secure school improvement offer that has already delivered improvements in some schools The City has its own support offer to schools and academies including impact visits, HT meetings, Governor support, access to City premium grants and pupil enrichment events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment and retention of teachers Alternative provision
Wider family of Livery-supported schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livery Companies have school improvement resources, but they vary in depth and areas of focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment and retention of teachers Access to specialists. This is limited when the expertise are not in-house, and the scale is not sufficient to hire a full-time specialist Short term focused collaboration on specific issues Collaborative CPD for teachers (e.g. early careers and leadership)
Schools across and beyond England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overall school improvement market is highly competitive, fragmented and largely saturated Most schools can find school improvement support themselves from a range of sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment and retention of teachers is a common issue in most areas Other needs likely to vary and depend on size, performance, location and type of school so it is difficult to identify common priorities

Financial Return on Investment	Low
Educational Return on Investment	High
Demand	Medium
Connection to City assets and practices	Low

School Improvement

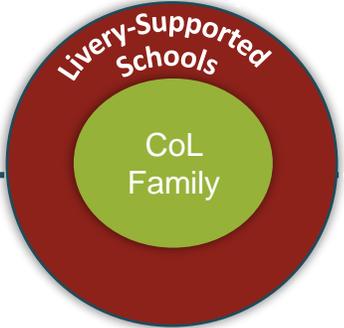
What?

For Who?

Considerations

Convening

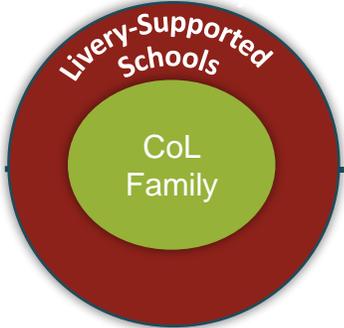
Practice sharing and practice development around specific school improvement priorities, with informal sharing of school improvement specialists



- Consider opening the City school improvement offer to its family of schools to Livery supported schools
- Work with the City Family of Schools and interested Livery supported schools to decide on annual school improvement foci, with a small co-funded budget for activity.
- Map existing school improvement capacities, needs and willingness to support other schools

Brokering and QA

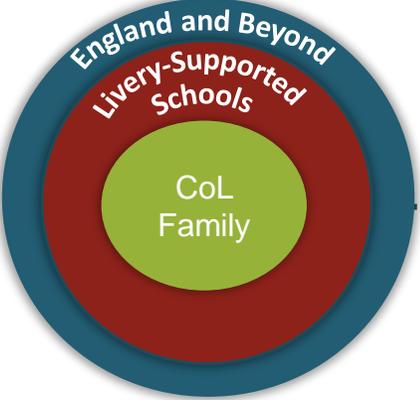
Network of school improvement specialists to support schools



- Identify (and potentially accredit) specialist experts to work across family and Livery schools., could include external experts already working with schools/MATs with capacity to do more, and brokering school-to-school support
- Develop and agree on a costed model for providing access to these experts to all schools

Creating a service

Build CoLAT's capacity to provide school improvement expertise to other schools on a traded basis



- Identify areas of expertise and strength within the current COLAT offer that could be built on
- Identify needs within Livery schools or particular types of schools that their needs are currently unmet

School Improvement – summary of findings and recommendations

There is no clear demand for additional School Improvement (SI) support from the City.

CoLAT is providing SI support for its academies. The City already has a 'free' offer to all Family Schools of impact visits, HT meetings, Governor support, access to City premium grants and pupil enrichment events. Livery companies generally provide SI support themselves or say they have access to the SI support they need, although some said they would welcome access to shared specialist expertise in non-core subjects. The one area of need that was consistently raised by all Livery Companies was around Teacher Recruitment and Retention.

There are many sources of school improvement support already for schools.

Nationally this is a crowded market with schools receiving support from Academy Trusts, Local Authorities, and consultants or working with other schools to develop their own support. DfE also has a national support offer for schools judged most in need. Support for governors is a more mixed picture with national organisations like the National Governor Association and Academy Ambassadors and/or Local Authorities providing some support. Some Livery companies seemed to have a strong Governor support offer which could potentially be shared and offered to others.

Recommendation.

Given the lack of demand and crowded existing market, the City should not try to enter the school improvement market. The one consistent need identified around recruitment and retention is a difficult one for the City to support on a national scale and it is already working across the Family of Schools on this topic. The City should continue to invest in developing CoLAT's school improvement offer and facilitating collaboration with and amongst Livery Companies by identifying common priorities and sharing expertise, including around governor support.

Careers

Groups	Assets	Needs
City of London Family of Schools and City institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are many high-quality businesses that offer specific career services The independent schools within the family have connection and approaches to careers which could be of more benefit students in COLAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have identified no appetite from City businesses to extend their offer or increase collaboration in this area beyond their existing work, e.g. the London Careers Festival
Wider family of Livery-supported schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many Liveries have a focused and well-developed career offer for students, and collaborate well on specific events, e.g. the London Careers Festival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have not identified specific needs in this area
Schools across and beyond England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a crowded space with some high-quality offers such as Education Employers Task Force and Local Education Business Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of consistency and clarity on provision of career services for learners Significant geographic inequity

Financial Return on Investment	Low
Educational Return on Investment	High
Demand	Medium
Connection to city assets and practices	High

Consideration:

There is not enough evidence to suggest that this should be an area of focus for the City. However, the City should use its influence to create greater equity in the career and work-related opportunities between their independent and state schools.

Cultural Learning and Fusion Skills

Groups	Assets	Needs
City of London Family of Schools and City institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture Mile Learning has made an impact in developing a more coherent and high-quality offer through effective collaboration of the City's cultural institutions • The institutions within Culture Mile Learning are eager to do more to improve the offer to schools • Some of the City of London schools are strong in cultural teaching and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a better understanding of how these groups of schools could be better served by the City's cultural assets • Cultural institutions have expressed a need to develop an offer that is better tailored to schools' needs and to improve their outreach to schools • Schools across various groups and partnerships require support in developing a systematic and integrated approach to Fusion Skills
Wider family of Livery-supported schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It does not appear that any of the Livery Companies schools focus on cultural learning • The Livery Companies are cultural assets themselves, through the buildings they own and the resources they allocate to schools and learners 	
Schools across and beyond England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is longstanding interest across the education sector in the development of broader skills and dispositions, and a number of initiatives happening nationally and locally. • However, various accountability and curriculum changes means that the English school system as a whole appears less open to the development of Fusion Skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As schools rebuild and improve their cultural provision in response to the Ofsted framework, the Durham commission and the arts premium for secondary schools, they may wish to draw on the City's cultural assets more systematically • Inequities in cultural provision appear to have increased over the last 10 years. Any offer to other schools, needs to aim to narrow gaps in access and opportunities • Schools require support in developing a systematic and integrated approach to Fusion Skills

Financial Return on Investment	Medium
Educational Return on Investment	High
Demand	Medium
Connection to city assets and practices	High

Cultural Learning

What?

For Who?

Considerations

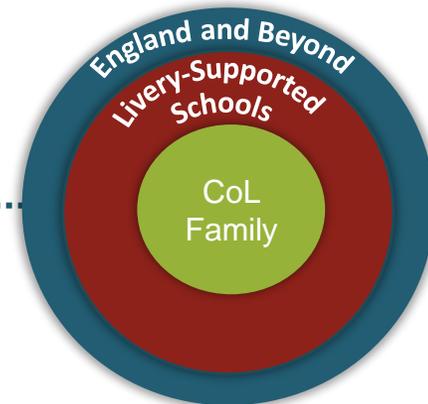
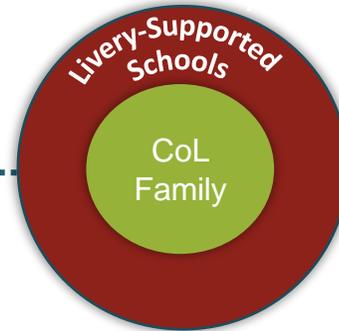
Convening

Brokering and QA

Creating a service

Broker a set of deeper collaborative relationships between Culture Mile Learning and the CoL Family of schools as a first step, possibly including the Livery Companies as cultural assets, and their schools as partners as a next step

Informed by AEA report, build on the foundations of Culture Mile Learning to create a sustainable subscription or membership model that can support many schools more effectively



This could align with Culture Mile’s strategy to ‘develop a collaborative partnership model with other high-quality learning providers including the City of London Corporation Family of Schools’

Such a model could include offers such as:

- A cross-institutional cultural CPD offer
- A cross-institutional thematic offers combining physical and digital assets (e.g. architecture themed day with a visit to St. Paul’s and the Barbican)

Fusion skills

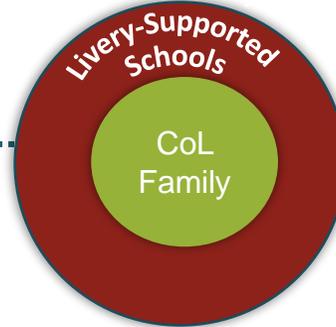
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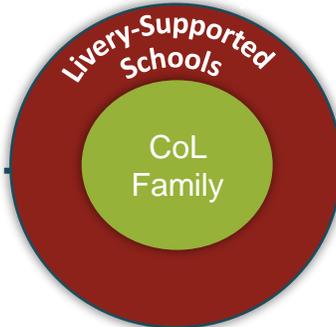
Fusion skills focused events including training and development, and continuation of the Fusion Skills prize



These activities are already being initiated by the City; however, there is a question about their potential strategic impact – will they be enough to ‘turn the dial?’

Brokering and QA

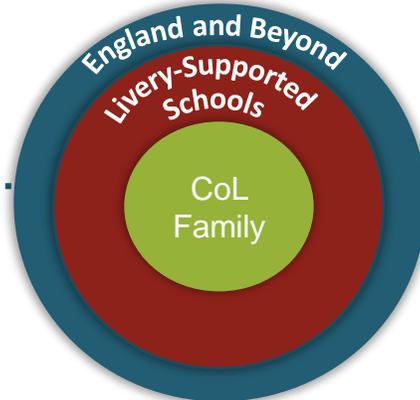
Identifying and brokering fusion skills expertise and supporting the scaling of best practice



This intervention could be integrated as part of a school improvement initiative

Creating a service

Create longer term system-changing programmes and interventions



Recommendations on this proposed intervention will be elaborated on in slides 22-23

Added value and innovation – summary of findings and recommendations

Overall, our analysis strongly suggests that this is the strand where the City has the most unique, valuable, and sustainable role to play locally, nationally and possibly globally. Exploring three issues in more detail:

- Whilst the City's work around **career-related learning** is welcomed, there is little appetite from either supply side or demand side for a more co-ordinated offer that would reach schools nationally. Local Education Business Partnerships and national organisations already play these co-ordinating roles.
- There is significant appetite from cultural partners, schools in the Family and the Livery Companies to continue improving approaches to **cultural and creative learning**, aligned to the strategy. Whilst the demand side needs further exploration, changes to the Ofsted framework and momentum from the Durham Commission may increase demand. The City's provision of cultural services to Islington could possibly be extended to one or two other boroughs, but the current model does not appear scalable
- Most stakeholders perceived **Fusion Skills** as the domain where the City could make the most difference: designing scalable models of practice that can influence debate, policy and practice; and playing a global 'system leadership' role. This area is of high priority for schools today due to employers demands and the changing labour market, but the system in England appears 'stuck' and unable to develop the long-term thinking and action that such an agenda requires. Fusion Skills is already embedded in the City's Education, Cultural and Creative Learning and Skills Strategies, and there are existing programmes, relationships and goodwill to build on.

Recommendation: Fusion Skills is the area where there is the most significant alignment between the strategy/assets of the City and the needs/interests of schools and the school system.

However, to achieve systemic change, we recommend that the City becomes more ambitious in its approach – building a long-term coalition for change.

Summary of our findings (non-Fusion Skills)

Activity Area	Avoid	Quick Wins	Explore
Back-office	The City should not attempt to create a new back-office support service for schools unless it can convincingly identify where the necessary educational expertise could be provided from	The City should continue to encourage and support COLAT to develop and build its back-office expertise and encourage schools across the family to make greater use of this expertise	The City could explore how to identify existing expertise used within the family and Liveries and signpost that expertise to others within the wider network of Livery schools
Standard School Improvement	The City should not try to become a new player in the school improvement market nationally at this stage.	The City should build on the greater Livery Company collaboration by mapping school improvement expertise/capacities and agreeing on an annual school improvement foci to work on	The City could start to develop a directory of expertise across the family and wider Livery network of schools. The City should also explore the potential for a more formalised system of accreditation and deployment of these experts across all schools.
Career-related learning		The City should use its influence to create greater equity in work-related opportunities between the independent and state schools in the family.	The City could explore how to support career-related learning as part of a broader Fusion Skills offer.
Cultural learning	The City should not attempt to develop any cultural learning activities that exist beyond the structure and strategy of Culture Mile Learning	Culture Mile Learning c/should develop stronger relationships with Livery Companies (as cultural assets) and with their schools (as test beds for deeper relationships with cultural institutions)	Culture Mile Learning could explore the development of a broader subscription/membership model, including an integrated digital offer

Responding to the key question in the original brief

Is a City of London Education Services Company a feasible idea?

Our analysis suggests that the City should not invest resources in creating an Education Services Company, for the following reasons:

- The City lacks sufficient existing expertise or track record in any of the areas outlined in the specification.
- Our attempt to *'map the possible opportunities to leverage in some of the expertise in broader Square Mile services'* has not revealed any demand from businesses in the City to create school-focused services that might create a unique City ESC.
- Whilst the CoLAT and wider Family of Schools have established a strong reputation for both efficient back-office services and strong school improvement, these are not sufficiently embedded within these collaborations to be sold beyond these schools. The CoLAT has limited appetite now to 'trade' its services in this way.
- ESFA Related Party Transaction Rules for Academies could prove an insurmountable obstacle to any traded relationships between the CoLAT and a City ESC.
- None of the people we have talked with so far have supported the idea of a City ESC, and many pointed out the potential reputational risks; both in terms of quality of delivery, but also how such a commercial offer might render other partnerships, for instance around Fusion Skills, more difficult to build.

Our analysis also suggests that the City's most immediate priority should be to consolidate the relationships and practices within its existing Family of Schools and build collaboration across the wider network of Livery Companies.

For instance, more needs to be done to ensure that CoLAT pupils benefit as much as the independent schools from the City's cultural and career-related assets. However, the broader question in our analysis opened-up four other possibilities for further exploration and investment that go beyond the ESC but might provide foundations for a new organisational structure.

Recommendations for areas that warrant further exploration and investment

- 1. The City could increase its efforts to foster back-office and school improvement-focussed collaborations between the COLAT, its broader Family of Schools and the Livery Companies**

This might require a more structured approach, for instance: brokering the sharing or joint commissioning of back-office expertise; or agreeing on an annual school improvement foci to work on through joint practice development.

- 2. The City could work with Culture Mile Learning to pilot a single CPD programme for teachers, drawing on all of the City's assets to support schools' aspirations to improve curriculum design, cultural capital and Fusion Skills**

This could: focus on London schools or schools in the East of England (within easy train access to the City) who can use the City as a learning destination; target emerging school leaders or early career teachers; be developed in collaboration with East Bank; be accredited or certified; attract additional funding from trusts and foundations, Livery Companies or city CSR budgets.

- 3. The City could play a national and international leadership role on Fusion Skills by building a long-term, system-changing collaboration between a larger number of schools and the City's cultural and business institutions**

Possibly taking the form of a Civic Trust, this would enable a critical mass of committed schools (including the Family and some Livery Schools) to collaborate rigorously on more radical changes to pedagogies, practices and policies. Long term partnerships with key City institutions would give credibility and support systemic impact, genuinely 'turning the dial' - something that similar initiatives have failed to achieve, nationally and globally.

- 4. The City could contribute to its ambitions to improve social mobility by working in a deep, sustained way with one or two areas of significant economic and educational challenge**

This could aim to support both fusion skills and standard school improvement objectives; be done in partnership with the DfE through the Opportunity Areas programme; support targeted non-Londoner access to the City's apprenticeships programmes.

Focus of our further work

Following consultation with the Town Clerk and other Members we were asked to focus any further work on the development of the third idea: **the creation of a long-term, system-changing collaboration between a larger number of schools and the City's cultural and business institutions around Fusion Skills.**

Within this, we were asked to explore possibilities around the fourth idea: a targeted geographical offer.

Given our strong finding on the lack of appetite for a more traditional Education Services Company, it was agreed not to pursue this idea in any further detail.

Fusion Skills: Recommendations and Next Steps



Fusion Skills: Why we think this is the main area to focus on

Of all the areas we have explored, we believe that the Fusion Skills element has the most potential for the City and its institutions to have a distinctive and vital impact on learners for the following reasons:

This area is of high priority for schools today due to employers' demands and the changing labour market, but the system in England appears 'stuck' and unable to develop the long-term thinking and action that such an agenda requires.

Fusion Skills is already embedded in the City's Education, Cultural and Creative Learning and Skills Strategies, and there are existing programmes, relationships and goodwill to build on.

The need in developing Fusion Skills cuts across the various school partnerships and structures, enabling the City to create an initiative that reaches a wide group of schools.

In short, Fusion Skills is the area where there is the most significant alignment between the strategy/assets of the City and the needs/interests of schools and the school system.

However, to achieve systemic change, we recommend that the City becomes more ambitious in its approach, building a long-term, school-focused coalition for change.

NB – Our ideas around Fusion Skills attempt to build on the work already being done by the City of London and partners and align with our knowledge of current and future plans.

Developing an offer: Possible areas of focus

1. Pedagogical innovation and Joint Practice Development

Support a small number of schools to become genuine test beds for robust, innovative pedagogies and other classroom-based practices that support Fusion Skills.

2. Pilot Fusion Skills programmes

Design, trial and scale age-specific, subject-specific and cross-cutting programmes, including family learning and school-to-work transition. Explore possibilities for blended learning.

3. CPD and Leadership Development programmes

Use resources of City and Livery to develop high quality resources to support schools on Fusion Skills. Trial the concept of an accredited 'Fusion Skills City Teacher'.

4. Curriculum design and peer review

Support schools to review their current curriculum offer and identify how to strengthen the development of Fusion Skills. Develop a tailored Fusion Skills peer-review offer.

5. Apprenticeship Pathways.

Work with providers (including City and Guilds) to include Fusion Skills as a structured part of the programme of learning, learner portfolios and the "20% off the job element".

6. Assessment and Qualifications

Develop Fusion Skills-infused approaches to assessment and qualifications design, with a possible focus on alternatives to GCSEs.

7. Governor support

Develop a national network of "Fusion Skills Champion Governors" to promote these skills. Explore the development of shared Governor audit teams and Governor Peer Reviews.

To achieve systemic change, these offers should be underpinned by a new organisation with four specific strands

Possible areas of focus...	1. Pedagogical innovation and Joint Practice Development		2. Pilot Fusion Skills programmes		3. CPD and Leadership Development programmes	
	4. Curriculum design and peer review	5. Apprenticeship Pathways	6. Assessment and Qualifications		7. Governor support	

Underpinned and delivered by a new organisation with the following remit	Advocacy, research, policy development and influence
	A deep partnership with a small number of school groups, City-based businesses and organisations with a long term commitment to leading systemic change
	A broad offer for a wider group of schools
	A targeted geographical offer to work in a deep sustained ways with 1-2 areas of significant economic and challenge (including an Opportunity Area outside London)

Creating a coalition for change: Why a new organisation might be required to play a systemic, transformative role in the development of Fusion Skills.

We have already argued there was little support for the creation of a new Education Services Company and an agreement that it would be more productive for the City to focus on strengthening collaboration across the Family of Schools and wider Livery companies. There is already a strong focus on Fusion Skills in the City's education agenda and many schools are interested in promoting Fusion Skills. So why is anything new needed at all?

From our work to date, it is unclear whether the existing structures, or the City Itself, has the requisite institutional form to take a more systemic, transformative approach to Fusion Skills.

We believe that achieving these goals requires a deeper, longer-term collaboration between a larger number of schools and the City's cultural and business institutions. These schools and institutions should become Fusion Skills world leaders and innovators, and the City itself should play a system leadership role.

For this reason, we suggest the City should develop a **City Fusion Skills Civic Trust that could enable long-term, systemic collaboration on the most complex and ambitious objectives related to Fusion Skills**, building a coalition/critical mass of committed schools that includes but is not limited to the City Family and the Livery-supported schools. Schools would be connected to a wider, more radical mission that seems too risky to achieve independently. Cultural and business institutions would provide long-term backing and relationships to support this mission. Whilst the Trust would focus on Fusion Skills, it would provide a forum for self-generated collaboration on other standard school improvement and back-office priorities.

Annex One includes an analysis of similar partnerships to learn from



The Fusion Skills Civic Trust: Initial thinking

The model of a Fusion Skills Civic Trust could follow the basic model of an Umbrella Trust:

- Groups of schools (including but not limited to Academies and MATs) and other partners (e.g. businesses, HEIs) agree to work together over the long-term through a formal collaborative partnership
- The terms of the partnership encourages long-term, sustained, collaboration without changing overall governance of individual institutions or the MAT, and any related accountabilities
- Crucially, Umbrella Trusts are not accountable for school performance, and have no formal intervention powers. Therefore, whilst some effective collaboration (e.g. on curriculum design) might require some temporary sacrificing of individual school autonomy, the fundamental principle of school/MAT autonomy remains
- Trusts are often joint ventures, pooling investment from individual schools and MATs with investment from other partners and leveraging additional external funding for particular purposes
- Umbrella Trusts are often based on 3-7-year agreements with partners, enabling long-term stability, commitment and secured revenue on which long term planning can take place.

Note: There is no single DfE-approved model for Trusts that enable partnerships of MATs. Providing they are not seen as ‘soft’ alternatives to MATs, and meet charity commission rules, Trusts can take many forms and can develop their own MoUs with individual schools and other partners. Existing models to learn from, nationally and internationally, are included in Annex 1.

The Fusion Skills Civic Trust: A potential ‘founder membership’ model

The ambition would be to establish the Fusion Skills Civic Trust with a small number of core committed founder members from across the City’s networks of schools, businesses and other institutions with a strong interest and experience in promoting and leading work on Fusion Skills. These founder members should include representation from the following groups:

School membership should come from existing school groups including:

- The existing Family of schools (14 schools)
- 2-3 Livery company-led groups (e.g. Skinners, Haberdashers’ Company)
- 1-2 additional groups of schools, possibly in areas of significant economic challenge and/or those with existing relationships to the city e.g. United Westminster and Grey Coat Foundation

Business membership should be restricted to those with offices within the City of London boundaries, ideally including both financial and technological expertise

Other membership might include a representative from Culture Mile, one Higher Education Institution with a base in the city and any other relevant national institutions that might support the promotion of Fusion Skills e.g. CST, City and Guilds?

Overall, membership should be based on commitment and capacity, rather than current ability and performance – joining this Trust would be a serious step.

The Fusion Skills Civic Trust: A potential governance model

More detailed work would be needed to determine the precise legal and governance model for a Fusion Skills Civic Trust.

On the basis of our work with other school partnerships there are a number of questions to consider here:

1. Why create a new legal structure at all rather than simply enter into voluntary/looser arrangements?

- It enables the new body to enter into contracts (either as a provider or a commissioner)
- It enables the new body to employ staff in its own right
- It can provide some longevity in terms of governance, when individuals move on
- It provides a locus for the continued engagement of the local authority with any new partnership but it establishes the financial independence of any organisation from the local authority

2. How should the membership rights be decided in any new legal structure?

The City will need to consider what proportion of the membership it wants to take for itself and how the rest of the membership should be made up. In other models we have seen local authorities have typically taken a 20-40% stake themselves and the rest of the membership has been made up of local headteachers, system leaders and other partners.

3. Should membership rights be linked to financial contributions?

One potential model here would be to link membership to funding contributions (see slide 28). On this basis the City would take a 25% membership stake, Liveries/other school groups and Businesses would collectively take 25% each. Cultural institutions, Higher Education and other partners might also be given a member stake in recognition of any in-kind contributions they make.

The Fusion Skills Civic Trust: Developing a financial model

Based on our work in helping establish other partnerships, below are some key principles that might inform the development of a robust financial model.

- The City is likely to need to make a significant upfront investment to build and develop the capacity of the organisation. In other local partnerships Local Authorities have invested anywhere from £250 to £500K depending on whether it is an upfront grant or an ongoing basis to support local partnership development.
- City already provides annual funding for schools in its family (£250K per secondary academy and 100K per primary academy). An equivalent investment in a Civic Trust would have the potential to support many more schools.
- We have worked on the basis that
 - The City contribution should be a declining proportion of the Trust's overall revenue over time as the revenue from other partners and any traded activities increases over time.
 - The City should continue to invest on an annual basis to support the longer-term development of the Civic Trust and to fund specific pieces of work e.g. targeted support to disadvantaged communities and students
 - We have aimed for upfront financial commitment from a small number of Livery Companies/school groups and Businesses, partly as a demonstration of 'buy-in'. We have aimed to increase the number involved over time as the Trust demonstrates its potential to grow and impact.
 - Over time we have aimed to shift the balance, so the Trust is generating more revenue directly from work with Trusts and schools that are not core members. There will need to be more detailed market testing to identify potential revenue streams, but we have set the aim of matching the City's contribution within three years.

The following slide sets out an initial estimate of income over first 3 years and Year 1 Costs.

The City Fusion Skills Civic Trust: Developing a financial model

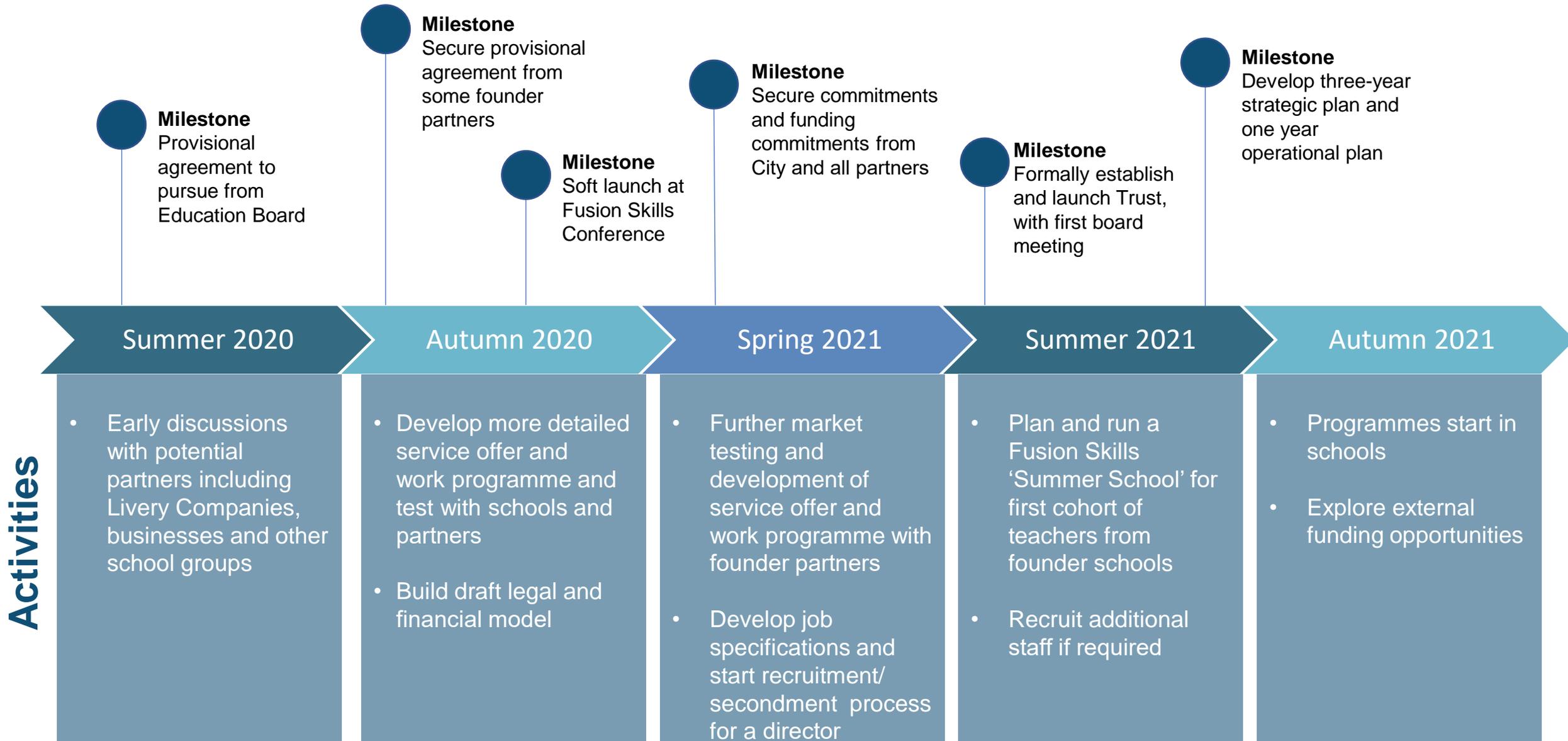
Income Stream	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
City contribution	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000
Livery/school groups contribution (assume 3 initially, then 5 by Year 3 at £50K each)	£150,000	£200,000	£250,000
Business contribution (assume 2 initially, then 5 by Year 3 at £50K each)	£100,000	£150,000	£250,000
Income for specific projects from other schools and external funders	£0	£100,000	£250,000
Total income	£500,000	£700,000	£1,000,000

Year 1 Costs: More detailed modelling will be needed to understand the tasks and effort required to develop and deliver the programme of work. We have worked on the basis that it would require a small team of c. 2-3 staff initially plus some possible external support.

There would be legal costs to support set up and a communications and website development budget. Based on modelling undertaken for other partnerships we think these Year 1 set up and development costs can be met within the budget above.

NB – the income above does not include any ‘in-kind’ support, which could be factored in and quantified

The City Fusion Skills Civic Trust: Possible implementation timeline



Possible immediate next steps

Given that Covid-19 might disrupt or delay standard decision-making processes, the following activities could be carried out in advance of any decision from the Education Board, or to inform this decision and further developments:

- Developing a more detailed programme of work relating to each of the seven offers, considering what could be achieved rapidly, and what would need longer timescales
- Testing interest and appetite from key Livery Companies and a small number of other school groups
- Interviewing key stakeholders, including within DfE and targeted Academy Trusts, to understand how the Trust could work in a deep, sustained way with a small number of areas in significant economic and education challenge*
- Developing more detailed options for financial models and governance models

** Pre-COVID, we had arranged interviews with DfE and some MATs to explore this issue, but postponed these due to pressures caused by school closures*

Annex 1: Exemplars of system-level collaborations with a Fusion Skills focus



Criteria for inclusion

- ✓ **Systemic impact** – does the collaboration aim to achieve sustainable system-level change?
- ✓ **Longevity** – has the collaboration existed or intends to exist over an extended period?
- ✓ **Partnerships** – does it build a dynamic collaboration involving schools and other stakeholders?
- ✓ **Changes in practice** – does the collaboration lead to new ways of working and thinking?
- ✓ **Fusion Skills** – is the focus on developing a broader set of skills or educational goals?

Summary of examples included

Location	Title	Type	Timeframe
England	Big Education	A Charity, incorporating the Big Education Trust, aiming to create a wider movement for change	2011 (Trust) 2018 (Charity) - Current
England	RSA Academies	An Umbrella Trust supporting its schools to learn together and prepare their students for life	2011 - Current
England	Creative Education Trust	A Multi-Academy Trust of 17 schools in post-industrial & coastal towns and cities	2010 - Current
Nashville, US	Academies of Nashville	An initiative of the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools to prepare students to be 'work ready'	2006 - Current
Catalonia	Escola Nova 21	A public-private collaboration over 3 years to catalyse the desire & capacity for education change	2016 - 2019
New Zealand	Communities of Learning	An initiative from the NZ Ministry of Education to build communities of schools & others for change	2014 - Current
Ontario	Leading Student Achievement	A multi-level network model focused on developing expertise, research and collaborative inquiry	2005 - 2019
Christchurch, NZ	Grow Waitaha	A partnership between schools & communities to rebuild and redefine education post earthquake	2015 - Current

Plus other emerging partnerships: Schools 2030 (global); NAF (US); Educacio 360 (Spain), K-12 Innovation (Canada)

England

Current provision & appetite for this type of collaboration in England

- Despite Fusion Skills being an area of high priority (linked to employer demands and the personal development of pupils), in reality, there is significant inconsistency in provision between individual and groups of schools, and a lack of coherent collaboration to improve in this area.
- Policy changes in England, including the introduction of Progress 8 and EBacc Measures, has in some cases led to a narrowing on the formal curriculum and fewer opportunities for pupils to develop Fusion Skills.
- Education leaders (Inc. Schools, Trusts, Local Authorities) have struggled to systematically promote Fusion Skills development – partly attributable to competing priorities around raising achievement and narrowing the gap. Area-based education partnerships have tended to concentrate on more standard school improvement and CPD activities.
- Whilst most MATS attempt to develop a 'USP' around their ethos, few are developing a reputation for delivering on a broader set of outcomes for their young people. Most, due to a combination of their values and accountability pressures, tend to be focusing on more traditional approaches to improving examination results.
- There are several local and national initiatives promoting broader outcomes, but their reach so far has been limited and systematic impact appears to be lacking.

United Kingdom – Emerging Partnerships



Big Education (est. 2017). In addition to a MAT of 3 schools, Big Education has a wider remit to develop and incubate innovative programmes and build a wider movement for change in the education sector. Voice 21 grew out of School 21, the Big Leadership Adventure & Education Dialogue Series seeks to engage the wider education community in a new vision for education.



RSA Academies (est. 2011). An Umbrella Trust set up by the RSA and sponsoring both individual schools & a MAT, all schools share a commitment to arts, culture, creativity, preparing pupils for life beyond school and wellbeing & mental health. The network of schools & organisations partner on various projects, events and sharing practice between schools.



Creative Education Trust (est. 2010). A not-for-profit multi-academy trust established to work in England's post-industrial and coastal towns and cities. The network of 17 schools work together to build cultural capital and provide educational equality through curricular innovation, as epitomised in their *Knowledge Connected* programme.



Academies of Nashville

What: A coalition between schools, families, businesses & community partners which aims to support students gain ‘industry’ skills in preparation for college or careers.

Where	Nashville, USA	When	2006 – Current	Scale	12 Metro Secondaries 350 Business & Community Partners
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Key information:

- Founded by a coalition between the Public Schools Board, Charitable Foundations & the Chamber of Commerce in 2006.
- Funding model: Government & public sector grants, donations & contributions.

Why this example?

- Having a measurable impact on outcomes – graduation rates have increased 25%
- A sustainable partnership model where stakeholders are mutually accountable for successful implementation.
- Rigour with an annual improvement process for each ‘academy’.
- Schools and employers equal beneficiaries– real world learning for pupils and improved pool of future employees for organisations.
- Includes a major focus on teacher development to improve practice in schools – developing cross-curricular pedagogy, externships, teachers co-designing projects.

Alignment with recommendations for City of London

Pedagogical Innovation	Y
'Fusion Skills' programme	Y
Professional & Leadership Development	Y
Curriculum Design & Peer Review	Y
Apprenticeship pathways	Y
Assessment & Qualification Development	Y
Governor Support	Y
Targeted geographic offer	Y

Note: Academies of Nashville was assigned the first **Ford Next Generation Learning Model Community** in 2014. It was announced in 2019 that the North-East of England will be the first Ford NGL Community outside of America.

What: An alliance of schools & civil society institutions aiming to transform the educational system and increase the focus on competency-based skills in schools.

Where	Catalonia	When	2016 - 2019	Scale	494 schools 64 Networks
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Key information:

- Founded by UNESCO Center of Catalonia, the Jaume Bofill Foundation the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, “la Caixa” Welfare Projects and the Barcelona Provincial Council.
- A public-private collaboration.

Why this example?

- Initial 3 year project which aimed to catalyse the desire for educational change – other initiatives have emerged from it e.g. Educacia 360, Networks for Change.
- Built on existing strengths in the system – Escola Nova identified and consolidated 25 ‘centre’ schools who played a leading role in local networks.
- Generated & refined a protocol for systemic change in schools - 30 test schools piloted a procedure for change which was independently evaluated.
- A focus on building capacity in the system for sustainable change – alliances were created between educational & local administrations who now have co-responsibility for driving change.
- Evaluation showed significant changes in practice in schools within 3 years from engagement in the networks.

Alignment with recommendations for City of London

Pedagogical Innovation	Y
'Fusion Skills' programme	Y
Professional & Leadership Development	Y
Curriculum Design & Peer Review	Y
Apprenticeship pathways	Y
Assessment & Qualification Development	Y
Governor Support	
Targeted geographic offer	Y

Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako

What: Groups of schools (Kura) who come together with local partners including businesses to raise achievement for all by sharing expertise and supporting one another.

Where	New Zealand	When	2014 - Current	Scale	214 Communities of Learning 1761 Schools (as of Feb 2018)
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Key information:

- One of three initiatives funded as part of NZ’s Investing in Educational Success (2014)
- Funded by the Ministry of Education

Why this example?

- Governance structure: Each community creates their own organization structure & appoints roles, supported by a central team from the MoE who facilitate networking between communities.
- Geographic dimension: A community includes teachers, parents, students and community members from multiple schools & organisations in a geographic area.
- Focus on student learning – with a particular focus on those at risk of underachievement and shared learning on how best to deliver NZ’s competency curriculum.
- Shared stakeholder challenges – each community identifies a shared goal between all stakeholders and develops plan to achieve it.
- Centrally funded professional learning and development pot – communities can apply for funding each year to spend on PLD linked to their chosen shared challenge.

Alignment with recommendations for City of London

Pedagogical Innovation	Y
'Fusion Skills' programme	Y
Professional & Leadership Development	Y
Curriculum Design & Peer Review	Y
Apprenticeship pathways	Y
Assessment & Qualification Development	
Governor Support	Y
Targeted geographic offer	Y

Leading Student Achievement: Networks for Learning

What: A project to provide support to district and school leaders to improve learning and wellbeing of students through networks and collaborative inquiry

Where	Ontario, CA	When	2005 - 2019	Scale	3000 Leaders 124 Districts
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Key information:

- Principals Boards of Ontario established the initiative in 2005 as part of Ed. Strategy.
- Funded by the Student Achievement Division, Ontario Ministry of Education

Why this example?

- Multi-level support networks: School, District, Province level.
- Focused on creating sustainable learning networks which developed their own projects and initiatives (Notable initiatives include Knowledge Building, Collaborative Inquiry)
- Emphasis on capacity building for education leaders through collaborative learning, sharing of practice and contributing to research.
- Co-designed resources created from the networks (digital, social, technological) and made available for all. These are still available beyond the scope of the project.
- Mixed delivery model – annual symposium, regional sessions, virtual / webinars, print and digital resources, network website and learning exchange website.

Alignment with recommendations for City of London

Pedagogical Innovation	Y
'Fusion Skills' programme	Y
Professional & Leadership Development	Y
Curriculum Design & Peer Review	Y
Apprenticeship pathways	
Assessment & Qualification Development	Y
Governor Support	
Targeted geographic offer	Y



Grow Waitaha

What: A partnership between the Ministry, education providers, schools and community to support schools through a citywide education transformation project

Where	Christchurch NZ	When	2015 - Current	Scale	150 schools
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Key information:

- Est. by MoE and founding partner in response to the Christchurch earthquake, 2011
- Included the rebuild scheme but went beyond this remit with a wider aim to grow collaboration between schools and collect and share learning & experiences

Why this example?

- A co-designed, multi-agency collaboration in a complex public sector context – a collaborative panel of 4 providers were chosen as delivery partners.
- The 4 providers established shared Terms of Reference which underpinned the work & ensured shared focus and transparency throughout
- A city-wide project aiming to support schools to grow their thinking of education for the future – central focus was on building capacity in the system through networking & collaboration.
- A collaborative, flexible structure including foundational partners, sector stakeholders, workstream coordinators and workstream groups. This evolved throughout the period of the project in response to the needs and wishes of the schools.

Alignment with recommendations for City of London

Pedagogical Innovation	Y
'Fusion Skills' programme	Y
Professional & Leadership Development	Y
Curriculum Design & Peer Review	Y
Apprenticeship pathways	
Assessment & Qualification Development	
Governor Support	Y
Targeted geographic offer	Y

Other emerging international collaborations

		<p>Schools 2030 – A 10-year longitudinal action research and learning improvement programme working across 10 countries. Bringing together a coalition of global, national and school level leaders to identify what works to improve holistic outcomes for marginalised children / youth.</p>			
Where	Global	When	2020 - 2030	Scale	10 National Governments, 1000 schools, 50,000 teachers and 500,000 learners.
		<p>NAF - A national network of education, business, and community leaders who work together to ensure high school students are college, career, and future ready. NAF Academies are small learning communities within mainstream high schools in America which prepare young people for the future through a combination of school-based curricula and work-based experiences.</p>			
Where	America	When	1980 – Current	Scale	110,000 students in 2019-20 attending 620 NAF academies across 34 states.
		<p>Educacio 360 – Continuing the work of Escola Nova 21, an alliance between schools, organisations, municipalities and any agencies who agree to the shared manifesto to provide more and better education opportunities for all. The alliance works to promote the right to 360 learning opportunities into political agendas, promote experiences in Catalonia, systemize the research & evidence and build partnerships.</p>			
Where	Catalonia	When	2017 - Current	Scale	150 organisations including local authorities, schools, county councils, networks of social, cultural and sports organisations
		<p>K-12 Innovation Strategy – A partnership between educators and government to provide support for those who are interested in – or already are – pursuing innovative education practices, including community partnerships.</p>			
Where	British Columbia	When	2015 - Current	Scale	Current cohort – 31 partnerships across 23 districts.

Annex 2 – Interviewee List

Full Name	Organisation
Jenny Brown	City of London School for Girls
Clare Hersey	City of London Academies Trust
Mark Emmerson	City of London Academies Trust
Alistair Falk	Association of Education Partnerships
Martha Schacolas	Media Trust
Jo Owen	Education Entrepreneur and leadership expert
Clare Loughlin-Chow	Gresham College
Tony Wilson	Skidders Company
Andy Chambers	Haberdashers' Company
Sean Gregory	Barbican
Holly Donagh	A New Direction
Leora Cruddas	Confederation of School Trusts

Annex 2 – Interviewee List

Full Name	Organisation
Christine Gilbert	Former HMCI, EDT Trustee, Chair of Camden Learning
Cindy Mahoney	CityHR
Paul Roberts	Innovation Unit
Rae Snape	Headteacher Spinney Primary School in Cambridge and National Leader of Education, Kite Teaching School Alliance
Maggie Farrar	Senior Associate, Education Development Trust and lead, School Partnerships Programme
Frazer Swift	Museum of London/Culture Mile Learning
Sian Bird	Guildhall School of Music and Drama
Beth Crosland	Museum of London/Culture Mile Learning
Nicky Morgan	Director of Education, Arts Council England

A list of participants at the three workshops is available on request.