

Committee(s)	Dated:
Culture, Heritage and Libraries	26/05/2015
Subject: Education Strategy - report on the work of the Learning and Engagement Forum	Public
Report of: David Pearson, Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries	For Information

Summary

This report provides an update on the work of the City's Learning and Engagement Forum. The City's Education Strategy 2013 - 2015 envisaged the creation of a Forum of officers from City departments that provide educational outreach and programmes for schools to support the Strategy by sharing information across the organisation and promoting joint working. Such a group had already been established informally prior to the introduction of the Strategy and now has been more formally structured as the City's Learning and Engagement Forum. It has recently been allocated £100,000 by the Education Board to take forward four pieces of work during 2015-16:

- £20,000 to scope a 'Hard Education' project to support secondary schools in tackling subjects such as homophobia, racism, gang culture and substance abuse
- £15,000 to scope the development of a Great Fire of London schools programme and website
- £40,000 to deliver the first phase of a School Visits Fund to enable schools to visit the City of London's own venues that provide educational programmes
- £25,000 to deliver a London head teachers conference, probably to be held in the autumn of 2015 to assist in promoting the next iteration of the City's Education Strategy and the City's outreach offer through the Forum's members

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note the report and in particular the funding provision made by the Education Board for 2015-16

Main Report

Background

1. The City's Education Strategy has as one of its strategic objectives:

- ***‘To inspire children through an enriched education and outreach opportunities. The best education incorporates both academic study and exposure to different experiences and learning environments. Children should be given the opportunities to explore the world around them, learn new skills and understand the communities they live in. London is culturally vibrant and has a wealth of green spaces to explore. The City manages a wide variety of historical, environmental and cultural institutions and believes that London children should be able access these to enhance their learning.’***
2. To assist with coordinating and developing work across the organisation to support this objective it recommended the establishment of an officer forum comprising those City departments that provide educational programmes. This had already been set up informally some months previously, building on individual partnerships that had existed for a number of years, and now operates as the City’s Learning and Engagement Forum. It meets quarterly and comprises representatives from the Barbican Centre, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, the Museum of London, Open Spaces department and all the constituent institutions of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Department – London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), Guildhall Library, Barbican and Community Libraries, Tower Bridge and the Monument, Guildhall Art Gallery and Keats House. It also includes the Town Clerk’s education and culture policy officers and a representative from Public Relations.
 3. Collectively, with their unique collections, buildings, spaces and expertise, these venues represent a powerful educational offer to the 3,200 schools and 1.3 million pupils in London. Every year they engage with over 200,000 pupils in primary, secondary and special schools through visits and outreach; receive around 2 million page views of their online educational resources, deliver training to teachers and student teachers; and support teaching and learning across the National Curriculum, for example in history, art, English, geography, drama, dance, citizenship and science.

Current Position

4. The Forum has already met to develop coordinated approaches around the London Curriculum, safeguarding and a project with the National Literacy Trust. It provides the Education Board with biannual information updates on activities that it and its individual members are undertaking and will feed into the City’s refresh later this year of the Education Strategy, particularly around the strategic objective for enriched education and outreach opportunities. It has also identified four key projects that would make a significant and positive impact on the educational lives of pupils in London and draw on the collective strengths of the City’s cultural venues and open spaces. These have been supported by the Education Board with funding for 2015-16.
5. They are:
 - a. A ‘Hard Education’ project to support secondary schools in tackling difficult subjects such as homophobia, racism, gang culture and substance abuse. Programmes in these areas are already offered by the Museum of London,

LMA and the Barbican Centre and it has been found that using settings away from the classroom has been very helpful for teachers as well as using the skills and experience of the institution concerned, from drama to the use of historical perspectives, to open up discussion and debate. The aim of the initial funding of £20,000 is to scope the potential to create a coherent offer that schools would value and the cost of delivering a three-year programme of outreach work, online resources and teacher training.

- b. A Great Fire of London project to coincide with the 350th anniversary in 2016. The funding of £15,000 from the Education Board is to scope the potential to develop the existing and hugely popular, though dated, Fire website www.fireoflondon.org.uk and to build in an educational programme for schools. The site was developed by the Museum of London some years ago with support from LMA and other partners for Key Stage 1 pupils (5-7 year olds) and receives some 1.5 million page views per year. The aim would be to increase the amount of digitised material from the Museum and LMA's collections that would be available and to look at the rebuilding of London after the Fire as much as the outbreak itself. It would form part of the wider Great Fire programme being supported by the City and conversations are already underway with Artichoke to make sure that appropriate co-ordination is in place.
- c. A School Visits Fund to enable schools to visit the City of London's own venues that provide educational programmes. Making such a visit can be difficult for many schools from a financial point of view, especially those in disadvantaged areas or those in the outer boroughs, where the cost of transport into central London is higher. The cost of providing cover for teachers accompanying pupils on visits can also be a barrier for secondary schools. These financial considerations are often the only reason why such visits are not made. The Education Board has provided £40,000 for a Schools Visits Fund to be run as a pilot during 2015-16 with a view to extending this to future years should it be successful. Schools that have not previously visited the venues and those from disadvantaged areas would be given priority.
- d. A London head teachers' conference, probably to be held in the autumn of 2015. This would assist the City in promoting the next phase of its Education Strategy and its outreach offer through the Forum's members. The Education Board has provided £25,000 to take this forward.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

6. The work of the Learning and Engagement Forum supports the City's strategic aim, as set out in the Corporate Plan 2015-19, *to provide valued services, such as education, employment, culture and leisure, to London and the nation*; and specifically Key Policy Priority 5 *increasing the outreach and impact of the City's heritage and leisure contribution to the life of London and the nation*

Conclusion

7. The four projects in particular that have received funding from the Education Board represent a significant opportunity to use the collective strengths of the City's cultural institutions and open spaces to engage schools throughout London and to make real impact on the lives of pupils. They will demonstrate very visibly the City's commitment to supporting education across London.

Appendices

None

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