

Committee(s) Education Board	Dated: 03/12/2021
Subject: Strategic Away Day Report	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	3, 8, 9, 10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author(s): Anne Bamford, Strategic Education and Skills Director	

Summary

This report updates Members on the Education Board away day which took the theme of 'social mobility' to re-examine the nature and impact of the three strategies - Education, Cultural and Creative Learning, and Skills. The away day was held at Newham Collegiate Sixth Form (NCS) and benefitted from the inputs from three external speakers, the Chair of Education Board, the Strategic Education and Skills Director, and the Principal, and the Head Boy and Head Girl from NCS. Members of the Education Board attended virtually and in person.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the summary of the away day outcomes
- Consider the recommendations made

Main Report

Background

1. The Education Board has oversight of three strategies: Education, Cultural and Creative Learning, and Skills (2019-23).
2. Prior to the restrictions caused by the pandemic, it had been the case that the Education Board had annual away days to provide the opportunity for Board members to consider strategic aspects in greater depth.

10. The members reiterated that a clarity of definition enables better measurement and reporting of impact.
11. Social mobility was further defined as the ability and opportunity for individuals, families or groups to progress within a society to reach their full potential - in terms of education, employment and access to skills, and access to opportunities to be creative and to engage fully in the cultural life of the City and community.
12. It was acknowledged that the Education Strategy Unit played a leading role in the delivery these strategies, particularly with the Social Mobility and Digital Skills Strategy.
13. Several particular initiatives were highlighted including: the Find Fusion platform to signpost creative learning and work experience opportunities; the London Careers Festival which was hosted digitally, and which over 20,000 pupils participated in; the Adult Skills and Education Service digital skills courses and their new traineeship programme to upskill young people aged between 19-24 with employability skills; and, the Evolve programme to promote careers in the film industry to young people from underrepresented backgrounds.
14. Frances Darlington-Pollock, from The Equalities Trust provided evidence of the link between income inequality and levels of social mobility and looked at structural features within England that might contribute to less social mobility such as selective and independent schools, housing and healthcare amongst other factors. Members discussed in detail the implications for stakeholders and specifically focused on how impact measurement could be improved to ensure there is a sustainable, positive impact. There was also a call to not hold university places as the only way to progress as other pathways are important in society, but rather normalise range of pathways and stop contributing to a 'sorting attitude'. As summarised by one member, "There is a lack of appreciation of other pathways. It is like a game of snakes and ladders. Students need to be supported to not miss opportunities and to bounce back from snakes." Better education leads to better, more equal countries. Reforming the education system would improve the quality of life for everyone in UK. Flourishing and social mobility is not just linked to earning but wellness too.
15. Members reflected on the role of extra-curricular activities to broaden experiences and develop fusion skills.
16. Members reflected on the importance of the use of language to create opportunities.
17. It was raised that alumni networks could be more effectively used in schools to boost social mobility.
18. The importance of impact measurement was highlighted, especially gathering current and longitudinal data and case studies.
19. Members pointed out that many of these issues have existed for some time and there seems to be little change. Also that it is not consistent across area and so pupils who attend a good school are fortunate while other students miss out. The question was raised, "How do we break through those barriers to save the same conversations later?"

20. It was suggested that there are models around the world that work better such as in Germany, The Netherlands and Scandinavian countries.
21. The point was made that equity of opportunity at all stages of life should be emphasised.
22. Maria Adebawale-Schwarte, CEO, Foundation for Future London presented a provocation on the role of culture and creative learning in boosting social mobility. Members discussed the interplay of 'in school' and 'outside of school' opportunities and the broad curriculum. Consideration was also given on how culture and creative learning could be boosted in our skills programmes including with apprentices and adult learners. The case was made for the connection between creativity and economic development. The creative industries have often not been seen as diverse. There is a skills shortage in the creative industries and all people that can be part of it. The question was raised, "How do we bring young people to understand the value of creative schools and how we can support them in the industry?"
23. Members suggested the importance of conversations with parents and carers in changing attitudes towards the importance of arts and culture and the availability of careers in the Creative Industries. The point was made that the fusion skills help those involved to understand that creativity can help thrive in all industries.
24. The arts can also assist with championing diverse voices recognising wide forms of knowledge and skills and different pathways into successful life chances.
25. The members commented also on the importance of the arts in stimulating curiosity and that this is transferable to elevating and challenging expectation.
26. A member also noted the therapeutic benefit of the arts and commented that the arts need to be seen as a basic expectation of a quality education offer not as a 'nice to have'.
27. Members commented about the importance of involving young people in the arts in the broadest sense possible. People are inspired by the range of opportunities offered. The City has considerable arts and cultural offers, and all children should be supported to access these offers. The comment was made that the arts, "Can be life changing". The connection was made between the arts and enhanced social mobility, because ambition is so important in whatever sphere you have. The arts also stimulate higher academic achievement.
28. James Adeleke, CEO Generation Success provided insight into the challenges facing young job seekers and emphasised the importance of a programme of preparation, support and ongoing additionality to build diversity. Discussions focused on the importance of oracy and the fusion skills. It was also noted that providing particular additional support might be needed at key transition points to boost social mobility, such as from early years into school, primary school into secondary school, and secondary school in further study and work.
29. A member reinforced the significance of points of transition in people's lives. Support is needed at multiple stages in young people's lives. Ongoing work with young people is needed to assist their development of resilience to face any challenges that life may bring to them whatever that may be.

Conclusions and recommendations

30. The following recommendations were made for consideration:

- a) That in all future Education Board decisions, the social mobility impact, both positive and negative, be considered.
- b) That impact measurement includes better tracking of data including data over time and improved case studies to report on progress more accurately towards achieving social mobility goals over time and on catalytic impact.
- c) That alumni networks be established to assist in providing mentoring support, boosting aspiration and modelling social mobility pathways.
- d) That focus be given to key transition points in children's lives to ensure that activities have the most impact.

31. The members of Education Board commented on the value of the opportunity for deep discussions that occurred at the Away Day.

Key Data

N/A

Corporate & Strategic Implications

N/A. This report is for information only.

Anne Bamford

Strategic Education and Skills Director
Department of Community and Children's Services

T: 07864948686

E: Anne.Bamford@cityoflondon.gov.uk