

Committee(s)	Dated:
Policy and Resources Committee	11/07/2024
Subject: London Careers Festival 2024 Evaluation	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Diverse Engaged Communities Providing Excellent Services
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: Executive Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Dr Deborah Bell, Strategic Director of Education and Skills	

Summary

This report updates Members on the outcomes of the London Careers Festival (LCF) 2024 which engaged primary, secondary, and post-16 pupils and young people aged up to 25 from across London in work-related and skills development activities from week commencing 26th February. An in-person festival week took place at The Guildhall, plus some sessions at partner business locations. The online festival week was hosted by the LCF online festival delivery partner and broadcast live into primary and secondary school classrooms.

The full report in **Appendix One** further examines the achievements of LCF and makes recommendations for subsequent years.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the LCF 2024 evaluation report with key outcomes and achievements.
- Note the recommendations for LCF 2025 and onwards.

Main Report

Background

1. Since 2019, LCF has been delivering on the City of London Corporation (CoL) commitment to ensuring learning is linked to the world of work at all stages to enable learners to make informed career choices.
2. The vision for LCF 2024 was for learners, who are pupils, students, apprentices, and young workers to encounter professionals from a diverse set of future-relevant careers in engaging and interactive ways that challenge stereotypes and inspire learners to think positively about their futures.
3. The event was marketed to young people and educators across London and connected boroughs. The programme of events was aimed at school pupils from primary through to post-16 and young people aged up to 25.

Current Position

4. The London Careers Festival 2024 was delivered between 26 February to 8 March 2024.
5. The in-person week (26 February to 1 March) was structured as follows:
 - Monday 26 February – Primary (*Livery Showcase and other workshops*)
 - Tuesday 27 February – Secondary (*Livery Showcase and other workshops*)
 - Wednesday 28 February – Ages 14 to 25 (*Post-16 Pathways and Careers Expo, and other workshops*)
 - Thursday 29 February – On-location day hosted at partner businesses.
 - Friday 1 March – Young Professionals Conference all-day takeover. This event expanded on the evening-only event in LCF 2023 and involved three sessions, morning, afternoon, and early evening, each offering networking and employer information stands. Plus, each session included employer-led insight panels, one for law and the other for finance.
6. Monday 26, Tuesday 27, Wednesday 28, and Friday 1 were hosted at The Guildhall. On-location sessions on Thursday 29 were hosted at 5 partner businesses.
7. The online festival week (4 March to 8 March) included:
 - 4 interactive workshops for primary school classes led by industry professionals. These included 2 skills sessions covering a variety of job roles, plus a specific STEM session, and a special *Jobs Behind the Books* session on World Book Day for which pupils were encouraged to dress up as their favourite book characters.
 - 3 interactive sessions for secondary school classes led by industry professionals. 1 session explored tech, planning, and medical roles in

healthcare, another explored careers in the built environment, and a final session explored the variety of options available post-16.

- A webinar led by the BBC exploring careers in media and journalism for secondary school classes.

Key findings from LCF 2024:

8. The following points provide headline summaries from the full evaluation report contained in Appendix One:
 - An estimated 17,139 young people attended LCF 2024. Of these, 14,252 attended the virtual festival and 2,887 attended in-person. This is a 34% increase on LCF 2023, and a nearly three-fold increase on LCF 2022.
 - Over 134 businesses, training providers, and livery companies participated in the delivery of LCF 2024. They helped provide 29 insight sessions or workshops, of which 5 specialist sessions were available for those differently abled or with special educational needs, and 1 specialist session for those care experienced.
 - 88% of young people rated their experience as excellent or good, a five percentage point increase on 2023, while 92% said LCF helped them think about a range of careers, a two percentage point increase on 2023. 90% of those who attended an on-location insight session said they were likely to apply for a job at the partner business.
 - Pupil feedback from across the online week showed that pupils felt empowered to aspire to any job they want and not be limited by job stereotypes. Teachers also agreed that pupils learned about lots of different aspirational jobs, many of which they hadn't heard about before.
9. Key insights:
 - 9.1 Teachers praised the festival's inclusion of pupils of a variety of ages, from primary-aged through to post-16.
 - 9.2 The festival continues to help young people to discover the broad spectrum of careers and pathways into careers, even in areas they have some existing knowledge of.
 - 9.3 Six industries represented at LCF were well-matched to young people's interests. They were Science, Technology, and Engineering; Architecture and Construction; Arts and Communication; Finance; Law; Business.
 - 9.4 Two industries were underrepresented at LCF but are of interest to young people. They are: Online / Social Media, and Sports.
 - 9.5 The ability to have detailed conversations with employers, industry professionals, and training providers continues to be highly valued by attendees.
 - 9.6 There was high demand for sessions that explored entrepreneurship and how to start a business.

Options

Item for information only.

Proposals

10. After analysing data from the London Careers Festival 2024 and reflecting on recommendations and insights of previous evaluation reports, the LCF team would make the following recommendations for 2025:

10.1 Acknowledging the following two items to be the festival's unique propositions and forming enhancements that are informed by these:

10.1.1 Livery Companies

The involvement of the Livery Companies and their interactive way of exploring key industry skills. Their approach is very popular with primary-aged and secondary-aged pupils.

10.1.2 Careers connected to the Square Mile

The City Corporation and its connected networks of partners, contractors, departments, and Members as industry professionals are uniquely placed to mobilise and galvanise representatives from the wide variety of careers connected to the Square Mile.

10.2 Adopt three festival aims as clear and communicable motifs:

10.2.1 **Inspire:** Inspire young Londoners to consider a Square Mile connected career.

10.2.2 **Support:** Support those facing the most challenge to explore the skills required for Square Mile connected careers.

10.2.3 **Mobilise:** Mobilise organisations operating in the Square Mile to be career advocates, including apprenticeship routes and entrepreneurship.

10.3 Continue to enhance the festival each year by:

10.3.1 Further incorporating youth voice, for example, by continuing to increase representation of industries identified as being of interest to participants while utilising opportunities for co-creation.

10.3.2 Communicating the festival aims and providing clear expectations to session providers and exhibitors to ensure sessions are interactive and continue to be appropriate for the participants.

10.3.3 Adopting initiatives to reduce the impact of no-shows.

10.3.4 Reflecting the wide variety of careers connected to the Square Mile.

- 10.4 Publicising the festival through retaining a pre-booking activity, celebrating festival partners on City of London social media channels, and increasing mailing list subscribers.
- 10.5 Increase attendance in-person by engaging with more schools from boroughs underrepresented in previous years, for example, Enfield, Haringey, Hackney, Lambeth, and the outer West London boroughs.
- 10.6 Review briefs for workshops and insights sessions to ensure they are serving the participants well, in particular, secondary-aged pupils, care experienced, and those who are differently abled, neurodiverse, or have special educational needs.
- 10.7 Revise and enhance the ways in which LCF is evaluated to better measure impact, outcomes, and to inform future enhancements.

Key Data

The data relevant to the report is included in **Appendix One**.

Corporate and Strategic Implications –

Strategic implications

11. LCF aligns with both corporate strategies and education strategies, as follows.

11.1 LCF has aligned directly with key elements of the Education Board's strategies from 2019 to 2023.

11.2 LCF continues to align with the City Corporation corporate plans, including Corporate Plan 2024-2029, contributing directly to Actions 1, 5, and 6 under the theme of Providing Excellent Services and Action 1 under Diverse, Engaged Communities demonstrated by businesses operating in the Square Mile taking part in LCF.

11.3 Furthermore, LCF will make a significant and direct contribution to Outcomes 1 to 4 under Improving Employability in the Draft Education Strategy 2024-2029.

11.4 As outlined in these strategies, the City of London Corporation aims to improve social mobility and reduce inequalities while supporting outstanding education, lifelong learning, and skills. LCF provides improved professional prospects for young people, particularly those facing the most challenge, by helping them to be better equipped to start businesses or to navigate the Square Mile and follow the career path of their choice.

Financial implications

12. The festival continues to be good value-for-money and have impact on its core audiences: pupils, schools, businesses, and livery companies. Furthermore, the festival has successfully attracted and delivered to increased

numbers of young people year-on-year while remaining within its budget envelope. Key to running the 2025 festival will be the continuation and expansion of successful partnerships to support marketing and operational activities. Continued financial support is needed alongside key partnerships to ensure the festival can still deliver on its equalities commitments and to manage inflationary increases in costs for in-person events.

Resource implications

13. As recommended in the full report, the festival will continue to need operational support from external contractors and continued strategic oversight by officers within the Education Strategy Unit.

Equalities implications

14. Over two thirds of the schools who booked for LCF 2024 had a Pupil Premium rate of 31% or higher. Over one third had a Pupil Premium rate of over 60%. 2 in 5 schools were from one of the nine City Corporation target boroughs. Five sessions were run specifically for children differently abled or with special educational needs. One session was delivered for care experienced pupils. The quiet space was retained, as in previous years, ensuring an inclusive environment for those who are neurodiverse.

There are no Legal, Risk, Security or Climate implications identified.

Conclusion

The London Careers Festival has grown into a respected leader among careers initiatives, trusted by teachers and praised by the young participants. The offer is varied, covering a wide selection of industries through in-person workshops, online insight session, on-location taster days, and walkthrough showcases, while also celebrating its unique offer as a place to explore Square Mile connected careers with interactive encounters provided by the Livery Companies.

Continued enhancements would maintain and advance the position of the festival as a leading careers initiative that mobilises organisations to support and inspire young people.

Appendices

- **Appendix One - London Careers Festival 2024 Evaluation Report**