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| Committee(s): Education Board | Dated: 09/10/2024 |
| Subject: School Visits Fund Impact Report 23/24 | Public |
| Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly? | Diverse Engaged Communities Providing Excellent Services Vibrant Thriving Destination |
| Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending? | N |
| What is the source of Funding? | Education Board |
| Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department? | Y |
| Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services Department | For Information |
| Report author: Caitlin McMillan, Education Strategy Unit | |

Summary

This report presents Members with key information relating to the impact of the School Visits Fund in the academic year 2023/24. The administration of the fund was transferred into the Education Strategy Unit, from Culture Mile Learning. The total budget assigned from the Cultural and Creative Learning budget per financial year (April-April) is £20,000.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the findings in this report.

Main Report

Background

1. Established in 2015 the School Visits Fund provides the opportunity for schools to apply for grants to pay for transport to facilitate school trips to the City Corporation's cultural venues.
2. Funding is available to any state-funded school with a Pupil Premium rate of 35% or more, special schools or youth organisations located within Greater London.
3. There is £20,000 per financial year allocated to the fund.
4. Each grant is limited to £300 per trip, but each school can apply up to three times per year.
5. The administration of the fund was brought into the Education Strategy Unit in June 2023, from Culture Mile Learning.

Current Position

6. The fund has had an extremely successful year. This has been in no small part due to the targeted enhanced promotional activity undertaken by the former Cultural and Creative Learning Co-ordinator in highlighting this opportunity for pupils widely across Greater London. In total, £40,991.90 was paid out in the academic year 2023-24. This breaks down to:
 - I. £24,113.47 in financial year 2023/24 (the additional £4,113.47 was drawn from contingency funds).
 - II. £16,878.43 in financial year 2024-25.
7. Visits were made to 18 of the City's cultural venues.
8. Approximately 25% of applications were made by secondary schools, with 75% being from primary schools or alternative provision.
9. Tower Bridge and Hampstead Heath, as destinations, received the greatest number of applications (29 each) followed by Epping Forest (24) and The Monument (21).
10. Evaluation forms were completed by 59 of the fund recipients.
Of these:
 - I. 98% said that their trip developed at least one Fusion Skill.
 - II. 95% stated that the visit helped develop the young people's communication, thinking, organisational, or creative skills.
 - III. 88% cited 'overall cost' as the answer to the question 'What sort of barriers do the young people in your school or organisation usually face in visiting arts and cultural organisations?'
11. Feedback on the fund was overwhelmingly positive. Below are examples of feedback from participating teachers:

"I would just like to thank again the whole team for making this visit a reality. Thank you for providing an opportunity that the children will remember forever."

(Primary teacher visiting Tower Bridge)

*“We have 77% free school meals we cannot rely on parents to contribute to trips and need funds like this to ensure our children get the same experiences as those from more wealthy backgrounds.”
(Primary teacher visiting Tower Bridge)*

*“They articulated their thoughts and feelings about the performance. They were required to think about, and ask questions about the show, performance, and storyline. It was inspirational and will support their further creativity.”
(Secondary teacher visiting Barbican)*

Options

N/A

Proposals

12. The feedback from participating teachers makes it clear that the fund is a valuable resource for schools. It should therefore remain part of the City’s Cultural and Creative Learning offer.
13. Over 75% of the £20,000 fund for this financial year had been allocated before the start of academic year 2024-25. We propose directing an additional £10,000 from contingency funds to the School Visits Fund to ensure that it can support schools throughout the coming academic year.
14. To support footfall in the City on Mondays and Fridays, as part of Destination City Corporate activity, Members are asked to consider adjusting grant quantum so that visits on Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays can attract grants of up to £275 and visits on Mondays and Fridays attract grants of up to £325.

Key Data

Embedded in the report

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – the School Visits Fund contributes to the City’s position as a vibrant thriving destination by bringing young people into the City’s cultural venues. The fund provides excellent customer service (with an average rating of 4.7 out of 5) and engages a diverse community of learners.

Financial implications - none

Resource implications - none

Legal implications - none

Risk implications – risk assessments for all trips are carried out by the participating schools and venues.

Equalities implications – the School Visits Fund provides access opportunities to young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those protected by existing equality legislation.

Climate implications - none

Security implications - none

Conclusion

15. The School Visits Fund continues to be an extremely valuable component of the City's Cultural and Creative Learning offer. With the growing popularity of the fund, the allocation of contingency funds will ensure that as many young people as possible can benefit from the cultural access opportunities it provides.

Appendices

None

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