

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Equality, Diversity, & Inclusion Sub-Committee	Dated: 22/11/2024
Subject: Social Mobility Employer Index Benchmarking Update	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • Provides business enabling functions 	Equalities underpin all Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes Equality Objectives 2024-29 People Strategy 2024-29
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
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:	Dionne Corradine – Chief Strategy Officer
Report author:	Alice Reeves – Interim EDI Director

Summary

City Corporation has achieved a ranking of 58th in the Social Mobility Employer Index, a benchmarking tool, this year. This is significant progress on the previous years’ result of 87th and is a direct consequence of major collaborative efforts across the organisation.

Upcoming activity is now underway to continue to develop our corporate offering on social mobility in future. This is being led by the new Equalities Director and will focus on delivering against our Equality Objectives 2024-29, and the specific objective on Social Mobility. Our aim is also to improve our index ranking in future and use ongoing benchmarking as a mechanism to demonstrate progress.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the social mobility employer index result
- Note that feedback from the Social Mobility Foundation has been received, and is being reviewed with a view to developing cross-cutting activity that will support our Equality Objective on Social Mobility

- Note the intention to return to this sub-committee with a draft programme of activity for social mobility in City Corporation in February 2025

Main Report

Background

1. City Corporation is committed to enhancing social mobility, both for staff and for the communities and stakeholders we serve. Social mobility has implications extending from individual opportunities to societal cohesion and economic prosperity and City Corporation recognises its responsibility to foster an environment conducive to upward mobility for all.
2. Social mobility is one of our four published Equality Objectives¹ reflecting the commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The specific objective is set out as follows:

Someone's socio-economic background should not limit their potential to flourish. Activities (cognisant with the Social Mobility Index recommendations for improvement) may include:

 - Continue to use our influence to advance socio-economic diversity across the City, building on the success of the Socio-Economic Diversity Taskforce report and its recommendations.
 - Collaborate with a variety of communities to enable opportunities for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds to get in, get on, and belong in the City Corporation.
 - Continue to measure our performance as an employer across the eight areas set out in the Social Mobility Index.
 - Closer working across the City of London Corporation family to tackle barriers collectively and holistically for underrepresented groups.
3. Our current framework and mechanisms advancing social mobility within City Corporation have progressed significantly during 2024. These are made up of
 - a. Equality Objectives 2024-29: distinct objective on social mobility
 - b. Corporate Plan 2024-29: which commits us to improving social mobility and reduce inequalities
 - c. People Strategy 2024-29: provides structures to improve social mobility via internal mechanisms.

When combined, these aim to embed organisational outcomes to achieve an inclusive and diverse culture and articulate our focus on socio-economic diversity and intersectionality with both staff and external communities – achieving our ambition to be a world-class organisation.
4. The City Corporation worked with The Social Mobility Foundation to set up the Social Mobility Index (SMI) in 2017. The Index is an annual benchmarking and assessment tool for employers, showing performance on eight areas of employer-led social mobility.

¹ [Equality and inclusion - City of London](https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/about-us/plans-policies/equality-inclusion): www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/about-us/plans-policies/equality-inclusion

Current Position

5. Following a disappointing result last year, our submission this year involved collaboration from officers across City Corporation to gather as much input as available, while being cognisant of feedback from previous years. Consequently, our 2024 submission to the Social Mobility Foundation (submitted to this sub-committee on 7 June 2024) covered a wide a range of internal and external social mobility related activity.
6. This approach has resulted in City Corporation being the only Local Authority featuring in the top 75 employers, at 58th. 150 employers entered for 2024, including 51 new entrants from 26 sectors and involving just under 1 million employees. We see this as a respectable result from which we can continue to improve.
7. Our previous years' results have fluctuated – we now aim to retain and improve our future ranking, noting that the index is becoming more competitive as employers are increasing social mobility initiatives and benchmarking themselves².
 - 2018 we ranked 66 out of 106
 - 2019 we ranked 56 out of 125
 - 2020 we ranked 50 out of 119
 - 2021 we ranked 40 out of 203
 - 2022 we ranked 67 out of 149
 - 2023 we ranked 87 out of 143

Proposals

8. We have now received feedback from the Social Mobility Foundation that is being reviewed to inform and enhance our work on social mobility, with a view to developing a high-level plan for progress.
9. Immediate work also involves gathering input from Chief Officers and Institutional leaders to determine what options there are to drive forward social mobility in the short to medium term. This workshop is taking place at the Executive Leadership Board on 18 November and will be used to inform our work to enhance the social mobility offering.
10. Further work will be developed in close coordination with key internal stakeholders including HR, the EEDI Forum and the Social Mobility Network; it will also link to external facing initiatives managed by departments including Environment and DCCS, and - in due course - areas of work such as the City Belonging Project. Where further opportunities for external benchmarking are

² Note that entrants choose to be ranked publicly; some organisations opt out of this process, so overall totals of entrants may be higher than indicated. Comparing rankings year on year is not a reliable way of measuring our progress, as questions have evolved and different organisations have entered or withdrawn since 2018.

identified and/or opportunities for Members to get more closely involved, these will be flagged at the EDI sub-committee.

11. Plans will be brought back to this Committee as soon as they are available. Member input will then be sought on an outline programme of activity, informed by ELB, based on current efforts to increase social mobility and feedback from the Social Mobility Foundation, that will be brought to EDI sub-committee in February 2025. This plan will then be further informed by the EDI Review, due to report by the end of FY24/25.

Key Data

12. Data is critical to effective delivery of improving our social mobility offering. This summer major efforts and comms initiatives have taken place to improve internal disclosure rates on equalities data, including on social mobility. Developing a solid evidence base of staff demographics will help us to understand gaps and create opportunities for everyone to thrive. Data sharing on social mobility has made significant headway, and efforts will be ongoing to improve our data – and consequently be able to develop better targeted interventions to deliver against our Equality Objectives. Activity on improving equalities data is a priority and core workstream that underpins our Equality Objectives 2024-29.
13. Prior to July 2024 City Corporation collected no data on social mobility; in July an updated equalities questionnaire was launched with three questions on social mobility³ – to date we have achieved an average disclosure rate of 35% (with a range of between 2% and 55% depending on area). This month Chief Officers and Heads of Institutions are making a renewed effort to drive up numbers. It takes time and trust to increase equalities disclosure numbers, and ongoing efforts through 2025 and beyond will be needed to achieve our overall objective of 60% (the minimum needed for data analysis); noting that all questions offer the option not to disclose answers, our long-term objective is to reach an 80% disclosure rate, as this will be a major enabler to effective targeted interventions to improve diversity.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – this work aligns with and will support the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2024-2029 (where equalities underpin all outcomes), People Strategy 2024-29 and Equality Objectives 2024-29, all of which form part of improving the corporate offering on equalities in general and social mobility specifically.

Financial implications - none

Resource implications – this work is managed by the EEDI team; however, input and delivery to achieve progress impacts upon other departments and institutions as it requires input and effort from across CoLC

³ The questions are: which type of school did you attend for the most time between ages of 11 and 16; did you receive free school meals at any point during your school years; were you the first in your immediate family to attend university; what was the occupation of your main household earner when you were 14.

Legal implications – none

Risk implications – none

Equalities implications – This work aims to increase diversity within the organisation; although social background is not a protected characteristic under the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010, Members have chosen to treat it as such; initiatives that are being developed as part of this work sit alongside activity that aims to increase diversity overall, and ensure we are compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010.

Climate implications – none

Security implications – none

Conclusion

14. This is a solid result, and improvement on our ranking in last year's social mobility employer index result. Efforts to develop and improve initiatives to increase social mobility will form part of our benchmarking submission in 2025 – our aim is to continue to improve our ranking.

Appendices

None.

Background Papers

Report to EDI Sub-Committee on the Social Mobility Index – 26 June 2024: [Report - Social Mobility Index.pdf](#)

Alice Reeves

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