

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Education Board	Dated: 10/06/2025
Subject: London Careers Festival 2025 Evaluation and Recommendations	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes	Diverse Engaged Communities Providing Excellent Services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	Education Board
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	n/a
Report of:	Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services Dr Deborah Bell Strategic Education and Skills Director
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Summary

This report updates Members on the outcomes of the London Careers Festival (LCF) 2025 which engaged primary and secondary school pupils, sixth form and college students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), all from across London and adjacent counties. Pupils and students took part in work-related and skills development activities at in-person sessions and showcases at the Guildhall, on-location sessions at partner business locations, and online sessions that were hosted by the LCF online festival delivery partner and were 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 2025 evaluation report.
- Note the recommendations for LCF 2026 and onwards.

Main Report

Background

1. Since 2019 until 2024, LCF was delivering on the City of London Corporation (CoLC) commitment to ensuring learning is linked to the world of work at all stages to enable learners to make informed career choices.
2. The 2025 festival, and those going forward, deliver on CoLC commitments of:
 - 2.1 improving employability (Education Strategy 2024-29),
 - 2.2 supporting educational excellence (Education Strategy 2024-29),
 - 2.3 providing excellent services (Corporate Plan 2024-29),
 - 2.4 and diverse engaged communities (Corporate Plan 2024-29) through working to increase participation in co-creating and delivering services.
3. The 2025 festival adopted the three festival aims that were proposed in the LCF 2024 evaluation report (presented at Education Board meeting of 17 June 2024) and act as clear and communicable motifs in support of the CoLC commitments. They are:
 - 3.1 **Mobilise:** Mobilise organisations operating in the Square Mile to be career advocates, including of apprenticeship routes and entrepreneurship.
 - 3.2 **Inspire:** Inspire young Londoners to consider a Square Mile connected career.
 - 3.3 **Support:** Support those facing the most challenge to explore the skills required for Square Mile connected careers.

Current Position

4. LCF 2025 was delivered between 3 February to 14 February 2025.
5. The in-person week (3 February to 7 March) was structured as follows:
 - Monday 3 February – Primary (*Livery Showcase and other workshops*)
 - Tuesday 7 February – Secondary and Post-16 (*Livery Showcase, Careers and Apprenticeships Expo, and other workshops*)
 - Wednesday 8 February – Young Professionals Conference for sixth form students interested in financial and professional services (*Plus additional workshops*).
 - Thursday 9 February – On-location sessions hosted at partner businesses, including the Creative Careers Day at Theatre Deli.
 - Friday 10 February – On-location sessions hosted at partner businesses, including the Green Skills Day at The Green Skills Hub.
6. Sessions as part of the online festival (delivered across 6 Feb to 12 Feb) included:

- Five interactive workshops for primary school classes co-led by industry professionals. They included sessions exploring roles in science, construction, and emergency and public services. One session focused on the skills needed for the workplace, and a session for the younger ages called 'Redraw the Balance' challenged stereotypes through engaging drawing activities.
 - Two interactive sessions for secondary school classes co-led by industry professionals. One session explored social media and IT, and a final session explored careers in trades and craftsmanship.
7. The delivery partner for the online sessions challenged stereotypes through the recruitment of industry volunteers that went against assumptions about who typically works in an industry.

Key findings from LCF 2025:

8. The following points provide headline summaries from the full evaluation report contained in **Appendix One**:
- An estimated 10,367 young people attended LCF 2025. Of these, 4,710 attended a live online session and 5,657 attended in-person. It is the highest in-person attendance since the festival began in 2019.
 - 167 businesses, training providers, and livery companies participated in the delivery of LCF 2025. They helped provide 48 insight sessions or workshops, of which 10 specialist sessions were available for those differently abled or with additional needs.
 - 14 partner businesses hosted one or more of the insight sessions or workshops on-location at a site or office in the Square Mile and beyond. This is an increase of 75% on 2024 and is the output of officer efforts to mobilise business support.
 - 85% of young people rated their experience as excellent or good, a rating that remains within a stable range across years 2023-25. Learners who attended an in-person session agreed that LCF helped them to:
 - Think about new careers options.
 - Understand how to gain new skills.
 - Discover new careers that [they] didn't know about.
 - Pupil feedback from the online week indicated that pupils discovered jobs that they did not know about. Teachers appreciated the time given to answer questions and said that pupils were noticeably keen to engage.

9. Key insights:

- 9.1 The festival continues to support schools with pupils receiving additional support in the way of Pupil Premium (PP). Around two thirds of the schools that attended an in-person session had a PP level of 31% or more.

- 9.2 The 2025 festival had increased engagement from schools in boroughs with previously low engagement. This is due to a targeted awareness raising campaign.
- 9.3 The top three industries that were both well-represented at LCF and of interest to young people were, Architecture and Construction; Creative, Design, and Performing Arts; Science, Technology, and Engineering.
- 9.4 There were two industries that were of interest to young people but were underrepresented at LCF. They are Business and Entrepreneurship; Online and Social Media.
- 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 were inclusive of or designed specifically for pupils who are differently abled or have additional needs.

Options

Item for information only.

Proposals

10. Four of the eight recommendations for 2026 are listed here (10.1 to 10.4). All eight recommendations can be found in **Appendix One**.

10.1 Empowering young people to feel like they could work in central London.

- 10.1.1 Increasing the number of workplace experiences in the Square Mile could support young people to feel like they want to work there.
- 10.1.2 Reinforcing the LCF approach of diverse representation and challenging stereotypes.

10.2 Increasing representation of sectors of interest to the attendees:

- 10.2.1 Business and Entrepreneurship
- 10.2.2 Online and Social Media

10.3 Young people sharing their own perspective and interacting with other young people

10.4 Enhancing on-the-day festival operations

Key Data

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

Corporate and Strategic Implications –

Strategic implications

11. LCF aligns with strategy outcomes as follows:

- 11.1 Corporate Plan 2024-29, contributing 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.
- 11.2 Education Strategy 2024-29, contributing directly to Outcomes 1 to 4 under Improving Employability in the Education Strategy 2024-2029.
- 11.3 LCF is a key contributor to the Destination City outcome of an inclusive and welcoming destination which attracts the next generation of talent.
- 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 career prospects for young people, particularly those facing the most challenge, by helping them to better understand how to secure the career of their choice in the Square Mile or be better equipped to start and run businesses.

Financial implications

- 12. The LCF budget is utilised to mobilise the festival's partners and volunteers by underpinning their efforts with planning and operational support. Furthermore, most of the specialist workshops for those with additional needs require some element of professional support provided by the LCF team or a specialist supplier. Continued financial support would secure this 'hybrid' approach that utilises volunteers, professionals, and officer capacity to ensure the festival is both delivered well and open to those of all abilities.

Resource implications

- 13. 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 that booked for LCF 2025 had a Pupil Premium (PP) rate of 31% or higher. Most schools that were new for 2025 had a PP rate of 31-60%, showing the increased reach of the festival to those schools receiving additional support.

15. Ten sessions were provided for learners differently abled or with additional needs. A designated quiet space was retained, as in previous years, ensuring an inclusive environment for those who are neurodiverse. Additionally, a training webinar on leading sessions for those who are neurodivergent was attended by fifteen festival partners or volunteers.

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

Conclusion

16. The London Careers Festival continues to provide a platform that mobilises City businesses and Livery Companies to support young Londoners with careers information and choices. Year-on-year, the festival has successfully grown its reach and engaged new schools, increased business participation, responded dynamically to attendee feedback and developments in the jobs market, plus enhanced its offer to those differently abled or with additional needs.
17. Future festivals should utilise the growing support of the business community and the increased popularity with schools across London to further showcase the Square Mile as a place of opportunity that welcomes all young Londoners.

Appendices

- **Appendix One - London Careers Festival 2025 Evaluation Report**

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