

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Education Board	Dated: 23/09/2025
Subject: Workforce Skills Development Performance Update	Public report: For information
This proposal: • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • delivers Education Strategy 2024-29 outcomes • delivers SME Strategy 2024-29 outcomes	Diverse engaged communities. Dynamic economic growth. 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?	City Cash, CIL and external grant funding
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Yes
Report of:	Judith Finlay CBE, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services
Report author:	Dr Deborah Bell, Strategic Director of Education and Skills

Summary

At its meeting on 2 December 2025 and 21 January 2025, Members of the Education Board sought clarity on the extent and impact of the City Corporation's collective skills development activities. This is framed through the lens of ensuring a skilled and diverse workforce that can drive dynamic economic growth in the City, London, and beyond. The paper provides the first annual update on skills development performance.

It is also set in the context of Members' ambition to develop a City Youth Guarantee for residents and City-affiliated students, complementing the proposed national Youth Guarantee. This report does not expand further on a City Youth Guarantee while the national pilots are still underway. Once findings from those pilots are

available, design options for a City approach will be brought back to the Education Board for consideration.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. Two key tenants of the City Corporation's Corporate Plan 2024-29 are *Dynamic Economic Growth: The City of London is the engine in the country's economy. Driving dynamic economic growth in financial and professional services at local, national, and international levels will create jobs, attract investment, and support businesses across communities and the country.* Also, *Providing Excellent Services: Supporting people to live healthy, independent lives and achieve their ambitions is dependent on excellent services. Vital to that continued pursuit is enabling access to effective adult and children's social care, outstanding education, lifelong learning, quality housing, and combatting homelessness.*
2. Skills development activity is structured across the City Corporation as illustrated below. This flightpath has been updated with activity during 2024-25:

SCHOOL

LORD MAYOR'S APPEAL

We Can Be

Inspiring young women to consider a career in the City
Annual. KS4. c.280 learners.

GUILDHALL SCHOOL

Young Artists

Performing and Production Arts for ages 4-18 in City, Kings Cross, Taunton, and Norwich.

EDUCATION STRATEGY UNIT

London Careers Festival

Ages 5 to 25, inc. for EHCP, SEND.
C. 10-15,000 learners.

Workshops, visits, webinars.

Work Experience Week

New for 2025. Summer. 20 learners.

CoLA KS4. Co-delivered with business.

Future Entrepreneurs

New for 2025. Summer. 30 learners.
CoLA or City-connected KS5.

VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Children and Young People with social worker ages 0-25
5 Apprentices aged 18+

EARLY CAREER

BARBICAN CENTRE

Backstage Experience Mornings

140 learners pa, KS3-5, schools with PP 35%+

Barbican Young Poets

Annual. Nov-Jun. Ages 16-29. 25 learners.

Barbican Young Film Programmers

Annual. Oct-Jun. Ages 16-29. 20 learners.

Work Experience Week

Annual. Summer. CoLA KS4, 10 learners.

PEOPLE & HR

Work Experience Week

New for 2025. Summer. 20 learners.

CoLA KS4. Co-delivered with Big Alliance.

Utilises City Corporation volunteers.

Apprenticeships Lvl 2&3, some Lvl 4-7

100 centrally funded per year.

Up to 20 extra externally funded.

ADULT SKILLS and EDUCATION SERVICE

Supported Internships.

7 places available but no eligible candidates in the City of London.

Learning Courses and Programmes

(multiple)

C. 3,000 learners / enrolments per year.

Please refer to accompanying board paper.

MID CAREER

INNOVATION AND GROWTH

Skills for a Sustainable Skyline

Bridging the skills gap for a globally competitive commercial built environment. The Skyline Skills Hub website has avg. 123,170 users per month.

Skills and Talent in UK FPS

Ongoing projects, reports, insights to maintain a strong talent FPS pipeline for London and UK.

Women Pivoting to Digital Taskforce

Support women with non-technical backgrounds to pivot to digital. Several Taskforce organisations have launched internal reskilling programmes.

AI Skills for the FPS Workforce

Unlocking employer investment in AI upskilling. Publicised in national/international forums.

Financial Capability in the Workplace

(Planned launch by end of 2025). Proposed outcome: *More employers take action to improve workforce financial capability, leading to increased access to financial wellbeing packages.*



The items here serve as a snapshot.
Please see accompanying board paper.



Prepared 2 Sep 2025

Current Position

Skills and Workforce Policy team

3. The Skills and Workforce Policy (SWP) team within the Department for Innovation and Growth leads the City Corporation's work to ensure London and the UK cultivate a strong pipeline of skills and talent for financial and professional services (FPS). This work underpins the sector's long-term global competitiveness:
 - a. The SWP team delivers this by running targeted projects, generating insights, and making evidence-based recommendations to inform policy. The focus is on driving systemic change in the Financial and Professional (FPS) sector and advocating for continued Government support in developing skills across the UK.
 - b. The aim is to foster a positive, lifelong learning culture, supported by employer investment. This approach helps build a strong domestic talent pool while also attracting the best global talent. It encourages businesses to upskill employees, recruit from the widest possible pool, and retain staff who can continue to contribute productively throughout their careers.
 - c. The SWP team's projects and insights provide direct value to FPS employers across the UK. The team engages with a wide range of large and small employers, co-creating solutions, convening stakeholders to align on policy priorities, and gathering frontline insights. The team also works closely with central and local government to ensure skills provision reflects employer needs. The focus is not on delivering services directly to employers or employees, but on enabling employers to meet their talent and skills challenges more effectively.
 - d. Current projects include:
 - i. The Women Pivoting to Digital Taskforce, which brings together business, government, third sector, and industry groups to bring more attention to and action around the digital talent solution that women from non-technical backgrounds provide. The Taskforce is chaired by Caroline Haines CC.
 - ii. The Skills for a Sustainable Skyline Taskforce, which is working to identify and bridge skill gaps to ensure that Central London has a globally competitive sustainable commercial built environment which we need to retain our world leading financial and professional services sector. The Taskforce is chaired by Keith Bottomley CC.
 - iii. Producing reports and insights on AI skills in the FPS sector, including our recent report on the Future of AI and the Workforce, which provided quantitative and qualitative analysis of how AI is impacting jobs across FPS sectors in front, middle and back-end jobs.

- iv. Producing reports and insights on international talent in the FPS sector, including our recent report on International Talent and Economic Impact, which reviews global competitor trends in national strategies, and rationales, for attracting global talent.
 - v. Collaboration with the Financial Services Skills Commission on skills needs in the FS sector and Progress Together on socio-economic diversity at senior levels in FS.
- e. Key impacts to date include:
- i. Women Pivoting to Digital Taskforce aims to help businesses close their digital talent gaps while empowering more women to pivot to a digital career by equipping them with technical skills to build a stronger, more inclusive future for the UK digital workforce.
 - 1. Over 100 businesses recruited to join and is Co-Chaired by Sheridan Ash, voted 2025 'Most Influential Woman in Tech'.
 - 2. Three organisations on the Taskforce have launched internal reskilling programmes with six others planning to launch similar programmes.
 - 3. Successful launch of a storytelling campaign, Turn to Tech, in Q2 of 2025 with 250+ signups for the newsletter and the most popular storytelling video viewed over 400 times on YouTube.
 - ii. Skills for a Sustainable Skyline Taskforce has influenced employers, local and national government and training providers to invest in green upskilling, reskilling and the attraction and retention of diverse new talent. It has done this by:
 - 1. The Skyline Skills Hub, which showcases over 100 green skills best practice resources and includes content from over 200 built environment firms.
 - 2. The upcoming Future Skyline Skills Commitment (an industry pledge to incentivise recruitment and retention of new talent), of which 35 firms have signed up and over 40 other firms are in the process of signing, in advance of the launch.
 - 3. Wider influence has resulted in Skills England and the Department for Education having designated construction as a priority sector, supported by the Chancellor's recent £600 million investment in construction training.
 - iii. AI Skills: Our joint report provides a robust, sector-specific evidence base on AI's impacts at a role and task level across FPS. It has since underpinned policy engagement, external events and parliamentary evidence.
 - 1. Evidence base taken into national and industry forums, shifting tone from fear to opportunity. Findings were cited in our memorandum to the House of Commons Treasury Committee inquiry into AI in financial services (Apr 2025) and used to brief/co-frame external engagements, including

Developing the right AI skills: futureproofing the FPS workforce (23 Oct 2024) and NextGenAI (26 Nov 2024).

2. Authoritative dataset now referenced by stakeholders.
- iv. International Talent: This work reframed the talent debate around productivity and competitiveness, gave a clear set of policy asks (including a UK Global Talent Strategy), and catalysed a follow-on programme of work on SMCR and international talent.
 1. Policy influence and alignment. Subsequent changes to the business visitor route and expansions to Youth Mobility Schemes were in line with our asks on business mobility and talent attraction highlighted in the programme's materials.
 2. Concrete follow-on policy programme. The report's recommendations seeded a sustained strand of work on the Senior Managers & Certification Regime (SMCR), resulting in this year's Mansion House announcement to conduct a new consultation with many significant changes proposed that we support.

The Adult Skills and Education Services

4. The Adult Skills and Education Services, within the Department of Community and Children's Services, delivers practical, operational programmes that provide measurable skills and qualifications to residents in the City and across London boroughs. This work focuses on helping Londoners move closer to the workforce or supporting career changes that respond to current and future skills needs. The current offer can be found here: [Adult Skills Education Service Prospectus 25/26](#).
5. In 2024/25, the Adult Skills and Education Services supported 80 apprentices, of whom 78 were City Corporation employees. Representation across the cohort was strong, with 52.5% female participation, 36% from ethnic minority backgrounds, and 22.5% aged 16–18. In addition, 18.8% of learners declared a learning difficulty and/or disability. The overall apprenticeship success rate rose significantly to 85.3% (from 69.2% in 2023/24), well above the last published national average of 60.5%.
6. Alongside apprenticeships, ASES delivered a broad portfolio of training programmes. In 2024/25, 218 participants successfully completed digital training courses, with 91 gaining interview opportunities or apprenticeships. A further 110 learners undertook intensive training in Data Science or Cybersecurity, with 79 progressing to interviews and 33 securing new jobs. The Multiply programme supported 385 learners in building numeracy confidence, while 103 learners participated in Bootcamp Green Retrofit programmes.
7. The City Corporation's involvement in community learning and wider engagement has also yielded strong outcomes. Over 1,000 residents took part in community learning programmes which prevent social isolation and promote wellbeing, whilst 1,200 school-aged children engaged in the DEFRA project. Together, these programmes demonstrate the reach and impact of ASES activity in equipping City residents and learners across London with the skills needed for progression into work and future opportunities.

The City Corporation's SME Strategy

8. The five-year City of London: Small and Medium Enterprise Strategy was agreed by Members of the Policy and Resources Committee in May 2024. Before the launch of the SME Strategy, there was no formal, coordinated approach to supporting small businesses within the City Corporation. While the Small Business Research + Enterprise Centre (SBREC) acted as the primary SME-facing function, many other departments – including City of London Police, Licensing, Planning, and Procurement – also interacted with SMEs, but this activity was fragmented and not centrally aligned or communicated. The SME Strategy was therefore developed to provide a coherent framework for support in line with the Destination City ambition for growth. It established three core priorities: (1) to de-silo operations across the Corporation; (2) to increase the visibility and accessibility of the universal support and training offer available to small businesses, and; (3) to design a new, targeted programme of support for early growth companies.
9. Significant progress has been made in the first year of the SME Strategy and the key achievements can be seen in the SME Strategy Factsheet Catalysing Business Growth: Highlights from the First Year. The priority for the first year was to streamline the City Corporation's services and training for SMEs by centralising our offer and breaking down internal silos. The SME team also wanted to increase access to all City Corporation SME services/training, connect with the wider SME ecosystem in the Square Mile through engagement of SMEs and key strategic partners, convene expertise from across the ecosystem to increase impact and increase the visibility of the SME Strategy itself.
10. The SME Delivery Team is currently situated within the Planning and Development Division and will soon transition to become part of the newly established City Business and Investment Unit (CBIU). In her report to the Policy and Resources Committee on 3 February 2025, Katie Stewart, Executive Director of Environment, outlined her proposal to create a dedicated CBIU. This new unit is intended to enhance the City Corporation's ability to proactively and dynamically attract, retain, and grow business and investment in the Square Mile.
11. SME Strategy - skills and training progress to date include:
 - a. SME Gateway: the SME Team is currently developing a new City Corporation sub-brand to unify existing services and training programmes, while also streamlining communications with SMEs. The first phase of this project focused on improving how SMEs navigate the City Corporation's website. Previously, SME-related services and training were dispersed across various sections of the site, making it difficult for users to find the information they needed. The SME Gateway web portal was launched in February 2025. This centralised hub, consolidates key SME services and training in one accessible location, significantly reducing the number of clicks required to access relevant support. The next stage aims to better reflect the dynamic start-up and entrepreneurial culture of the Square Mile and will include the development of targeted marketing materials to help SMEs better understand and access the support and training available to them. The full launch of the SME Gateway is scheduled for Autumn 2025, with a high-profile event led by the Lead Member for SMEs

- b. SME Conference: the City of London Corporation successfully delivered its first flagship SME Conference, called "Access to Finance for Early-Stage SMEs" in partnership with the British Business Bank. It attracted over 240 SMEs who were at seed and venture investment stage. This event was designed to provide valuable insights and expertise on securing funding, and featured industry leaders and investors who shared their knowledge and strategies. The annual conference will now continue each year, demonstrating the impact that the City Corporation can have on training and upskilling the City and London SME Ecosystem.
- c. SME Events and Training programme: the SME Team have delivered a robust learning and development programme in the first year of the SME Strategy with 110 free events and training, comprising 57 onsite events and 53 online webinars. These sessions have collectively attracted over 600 SMEs and featured 36 speakers and experts, with most attendees based in London.
- d. Outreach Programme: the SME Team actively engage in a wide range of outreach activities, significantly impacting and supporting the SME community across the City and London. Last year, the team attended and supported just under 100 outreach sessions and partner training programmes, marking a 14% increase from the previous year and supporting over 500 delegates. These sessions were tailored to groups ranging from one-to-ones and workshops for up to twenty people. The qualified Business Advisers support a wide cross section of disadvantaged delegates looking to start or grow their business with training.
- e. Small Business Research + Enterprise Centre (SBREC) Membership and Centre Usage: last year, the Centre has seen significant growth and improvement in both membership and usage. A total of 1,768 new members joined, representing a 39% increase compared to the previous year. Member retention has also notably improved, with a 50% rise in retention rates year-on-year. Footfall within the Centre has increased by 70%, with a monthly average of 184 members accessing services such as research training, business advice, and shared workspace, up from 108 the previous year. This figure excludes footfall related to events and room hire.
- f. E- Business Programme: the SME Team were successful in securing £260k UK Social Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in 2023 as part of the London E-Business Support Programme. The aim of the programme was to upskill SMEs to make better use of online marketing, AI and other digital technology to boost their business growth, enhance efficiency, and maximise performance and productivity. 160 SMEs attended training between November 2023 and March 2025. The SME team met all UKSPF targets, helping to create and safeguard jobs, improve the business' internal processes, helped clients introduce new digital tools and helped them to learn how to harness the power of social media and AI. The SME Team also exceeded the programme's diversity targets that had been set by the Greater London Authority (GLA).

g. Skills/Training Priorities for Year Two of the SME Strategy include:

- I. SME Gateway branding launch: Involves the creation of a dedicated corporate sub-brand for the SME Gateway.
- II. SME Business STEP Training Programme: Launch and deliver this new business support programme which is being funded by an additional UKSPF grant direct from the GLA. This programme will support 38 SMEs in the Square Mile who need business advice and training to grow their business.
- III. The second annual SME Conference: The UK Inclusive Sourcing Summit 2025 is a first-of-its-kind conference hosted jointly by the City of London Corporation, MSDUK, OutBritain, Social Enterprise UK, Veteran Owned UK, and WEConnect International to accelerate growth in inclusive procurement and support diverse-owned businesses across the UK. It is being held in the Old Library at the Guildhall on 11 and 12 September 2025.
- IV. Refresh of the Small Business Research + Enterprise Centre: The Head of SME Delivery will lead a review and refresh of SBREC to align the centre with the corporate SME Gateway branding and to build on the success of the centre's new self-contained location at the Guildhall. This will involve a potential new centre name and updated branding to better reflect its core identity as a leading start-up training zone in the Square Mile.
- V. Expanding SME Upskilling and training: To build on the successful training delivery in the first year of the strategy, officers are exploring how they can expand training opportunities provided to ensure a targeted training offer is provided for City SMEs. Therefore, in Autumn 2025, the SME team will be seeking approval from the Policy and Resources Committee to utilise a portion of the remaining Section 106 skills and training funding. If approved, this funding will be used to expand business advice and develop a series of SME training programmes.
- VI. Skills for a Sustainable Skyline – as part of the development of the CBIU team, the responsibility of this project will transition from the Skills and Workforce Policy Team in I&G to CBIU from 2026.

Apprenticeships, Work Experience, and Graduate Programmes

12. The recruitment of Apprentices to the City Corporation and co-ordination and delivery of work experience opportunities within the City Corporation is the responsibility of Learning and Development within Peoples Services.
13. The Learning and Organisational Development team, situated within the People and HR Department, leads the City of London Corporation's efforts to develop a skilled, inclusive, and future-ready workforce. Through a coordinated approach to apprenticeships, work experience, and graduate development, the team ensures that both new entrants and existing employees are supported in their professional growth, while also addressing organisational skills gaps.
14. **For Apprenticeships:**
 - a. The City of London Corporation currently supports two primary apprenticeship pathways: one for new entrants via centrally funded programmes, and another for existing employees seeking to upskill through the apprenticeship levy.

b. Pathway One: Centrally Funded Apprenticeships - this pathway is designed to provide accessible entry points into the workforce, particularly for individuals with lower levels of formal education. Priority is given to applicants with qualifications at GCSE level or below, ensuring that opportunities are inclusive and supportive of those who may face barriers to employment.

- I. Recent changes to funding regulations have removed the requirement for English and Maths GCSEs for applicants over the age of 19. This has broadened access to manual and vocational apprenticeships, which are often more appealing to individuals who prefer practical roles over administrative ones.
- II. The City of London Corporation's central apprenticeship fund currently supports the salaries of up to 100 apprentices at Levels 2 and 3. These apprenticeships operate on a rolling basis, with new recruits joining as others complete their programmes. Apprenticeships span a diverse range of disciplines, from Accounting (AAT) and Arboriculture to Zookeeping, reflecting the breadth of services delivered by the Corporation.
- III. Progression is actively encouraged, with level 2 apprentices supported to advance to Level 3 upon successful completion. At present, 100 apprentices are engaged across departments, and demand remains high. A waitlist of managers eager to host apprentices demonstrates the strong internal appetite for participation. This sustained interest allows the Corporation to maintain, and potentially exceed, the 100-apprentice benchmark without the need for additional promotion, thanks to growing organisational awareness of the value apprentices bring.

c. Pathway Two: Two: Apprenticeship Levy for Existing Employees - the second pathway enables current employees to access apprenticeship training as part of their ongoing professional development. Currently, 190 employees are undertaking apprenticeships ranging from Level 3 to Level 7, including degree-level programmes in senior leadership.

- I. These apprenticeships are strategically aligned with organisational priorities, with a strong emphasis on data literacy, leadership, and management. In addition, bespoke programmes have been sourced to meet the needs of specialist teams—for example, ecology apprenticeships within the Environment Department.
- II. This approach not only supports individual career progression but also strengthens the Corporation's internal capabilities and resilience.

15. For Work Experience:

- a. The City Corporation continues to welcome work experience students into departments, offering valuable exposure to both office-based and open-space environments. These placements provide young people with insights into the diverse career opportunities available within the organisation.

- b. Many requests for placements come directly from schools. Learning and Development received a request from the City of London Academies Trust (CoLAT). In the past year, five students from CoLAT schools completed structured placements consisting of one day per week over four weeks. These students gained experience across HR, Environment, and Facilities teams, including placements at the Guildhall and City schools.
- c. In partnership with the Big Alliance charity, the Corporation has also facilitated insight days for additional CoLAT students. These sessions provide an overview of the organisation, highlight work experience and apprenticeship opportunities, and include presentations from current graduate trainees, offering peer-to-peer insights into career pathways.

16. For Graduate Programme(s):

- a. The City Corporation launched its graduate programme in September 2024, welcoming an inaugural cohort of six graduates recruited through the IMPACT programme (formerly known as the National Graduate Development Programme, NGDP). This initiative is designed to attract high-potential individuals into public service careers, equipping them with the skills and experience needed to become future leaders.
 - b. Graduates undertake two six-month departmental rotations followed by a 12-month placement, allowing them to develop a deeper understanding of a key area while completing their Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) projects. The first cohort has contributed meaningfully across departments, bringing fresh perspectives and enhancing team dynamics.
 - c. A second cohort of nine graduates has been recruited and will join the organisation in September 2025. These individuals will initially be placed in departments aligned with their strengths and interests, with future rotations planned in response to organisational needs.
17. The City Corporation's integrated approach to apprenticeships, work experience, and graduate development demonstrates its commitment to workforce sustainability, inclusion, and professional growth. By investing in early career pathways and lifelong learning, these programmes create meaningful opportunities for individuals while delivering clear benefits to departments, with ongoing efforts focused on expanding access, enhancing quality, and aligning initiatives with strategic workforce priorities.

Education Strategy Unit

18. The Education Strategy Unit (ESU) has 'Improving Employability' as a key facet of the Education Strategy 2024-29 to deliver. Actions are;
- a. Better leverage the City Corporation's links with employers to contribute to the 'London Bridge the Gap' initiative currently being driven by the City of London Academies Trust, to help all learners – including those with SEND, and especially those without equal access – understand the landscape of careers and development opportunities in the Square Mile, access world-class careers pathways, and gain professional connections.

- b. Work collaboratively with ASES and our central apprenticeships team to help students leaving the Family of Schools better understand apprenticeships and access high quality City-based opportunities.
- c. Better support learners leaving the Family of Schools, especially those in need of extra support, who are interested in entrepreneurship and innovation by working collaboratively with our Small Business Research + Enterprise Centre.
- d. Map the landscape of Green Careers to offer learners a comprehensive overview and signpost them to careers pathways and green career development opportunities.
- e. Refresh and relaunch FindFusion, positioning the platform as a knowledge hub that helps educators understand what Fusion Skills are, why they are so important to employers, and how they can help their learners to develop them.

19. In the ten months since the Education Strategy 2024-29 was approved, associated activity has delivered the following:

- a. Delivery of the London Careers Festival which took place over 2 weeks both in-person and digitally, engaging 167 employers representing 13 sectors and offering 48 workshop opportunities to learners aged 4 - 18. Approximately 10,300 learners participated. 82% reported that the events they attended were either good or excellent.
- b. Delivery of a two-day 'Future Entrepreneurs' event designed to encourage and support aspiring entrepreneurs. The event was developed by the ESU and delivered in collaboration with SBREC and Northeastern University. Following the event, 100% of participants reported they had a better understanding of entrepreneurship, 71% reported they felt more confident with the idea of becoming an entrepreneur and 92% reported they felt more confident engaging with the world of work.
- c. To assist some of the City-sponsored academies, delivery of a 1-week work experience adjacent programme was achieved. This was not in itself work experience - it was a programme designed to help young people who had not managed to secure work experience elsewhere to still improve their knowledge of the workplace, and to interact with a selection of employers via workshops. When asked if they felt the experience was of benefit, 82% of participants answered 'Yes'. When asked if it had improved their confidence in engaging with the world of work, 55% of participants answered 'Yes'.
- d. Complete structural and visual redesign of the FindFusion website with relaunch is scheduled for Q4 2025. Signposting to at least 50 employability skills development programmes or workshops will be available to users at launch.
- e. Opportunity for warm introductions to 44 organisations offering employability development opportunities has been shared with the *London Bridge the Gap* project via CoLAT by the ESU.

- f. Termly Skills forums have been facilitated by the ESU, engaging 25 teachers across the family of schools, with 12 curated skills opportunities shared with participants across the 3 sessions.
- g. Work focused on mapping the landscape of Green Careers will begin in the second half of the 2025/26 academic year as originally planned, and delivery of the apprenticeships-focused event will take place in the first half of the 2025/26 academic year. The latter will be delivered via a collaboration with the central apprenticeships team.

20. Immediate impacts of the activity outlined above include:

- a. **Scale and employer activation:** engagement of 167 employers and 10,300 learners demonstrate substantive reach and employer activation, helping to underpin local labour-market pathways.
- b. **Proximal learning outcomes:** consistently high self-reported gains in confidence and understanding provide short-term indicators of increased careers readiness; these measures are useful initial evidence of positive impact in lieu of full-scale destination tracking.
- c. **Inclusion and mitigation of access gaps:** the work-experience adjacent offer and curated enterprise support ensured that learners who would otherwise have been excluded from placements received employer exposure and workplace awareness. This aligns with current concerns about skills supply and employer demand.

21. The quantitative figures, collected through ESU monitoring, reflect scale and participation data. Qualitative measures are self-reported assessments of immediate and short-term impacts on participants' confidence and understanding after each activity.

Options

Members are invited to note this report.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications: Delivery of skills programmes directly supports the Corporation's strategic priority to develop a skilled, diverse workforce that underpins economic growth in the City, London and beyond.

Financial implications: ASES delivery is funded by grants secured from the Department for Education, Department for Work and Pensions and the Greater London Authority. Learning and Development apprenticeships are funded through the City Corporation's Apprenticeship Levy. Skills Policy work is resourced through Section 106 and Innovation & Growth local budgets, while Education Strategy Unit activity is funded through City Cash.

Resource implications: The delivery of skills training requires accessible public spaces. ASES currently uses Golden Lane Community Centre and City libraries, at a cost not covered by grant income. This presents an ongoing risk in terms of both cost and suitability.

Legal implications: None.

Risk implications: Non-delivery of funded projects against targets.

Equalities implications: All services for resident and non-resident learners are delivered in full compliance with the Public Sector Equalities Duties and the Equality Act 2010. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is embedded across the Skills & Workforce Policy Team's work, with initiatives such as the *Women Pivoting into Digital* Taskforce driving gender equality in technology and digital roles, and collaboration with Progress Together supporting socio-economic diversity.

Climate implications: Green skills development is reflected in both the Skills Policy Team's strategic work and ASES's operational delivery, including retrofit and sustainability programmes.

Security implications: Cyber security training forms a core element of the ASES prospectus.

Conclusion

Members have received a summary of skills development activity across the City Corporation during 2024-25. Members will receive proposals for a City Youth Guarantee when learning from the national pilot is available. Members will expect to receive an annual summary of skills development activity as agreed at Education Board on 21st January 2025.

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