

# City of London Corporation Committee Report

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| <b>Committee(s):</b><br>Education Board   | <b>Dated:</b><br>22/01/2026   |
| <b>Subject:</b><br>Education Strategy 2024-29 - Year 1 Update   | <b>Public report:</b><br>For Information  |
| <b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Diverse Engaged Communities</b></li> <li>• <b>Providing Excellent Services</b></li> <li>• <b>Leading Sustainable Environment</b></li> </ul> |
| <b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>  | No  |
| <b>If so, how much?</b>   | N/A   |
| <b>What is the source of Funding?</b>   | City's Estate   |
| <b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>   | Yes   |
| <b>Report of:</b>   | Strategic Director of Education & Skills - Dr Deborah Bell  |
| <b>Report author:</b>   | Torri Stewart, Lead Officer, Strategy & Impact  |

## Summary

This report provides Members with an overview of Year 1 delivery of the Education Strategy 2024–29. It:

- Summarises activity across five priority areas, including 38 ESU-led initiatives and 130 funded projects engaging over 56,000 participants
- Highlights key outcomes such as strengthened collaboration, enriched cultural access, improved employability pathways, and enhanced educational experiences
- Notes early learnings and areas for improvement, including longer-term impact evaluation, progression routes, and further widening reach for learners facing the most challenge

## **Recommendation(s)**

Members are asked to:

- Note the findings shared in this report.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. The Education Board has oversight of the City of London Corporation's Education Strategy 2024-29. The strategy sets out how the City Corporation will extend and enrich education for City-linked learners by using its assets, partnerships and convening power to provide 'additionality' that will help learners flourish in a rapidly changing world. The strategy is underpinned by a commitment to increasing social mobility for learners facing disadvantage.
2. Delivery is structured around five priority areas:
  - Reinforcing Safety, Health and Wellbeing
  - Promoting Personal Development
  - Embracing Culture, Creativity and the Arts
  - Improving Employability
  - Supporting Educational Excellence
3. Within each priority area sit a number of strategic actions supported by a range of small and large projects, events, tools and funding mechanisms – many of which contribute to more than one priority area. This mix of components and accompanying strategy structure was informed by extensive stakeholder and Member input and approved by Members of the Education Board.
4. As the first year of a new strategy, delivery has balanced continuing established programmes with piloting new activity, alongside the introduction of baseline measures and performance capture processes which will be iterated annually.

### **Current Position**

5. The ESU delivered 38 initiatives, events and tools, in the first year of the strategy, engaging 10,000+ learners and 300+ education sector professionals. In parallel, the ESU managed the funding and evaluation of a further 130 projects funded via the City Premium Grant, School Visits Fund and Cultural & Creative Learning funding, utilising £2,410,000 and engaging 46,000+ participants, predominantly from schools in disadvantaged areas.

6. Across the five priority areas, participant feedback tells us activity has helped educators and learners build advocacy for healthier choices and outdoor learning, build personal confidence and Fusion Skills, engage more deeply with culture, creativity and the arts, improve their understanding of the workplace and career pathways, and benefit from educational enhancement through events, grant-funded projects and strengthened collaboration across the City Family of Schools. Some headlines from across the priority areas include:
7. Supporting Educational Excellence - Activity in this area combined grant management, events delivery, collaboration across the Family of Schools, and sector-facing research and engagement. The City Premium Grant funded 118 improvement-focused projects with 86% reporting positive outcomes and 78% of schools applying learnings from previous projects. A suite of Guildhall-based learner events (including the London Careers Festival, City Maths Challenge, City Maths Tournament and City Schools Concert) reached 10,655 learners. These events all continued to prove highly popular and were well-received with 90% of learners reporting the events were beneficial and 91% of educators reporting the opportunities had enhanced learners' education experiences.
8. The ESU also engaged 183 external education-focused professionals through conferences and network events and oversaw two research projects spanning SEND provision and music education. These research projects sparked interest across the education sector, central government and parts of the wider academic community. Across this strand, 82% of respondents reported their involvement motivated them to embrace and help drive innovation in education.
9. In addition, the ESU's convening and communications activity supported collaboration across the City Family of Schools, including 12 City Schools Forums (164 attendances) and a weekly newsletter sharing 199 opportunities and insights with 171 educators and education-focused professionals, with consistently positive feedback reported.
10. Reinforcing Safety, Health and Wellbeing - Activity focused on creating and signposting opportunities that strengthen advocacy around healthy living and environmental and outdoor learning. The new City Schools Health Challenge engaged 187 learners from five schools in a co-designed, and well received non-competitive format. Respondent feedback told us 74% enjoyed the experience with 62% reporting an increased motivation to stay fit in the longer term.
11. Also throughout the year, the ESU's consistent Environmental & Outdoor Learning (EOL) communications and its online 'EOL InfoHub' signposted or connected educators with 98 partners, opportunities and resources. The ESU also supported educators from the Family of Schools and officers from the Natural Environment department in establishing the Natural Environment Youth Board.
12. Embracing Culture, Creativity and the Arts - The year continued to broaden access to high-quality cultural and creative enrichment. Approximately 1,000 learners from disadvantaged backgrounds accessed bespoke experiences delivered by cultural and creative learning partners, with increased interest in arts

and culture reported. Alongside this, around 1,500 learners from schools with high pupil premium levels accessed creative and cultural experiences via the School Visits Fund.

13. An Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI) focused CPD offer for cultural partners to strengthen inclusive delivery was well-received, with 100% of participants reporting confidence gains in better supporting learners facing additional challenges.
14. Promoting Personal Development - Delivery centred on establishing vehicles that will help build social capital and Fusion Skills, and amplify learner voice. The ESU launched Step Up Mentoring, a new 3-year London-wide programme for care-experienced young Londoners, funded through the Town Clerk's Transformation Fund, intended to connect them with the Square Mile and build life skills, networks and prospects.
15. A creative personal development programme pilot demonstrated short term skills gains, and a new small-scale learner engagement initiative began to strengthen co-production of future strategy activity. For the latter activity, 75% of participants reported increased motivation in voicing opinions on the design of their education experience and increased motivation to invest in their personal development.
16. Improving Employability - Activity placed an emphasis on exposure, connections and clarity of pathways. The ESU established or strengthened relationships with 82 Square Mile employers and introduced 19 additional organisations from a range of employment sub-sectors to *London Bridge the Gap*.
17. New insight events on apprenticeships and entrepreneurship were well received: 100% of apprenticeship event respondents reported improved understanding and confidence around apprenticeships, and 71% of Future Entrepreneurs respondents reported increased confidence to pursue entrepreneurial aspirations.
18. Additionally, *FindFusion*, (the City Corporation's bespoke platform designed to signpost learners and educators to skills development opportunities), was completely redesigned and soft-launched for testing.
19. As expected for year one of a new strategy, several opportunities for improvement have been identified alongside positive early outcomes. These include:
  - Finding opportunities to strengthen longer-term impact evaluation to enable longitudinal tracking
  - Building in more follow-up and progression routes to support sustained progress rather than one-off experiences (including improved signposting and repeat touch-points)
  - Continuing to widen reach for learners facing the greatest barriers

- Scaling what has worked and protecting quality as volumes increase

## **Options**

20. N/A

## **Proposals**

21. N/A

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications -**

Strategic implications

22. This work is aligned with and will contribute to the outcomes of the City Corporation's Corporate Plan 2024-29, specifically 'Providing Excellent Services', 'Diverse Engaged Communities' and 'Leading Sustainable Environment'.

Financial implications

23. None, existing approved resources will continue to be deployed.

Resource implications

24. None, existing approved resources will continue to be deployed.

Legal implications

25. None

Risk implications

26. None

Equalities implications

27. The proposal within this report complies with the City Corporation's Public Sector Equality Duty 2010. It is built on the new Education Strategy's commitment to improve educational EEDI and will work to improve education experiences for all - especially those without equal access.

Climate implications

28. None

Security implications

29. None

## **Conclusion**

30. The first year of Education Strategy 2024-2029 delivery has established a stable foundation for ongoing programme delivery and reporting, while maintaining a balance between established activity and piloting new interventions. Year one delivery demonstrates strong reach across learners, employers and sector professionals, with particularly strong engagement through funded projects, major events, and the ESU's convening role across the City Family of Schools.
31. The coming year will focus on building on what has worked, strengthening follow-on pathways and longer-term evaluation, and continuing to target opportunity towards learners facing the greatest barriers - ensuring the City's "additionality" offer continues to mature in both scale and impact for those who stand to benefit most.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Education Strategy - Year 1 Update

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