

Livery Education Working Party – Report on the contribution to education by Livery Companies

A. PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER

The City of London Corporation (COLC) is devoting increasing focus to provision of education across its remit – evidenced by the recently completed Education Strategy paper and establishment of a newly formed Education Board. During the course of the strategy review it became clear that contributions across the Square Mile towards education should usefully include and certainly not exclude those contributions made by the Livery Companies (LCs).

It was felt sensible to set up a small working group with connections to the Livery and ask it to:

- Document briefly the contribution of Livery companies to education and how it relates to the City
- Document work done by the Livery Schools Link (LSL)
- Suggest areas where more work might be done, how it might be taken forward to include possible sharing of experience, encouragement to review (and increase) contributions and explore the benefit of a better resourced central service.

This summary report represents the outcome of the review. It makes certain recommendations for simple changes which might work to the benefit of all parties.

B. BACKGROUND

The City of London has been involved in education since medieval City tradesmen began teaching their trades to apprentices. The introduction of Guilds led to the creation of LCs - each with a link to the practice of a particular trade. Some of those original working links still remain. New links have been established by newer LCs formed by more modern trades and professions. Some older links have vanished, as the original trade has changed or disappeared. In many of these cases, that trade link has been replaced by fiduciary responsibility for schools, often via will trusts (Mercers/Dean Colet, Grocers/Sir William Laxton, Haberdashers/William Jones, Fishmongers/Sir John Gresham, Skinners/Sir Andrew Judde) which have resulted in deep involvement in educational provision for hundreds of years.

The Livery Schools Link (LSL) was constituted in 2004 to promote support for schools in the Greater London area from LCs hoping to prepare young people for the world of work. Current membership comprises 55 LCs (out of 110) each of which subscribes £95 per year. The revenue is used to fund the administrator's post and meet the cost of events intended to link Companies to educational institutions, including the Livery Showcase and the June 2014 Headteachers Conference.

LSL holds a central register of volunteers who work in London schools or who are governors. Regular bulletins are published about educational programmes in London with volunteer vacancies. It has also embarked on a schools art project to mark the 100th anniversary of the First World War.

C. INITIAL FINDINGS

The group aimed to start its review with an open mind – aiming to gain a broad overview of what is currently provided by LCs across the City remit, and then provide an objective set of recommendations of how those workings might usefully be changed and improved.

One thing became very clear – there is no such thing as a “Livery Movement”. Each LC is different – holding individual purposes, aspirations and traditions. Governance structures are all different. Nevertheless it is possible to separate LCs into three broad categories of educational involvement:

1. Management and governance of schools

A small number of LCs have responsibility for direct management and governance of schools, either as proprietor or sponsor. In addition some LCs are responsible for the promotion of school governor positions from their membership, sometimes with allocated places to fill. Some LCs (eg Mercers and Haberdashers) have also chosen to appoint full time Executive Heads of Education given the scale of their commitments.

10 London LCs and 2 regional LCs have direct involvement. A further 2 London LCs and 1 regional LC are also involved in appointing school governors. These numbers reflect about 10% of whole.

5 of the Great 12 Companies are involved in this activity. 1 has a single school - increasing up to 14 from Haberdashers and 17 from Mercers. It is not clear which Companies promote school governors or how many each Company can appoint; nevertheless it seems unlikely that less than 200 school governors are appointed under the auspices of a LC to at least 60 schools.

2. Grant giving

The majority of Companies give grants to schools through scholarships, bursaries and prizes. Headline figures suggest that 77 Companies gave prizes to over 400 educational institutions, including schools, further and higher education institutions. Most funds are donated through trusts or endowments via a charitable structure. Some Companies have set up educational trusts in addition to the Company’s regular charitable trust, including some not directly associated with the management of schools.

The records available for charitable giving make it difficult to ascertain the full picture. In some cases, funds are too small to require accounting under Charity Commission guidelines; in other cases, it is not easy to strip out exact numbers without proper review. The most recent review produced for the Lord Mayor and Livery Committee suggests that in 2010 some £21m was donated by LCs to Education – with support provided to 37 primary schools, 16 preparatory schools, 54 secondary schools, 44 independent schools and 11 6th form colleges. The figures quoted in this report are the amount spent in any one year.

Although the majority of LCs donate to educational institutions, it appears that for many the association ends there. There also exists some “non-grant giving involvement” such as that provided by the Salters with Chemistry education.

3. Direct association with industry

25% of LCs are involved in promoting their trade through apprenticeships or direct links with the industry. Although some old trades no longer exist, the numbers of new LCs with modern professional relevance have increased – such as the Information Technologists and Educators.

There are two distinct areas of involvement in the associated industry – support of training and apprenticeships (eg Fishmongers and Spectacle Makers) and setting of industry standards, including kite marks and quality assurance (eg Goldsmiths and Butchers). Some LCs are involved

on both fronts. The Livery Company apprenticeship scheme will place up to 52 apprentices across 15 Livery trades, and intends to make that a sustainable trend.

D. MATTERS TO ADDRESS

Overall it is clear that there is material involvement and expertise in “Education”, particularly from a small number of the older LCs allied to widespread involvements from many of the newer LCs with their own “modern” industry. The likelihood is that a large number of all LCs would like to expand their involvement with education and training if other routes could be found.

At present the only real attempt to provide some sort of co-ordinating link is that provided by the Livery Schools Link. LSL has ambitions to expand its membership and the services it provides. It is currently working on a database that will enable schools and other organisations (such as Education and Business Partnerships) to publicise programmes and events requiring volunteers. This will increase the connectivity with LCs and make it easier for Companies to get involved. It also wants to increase its own resources and capacity to support Companies in engaging these opportunities and connecting organisations beyond schools, such as the School Governors One-Stop Shop (SGOSS).

Three points spring readily to mind.

1. There is little or no co-ordination of LC activities – whether with other LCs or COLC. All LCs largely work on an autonomous and stand-alone basis.
2. Although there are some external bodies that may be able to provide assistance, there is no central resource able to support or facilitate educational activities, LSL has neither the resource to achieve its intended aims nor the “buy in” to make it fully representative and viable.
3. It remains difficult to collate accurate information about all LC activities. As a result the full value provided by LCs to Education is probably undersung to the outside world.

It is unrealistic to expect individual LCs to change materially their existing strategy. In many cases educational links are hundreds of years old – and in other cases links with existing trades are too strong and proudly held.

Yet there do appear to be many advantages that might be gained for all stakeholders, if COLC was able to support a co-ordinated approach, which allowed LCs to continue with their current links, enabled a much greater degree of sharing of information and learning, and work towards aligning their educational strategies over a number of years.

This paper specifically excludes any material consideration of work currently performed by the Livery Company Skills Council (LCSC) which fell outside the working group’s brief. LCSC currently has no in-house secretariat. It does not require any great stretch of imagination to see how such work might be absorbed easily and logically into a single over-arching strategy – running from education, through skills/technical training and onwards into employment.

E. PROPOSALS

A number of simple proposals might be considered.

1. Create a central Lord Mayor's Education Office

LSL has limited resources and buy in from about half of all LCs, including some notable absentees from the major "Educating" LCs. The result is a link that is not fully utilised and unable to reach its proper potential.

It is therefore proposed that a central resource be created that will link the Livery education contribution, promote collaboration and identify opportunities for further Livery involvement in education. The resource should be branded by the Lord Mayor, be based at Guildhall, and initially funded by the COLC (thereafter ideally self-funded/or funded partly from a COLC resource such as the City Bridge Trust) up to an estimated cost of £75,000 per annum for two years, encompassing base salary, employment costs, and office space. The role is not expected to involve more than a single FTE, who over time should ideally also provide similar support for technical training and apprenticeships which would create a holistic "start to finish" schooling and skills resource.

The link should be facilitative NOT prescriptive. It should be given responsibility to:

- a. maintain a skills and volunteer database
- b. identify and/or arrange Livery wide training initiatives such as those for school governors
- c. document/update/disseminate educational activities and events organised by different LCs
- d. organise, and provide funding for, such educational activities as are seen to promote educational involvement from LCs across the City
- e. work to identify areas of education which could benefit from greater Livery involvement and/or funding.

2. Establish Livery-wide governance structure

LSL is currently administered by a management committee, with members drawn from 7 LCs. Its work is undertaken by an administrator, who is paid a small stipend.

It is proposed that a new management board be set up perhaps comprising:

- a. 9 LC representatives (three from each of the Educational, Training and Donor groups, including Master Educator as an ex officio post)
- b. 2 Common Councilmen, at least one Member of the Education Board
- c. Chairman from whichever COLC body provides initial funding.

The board should meet no more than quarterly. Positions should ideally be held on a three year rotating basis to ensure the benefits of change and continuity.

After two years of operation, it is proposed to charge each LC a membership fee, perhaps adopting a two or three tier system, depending on individual LC desire to receive bulletins, access data, and/or attend events, with the aim to move to a more self-funded approach as the link starts to generate real value.

3. Provide clear goals based on a project based approach

The office should be set clearly defined goals. Those goals should be capable of being measured and reviewed at least every two years. The first aim must be to attract 100% support from all LCs within the first 12 months of operation.

Other goals that might be logical to adopt and easy to measure might include:

- Amount of donations made each year.
- Numbers of governors provided.
- Number of work experience openings on offer.
- Numbers of apprenticeships provided by current LC trades.
- New Academy “sponsorships” taken on.

F. BENEFITS OF CHANGE

Such approach should generate a number of obvious benefits – many of which could be measured easily:

1. Increased and possibly more targeted LC funding of education.
2. Production of more school governors and improvement in their training. Training events would also provide informal networking connections between state and independent sectors.(For example the Grocers have recently accepted an offer to provide 12 governors for four Academy schools).
3. Creation of a genuine “working link” not only between different kinds of LCs, but also between children, parents and schools – able for example to highlight bursary availability, internship openings, potential governors and funding opportunities, which individuals might otherwise not know about or be unable to fill from their own resources.(For example, the Haberdashers are stretched to provide governors for their extensive school commitments from their membership alone).
4. Provision of a simple Livery “ladder of opportunity” connecting schools with prospective employers. As mentioned above, such information might highlight also potential funding opportunities which LCs wishing to commit funds for education might like to consider.
5. Facilitation of a coordinated strategy which aligns LCs with COLC in the medium term – enabling all parties to make better use of existing skillsets and also publicise their contributions to the outside world.

These benefits above are all measurable. Success would be easy to judge. In general terms there are other less measurable but just as significant benefits:

- Gradually widening availability of increasingly expert governors
- “Bringing together” of COLC and LC supported schools from Independent and Academy sectors
- Greater awareness of educational opportunities
- Increased injection of “business acumen” into Academies
- Improved social mobility perhaps for pupils, teachers and governors alike
- Possibility of improved job availability for children within a more integrated network of schools and potential employers
- Opportunity to create a COLC link (potential consultancy service) with other London boroughs and their schools

G. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

These proposals are simple in their execution but far reaching in their possible outcome. The combined forces of LCs provide the COLC with a huge pool of proven expertise and possible extra funding if they can be marshalled in a way that can retain individuality but ally it to a sense of common purpose.

If accepted by the COLC the essential next stage would be to gain acceptance of this concept from the Livery. Given the conclusions of this paper, the most logical approach would involve appointment of a small action team comprising perhaps two Common Councilmen (ideally with strong links to the Livery) plus a nominated member of staff from Guildhall to discuss the broad approach with interested stakeholders.

Those stake holders, current and potential should reflect those entities set out below, and probably should be approached in the following order of appearance:

1. Chairman of the COL Policy & Resources Committee and thereafter the main Committee
2. 8-9 Livery Companies with significant involvement in management of schools or appointment of governors
3. Livery Companies with major involvement in training or standards of current trades
4. Livery Company of Educators who set up LSL

The team should be tasked with achieving consensus if at all possible by mid-autumn 2014 with a further remit to construct a simple action plan to take effect on or about the same date.

If successful, the plan will allow the COLC to optimise unique resources at its disposal, and provide a coordinated strategy for education across the City, across all sectors, allowing it to shape political debate, promote the City and above all improve life chances of young people.

Success will be easy to measure – full sign up for membership of the link from all Livery Companies, Livery funding for education not just increased but carefully targeted to achieve maximum benefit from students and trades, and a wider recognition from the public at large of the contributions given to education by City practitioners.

The result will underscore the relevance of LCs, highlight the extensive work of the COLC with broad provision of education across a diverse community, and ultimately improve access and quality of education across that community.

Finally it should be stressed that in the limited time available this paper has not sought to cover the broader aspects of education in which LCs and COLC are involved – whether cadets/BTEC qualifications, City and Guilds or support for tertiary education such as the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, City University or Gresham College. Nor has it sought to include or make similar proposals for a central resource to support the professional training or apprenticeships provided by many LCs. The addition of such support as promoted by LCSC has been briefly mentioned. Such resource would sit comfortably and logically with the proposed LMEO – able to allow all LCs to carry on doing what they do best, able to feed off each other's initiatives and provide added value to children, parents, teachers and employers as part of an enhanced COLC education strategy.

APPENDIX 1 – LIVERY COMPANY CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION