

EDUCATION BOARD

Thursday, 24 September 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Board held virtually on Thursday, 24 September 2020 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Ann Holmes (Chair)	Shravan Joshi
Caroline Haines (Deputy Chair)	Alderman Nicholas Lyons
Randall Anderson	Benjamin Murphy
Tijs Broeke	Deputy Philip Woodhouse
Henry Colthurst	Rachel Bower
Alderman Sir Peter Estlin	Dr Ioan Davies

In Attendance

Officers:

Polly Dunn	- Town Clerk's Department
Kerry Nicholls	- Town Clerk's Department
Chandni Tanna	- Town Clerk's Department
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Ellen Wentworth	- Chamberlain's Department
Anne Pietsch	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Anne Bamford	- Department of Community & Children's Services
Daniel McGrady	- Department of Community & Children's Services
Fatema Chowdhury	- Department of Community & Children's Services
Barbara Hamilton	- Community and Children's Services Department

Observers

Mark Emmerson	CEO, City of London Academies Trust
Dr Jane Overbury (item 11)	

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor William Russell, Deborah Knight and Ruby Sayed.

The Chair welcomed Shravan Joshi to his first meeting of the Board.

The Chair stated that she would take *For Information* items as read unless a Member of the Board had a specific question. Items *For Discussion* would be open for comment.

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

Shravan Joshi had a non-public declaration which was granted exemption from the public by the Comptroller & City Solicitor in his capacity as Monitoring Officer.

3. **PUBLIC MINUTES**

The public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 23 July 2020 were approved as a correct record.

4. **PUBLIC OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Members received a report of the Town Clerk regarding outstanding actions of the Board. The following matters were raised:-

- Item 1/2020/P was considered well bedded into practice and the Board agreed to remove it from the actions list.
- Item 3/2020/P (marked completed): Members discussed meeting the skills requirements of COLAT LGBs. CoLAT Trustees, enacted through LGB Chairs, are responsible for governor recruitment to vacancies which includes assessing the LGB's skill requirements as per the Department for Education's Governance Handbook. LBG Chairs inform the Education Unit of an upcoming vacancy to seek nominations from the Court of Common Council and Governors for Schools. At this point, LBG Chairs provide the City's Education Unit with information regarding skills requirements. Whilst many of the skills requirements were covered by current governors, there was generally a lack of diversity which needed addressing.
- Item 7/2020/P related to the work of the Tomlinson Review which was ongoing.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

5. **EDUCATION BOARD BUDGET UPDATE FOR 2020/21 FINANCIAL YEAR**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding the Education Board's budget update for the 2020/21 financial year.

A question was raised on the reported repurposed budget, specifically regarding what it had been spent on. It was confirmed that the funds had been repurposed to achieve similar or the same ends as set out in the annual action plan. For example, some events were still held virtually, which incurred different costs to meet the same objectives.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

6. **EDUCATION ACTIVITIES UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding the Education Activities update. The following matters were raised:-

- Whilst the HeadStart programme had been successful (and necessary due to the impacts of COVID-19), members of the Board were keen to adopt a longer-term strategy that would mitigate the need to constantly revisit additional summer provisions. Members requested a strategy proposal alongside a budget plan be drawn up to address the disadvantage gap in its schools. This was something that the City of London Corporation Academies Trust (COLAT) might take forward.
- On skills, it was noted that the London Careers Festival (LCF) resources were immensely valuable and available all year round.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

7. **COVID-19 UPDATE**

Members received a verbal update from the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the City's Family of Schools.

All the City's Family of Schools had now reopened. Overall, the return had been positive with staff and pupils excited to return. The recovery curriculum was both broad and balanced, with extra resources directed to wellbeing and behaviour. There had been an extraordinary effort from staff and teachers to return in a safe and timely manner. Frontline workers had been under a lot of pressure and the Board noted its huge thanks to all those who had been working both on the return to school and throughout the pandemic.

Attendance rates were close to normal although there had been a slight decline in recent weeks with some students and staff self-isolating.

Dining facilities in some schools remained an issue.

Members discussed flu vaccinations noting that teachers did not fall into a priority group unless they also fell into a different category (e.g. those with long-term health conditions such as asthma). There was no COLAT budget to provide flu jabs for teachers. It would be up to each individual academy if this was something they wished to explore. As the City of London independent schools were formally part of the City of London Corporation, those employed by them would qualify for the City's flu jab scheme. The same benefit could not be readily extended to the academies within COLAT as they were a separate entity. The Chamberlain advised that to fund such an activity would likely need the formal approval of Resource Allocation Sub-Committee. On recommendation from the Chair, the Board agreed to seek informal soundings on the matter.

RESOLVED, that the update be noted.

8. **TACKLING RACISM TASKFORCE UPDATE**

Members received a verbal update regarding the work of the Tackling Racism Taskforce.

The Chair invited Shравan Joshi, as a member of the TRT, to address the Board. The TRT had established a number of key areas that required their consideration including, but not limited to: staff, culture, governance and education. Ultimately it is the aim of the Taskforce to bring to Policy and Resources Committee and the Establishment Committee, a number of recommendations on their findings.

Members were invited to send any thoughts or considerations they wished to share with the TRT, to the Clerk for collation.

It was noted that the Education Unit held diversity data across the schools, based on the Department for Education's approved groupings and that the Deputy Chair had attended the previous TRT meeting as a guest.

RESOLVED, that the update be noted.

9. TOMLINSON REVIEW UPDATE

Members received an update from the Chair regarding the Tomlinson Review.

The Board were informed that the Education Grants Working Party had not met as planned as there had been no capacity to draw together a funding model that reflected Sir Mike Tomlinson's recommendations during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was hoped that this would be ready for the end of October 2020. It was noted that any proposed funding model should be allowed for within the forthcoming budgeting exercise and the Board agreed that a resolution should go to the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee to ensure that this was not overlooked.

Members were pleased that a number of Sir Mike Tomlinson's recommendations had been captured in the City's Governance Review conducted by Lord Lisvane. The Board agreed that, in light of the Governance Review, the Tomlinson Review should be made public even though the City's responses to the recommendations were not finalised. This action would be followed up by the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED that,

- The update be noted; and
- The Resource Allocation Sub-Committee be given formal advanced notice of the proposed new funding model for schools (which is hoped to form part of a new policy on the balance of funding between the City's academies and its independent schools), so it can be included in the City's next budgeting exercise.

10. GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS UPDATE

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding an update on Governor Appointments.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

11. **REVIEW OF SIXTH FORM PROVISION**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding a Review of Sixth Form Provision.

Dr Jane Overbury, author of the review, gave a brief introduction to her findings.

Concern was raised by the Board over the viability and sustainability of Sixth Form provision across its Family of Schools. It was felt that smaller Sixth Forms could not provide the breadth of opportunity the City would like to offer.

The Board discussed the need for an overall strategic approach to for Sixth Form provision and whether this should focus on academic excellence or whether the City might strengthen its technical provision to provide an alternative pathway to its students. A number of ideas were shared, including:

- the benefits of Sixth Forms collaborating in such a way that would provide an academic and technical/vocational 'hub'.
- a division of subjects, e.g. a STEM focussed provision and a Humanities focussed provision.
- the possible establishment of two collegiate Sixth Forms, one north and one south of the river.
- increased engagement beyond the City's Family of Schools, with Livery schools etc.

Any decisions would need to be informed by the various excellent provisions that were already in place and should utilise the City's unique Family make-up of academies and independent schools. Equally, the Board recognised the need for a robust approach to analysing curriculum provision within schools if there was a declining demand for Sixth Form places.

Members requested a strategy paper outlining the City's options for Sixth Form provision to be considered by COLAT Board of Trustees and the Education Board.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

12. **EDUCATION SERVICES COMPANY FEASIBILITY STUDY**

Members considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding the Education Services Company Feasibility Study.

It was noted that a decision from the Board was being sought on this item.

Whilst the agenda on Fusion Skills was deemed right, the Board was very supportive of the recommendation to not support the establishment of the Education Services Company. Members commented on the existence of a number of relevant and good enterprises on the City's doorstep that could be used. It was suggested that this might be something that would benefit from a pan-Livery initiative, to be considered by the Livery Committee.

A number of Livery Committee Members were on the Education Board and agreed to take this matter up with their colleagues after the meeting.

RESOLVED, that

- The City does not invest resources in the creation of an Education Services Company;
- The City prioritise the consolidation of relationships and practices within its existing family of Schools; and
- Endorse the recommendations a)-d) in the report.

13. PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding Parental Engagement in Learning.

The Board commended the report which covered an area of great importance, particularly in light of COVID-19. Early on in the pandemic it was felt that the provision of technology would improve engagement in remote learning. It had since become apparent that parental support was even more key.

The Family of Schools had already developed a number of imaginative ways to engage with parents and to help them cope. It was suggested that some sort of audit take place to learn more regarding what provisions had been made in this area so best practice could be shared. An audit at this time would take a lot of resource from schools which were, understandably, already stretched. A lot was already being shared at a local level within communities.

The Chair noted that Achievement for All had done a substantial amount of work to provide support to children with disadvantage. The Board supported proposals that they might be invited to present to the Board at its next meeting about actions they had taken to address parental engagement.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

14. ADULT EDUCATION, SKILLS AND APPRENTICESHIPS UPDATE

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

15. LONDON CAREERS FESTIVAL 2020 EVALUATION REPORT

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding an Evaluation of the London Careers Festival 2020.

The Board congratulated officers and the Deputy Chair on the success of the virtual event.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

16. **CULTURAL AND CREATIVE LEARNING UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding an update on Cultural and Creative Learning.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

17. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE BOARD**

There were no questions.

18. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was one item of urgent business.

The Chair asked Members for their view on a change to the Board's meeting schedule from six to five meetings a year. This proposal was met with support and the Chair requested that any further comments to be fed back to the Town Clerk.

19. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Under Standing Order 40, the Board agreed to extend the meeting until such a time that all business on the agenda had been considered.

20. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2020 were approved as a correct record.

21. **NON-PUBLIC OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Members received a report of the Town Clerk regarding the Board's non-public outstanding actions.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

22. **UN-VALIDATED 2020 RESULTS DATA FOR THE FAMILY OF SCHOOLS**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding the Un-validated 2020 results data for the Family of Schools.

23. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE BOARD**

There were no questions.

24. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There was one item of urgent business.

In light of the resignation of Deputy Clare James as the Chair's nominee on the City of London Academies Trust Board, members considered proposals for her replacement.

The Chair had put forward Alderman Robert Howard as her nominee and information regarding Alderman Howard's educational experience had been shared by e-mail. This appointment was met with unanimous support.

RESOLVED, that

- The Board endorse the Chair's nomination of Alderman Robert Howard to the City of London Academies Trust; and
- Formal thanks be noted by the Board on behalf of the previous Chairman and current Chair, for Deputy Clare James' contribution to COLAT.

The meeting ended at 1.01 pm

Chairman

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