

**PEOPLE. EQUALITIES AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF
LONDON ACADEMIES TRUST
Tuesday, 8 February 2022**

Minutes of the meeting held via Microsoft Teams at 9.30 am

Present

Members:

Dawn Elliott (Chair)
Tijs Broeke
Lucas Green

Officers:

Katryna Zamulinskyj	- Human Resources Director
Kerry Nicholls	- Town Clerk's Department
Sarah Phillips	- Town Clerk's Department
Charlie Pearce	- Chief Operating Officer's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Roy Blackwell.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIR

An election for Chair was conducted. Dawn Elliott, being the only Trustee willing to serve, was elected Chair for the 2021/22 academic year.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Trustees discussed the terms of reference for the People, Equalities and Inclusion Committee.

RESOLVED, that the terms of reference for the People, Equalities and Inclusion Committee be approved.

5. CONSIDERATION OF ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

Trustees considered the achievements of the City of London Academies Trust in the areas of people, equalities and inclusion to date and the following points were noted:

- The CoLAT Central Team had a well-established Human Resources function which had embedded best practice people, equalities and inclusion processes across the Trust. This included the annual publishing of a gender pay gap report which was a legal requirement, and the development of policies and statements which supported equality of opportunity and the building of a diverse workforce across the Trust. Future areas of development included improved data collection of leadership and staff information to support the Trust in achieving its

people, equalities and inclusion aspirations. It was also planned to develop further HR policies in a number of key strands including Protection from Harassment at Work and an Equality and Diversity Policy.

- In considering the achievements to date, the Chair observed that the Public Sector Equalities Duty was very broad. It was likely that the initial focus of the People, Equalities and Inclusion Committee would be the Trust's duty to its staff, but going forward, it may be the Committee would review how individual academies were meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty to their students with a view to ensuring a consistent approach was being taken by academies across the Trust. A Trustee noted that over the past three years, the Trust had expanded in size by 25%; however, HR resourcing remained the same and additional resources might need to be agreed to drive necessary change.

RESOLVED, that the achievements of the City of London Academies Trust in the areas of people, equalities and inclusion to date be noted.

6. **EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

Trustees considered a draft Equality of Opportunity Statement for the Trust and the following points were made:

- The draft Equality of Opportunity Statement outlined the Trust's vision to build and support strong, sustainable, and cohesive academies within local communities through inclusive policies, processes and employment. The Statement captured the role of the People, Equalities and Inclusion Committee in providing strategic direction on equality and inclusion and ensuring the Trust's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, including monitoring and reviewing its provision to give fair and equal access to all. The Statement also outlined the Trust's commitment to promote equality of opportunity to the Trust's employees and students as well as develop community relations with relevant partners, voluntary sector agencies, contractors and those who delivered services on the Trust's behalf.
- A Trustee underlined the need to include the vision for governance in the Equality of Opportunity Statement and this was supported by the Committee which agreed the following amendment:

"COLAT People, Equality and Inclusion Committee provides strategic direction on equality and inclusion, *including its consistent implementation by the Board of Trustees*, and ensures compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty."

In response to a suggestion from another Trustee, the Chair confirmed that the Equal Opportunities Statement would be developed over time to become a more personalised statement of the Trust's aims but at

present it served as a clear statement of the Trust's vision and commitment in the area of equal opportunities.

RESOLVED, that the Equality of Opportunity Statement be agreed, subject to the above amendment.

7. **PRINCIPLES OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

Trustees considered principles of equality and diversity in the workplace and how this was applied by the Trust and the following points were made:

- The Equality Act 2010 legally protected people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society across a range of protected characteristics comprising age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or beliefs, sex and sexual orientation. The Equality Act 2010 had also introduced a single equality duty on public bodies which required them to eliminate conduct prohibited by the Act, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across all characteristics. The CoLAT Central Team had actively responded to this duty by designing policy, practice and training that aimed to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, by making reasonable adjustments for staff and students and by acting on and analysing any complaints to challenge and develop practice. A number of actions had also been taken to advance equal opportunities including the establishment of the People, Equalities and Inclusion Committee, data collection and monitoring and an Equal Opportunities Statement and Policy. The Trust also took an active role in fostering good relations across its family of academies by promoting education and understanding, ensuring materials were representative of the diversity of the Trust's population and that all materials were inclusive in image, language and intent.
- The Chair emphasised the need to consider the extent to which the Trust's staffing demographic reflected the communities its academies served, providing positive role models for success. Data collection on protected characteristics would be key to capturing a clear picture of the Trust's current position which, once analysed, would identify areas where decisions could be taken regarding the need to enhance representation by recruitment and development opportunities at all levels across the Trust. A Trustee noted that it would also be important to identify the experience of staff working within the culture of the Trust and suggested that annual equality gap reporting be undertaken to demonstrate the Trust's commitment to equality and diversity in the workplace.
- A Trustee observed that there was also a need to build diversity at governance level in the Trust and agreed to raise this with the Trust's sponsor, which appointed the majority of Trustees. Another Trustee queried whether it would be possible to make an external appointment to the People, Equalities and Inclusion Committee to broaden the perspective of the Committee and the Chair of the Board of Trustees

agreed to discuss this with the Chief Financial Officer following the meeting. If it was possible to appoint external candidates to the Board's committees, consideration would need to be given to a robust process for identifying strong external candidates, which could include an open recruitment process. A Co-opted Trustee had access to a range of best practice in this area and agreed to draw up a list of professionals with insight in building diverse and inclusive organisations who could offer advice and guidance to the Committee.

- In response to a question from a Trustee, the Human Resources Director advised that some individual academies across the Trust undertook staff surveys but did not necessarily share this data with the CoLAT Central Team. The CoLAT Central Team was committed to lead on a data gathering exercise from a whole-Trust perspective; however, there was limitation on resources within the Central Human Resources function which would need to be addressed before this could be taken forward. The Chair suggested that an initial focus on Senior Leadership data might be more deliverable. The Committee agreed to set a target of completing an all-staff survey demonstrating how the Trust was meeting its Public Sector Equality Duty by the end of the 2021/22 academic year, including salary data on the Senior Leaders across the Trust's academies. The Chair of the Board of Trustees further agreed to discuss resource implications of this work for the HR Central function with the Chief Executive Officer.
- A Co-opted Trustee advised that national and international media organisations tended to have strong diversity and inclusion cultures and often undertook volunteering work as part of corporate social responsibility strategies. The Trustee suggested this might present an opportunity to bring diverse role models from aspirational industries into Trust academies and this would be followed up after the meeting.

RESOLVED, that the discussion be noted.

8. QUESTIONS ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no other business.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Trustees discussed the date of the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED, that two meetings of the People, Equalities and Inclusion Committee be scheduled for the Summer 2022 term.

11. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED, that the public be excluded and that Trustees move into private session.

12. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

13. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE COMMITTEE AGREES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE NON-PUBLIC SECTION**

There was one item of other business.

The meeting ended at 10.30 am

Chair

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