

EDUCATION BOARD

Thursday, 3 February 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Board held at Guildhall at 10.00 am

Present

Members:

Caroline Haines (Chair)	Benjamin Murphy
Deputy Philip Woodhouse (Deputy Chair)	Ruby Sayed
Randall Anderson	Rachel Bower
Alderman Robert Howard	Deborah Knight
Shravan Joshi	Mary Robey
Alderman Nicholas Lyons	

In Attendance

Officers:

Joseph Anstee	- Town Clerk's Department
Rhiannon Leary	- Town Clerk's Department
Sarah Phillips	- Town Clerk's Department
Andrew Buckingham	- Town Clerk's Department
Emily Rimington	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Catherine McGovern	- Department of Community & Children's Services
Scott Caizley	- Department of Community & Children's Services
Ejay Deroy	- Department of Community & Children's Services
Vasima Patel	- Department of Community & Children's Services
Teresa Shortland	- Department of Community & Children's Services
Torri Stewart	- Department of Community & Children's Services
Gwen Rhys	- Department of Community & Children's Services
Richa Sagar	- Department of Community & Children's Services
Mohammed Alam Begi	- Department of Community & Children's Services
Rachel Thompson	- Head of City Junior School
Charles Griffiths	- City Junior School

Also in attendance

Tim Levene	
Peter Bennett	
Mark Emmerson	City of London Academies Trust
Sharon Ament	Museum of London
Frazer Swift	Museum of London
Beth Crosland	Museum of London

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Tijs Broeke, Alderman Sir Peter Estlin and Alderman Sir William Russell.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **PUBLIC MINUTES**

The public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 3 December 2021 were approved as a correct record.

RESOLVED, that the public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 3 December 2021 be approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

- The Deputy Chair asked if it was possible to provide a link to the Youth-Led Environmental Updates (p9, paragraph 6) on the Livery Committee website;
- The Deputy Chair advised that the Head of the Outward Bound Trust was keen to connect with City Schools and to present to the Board.

The Chair noted that there was a date in the diary to discuss the above points.

- The question was posed whether it would be possible to look at a wider community of schools to assist with the Afghan students (page 11) or boarding places at City Schools, also adding that there was further provision across the Livery schools which could be assessed for opportunities;
- A Member advised that the older age groups had been more challenging to place, particularly in light of the fact that there was very little available housing for larger families; however, work was ongoing.
- Members heard that some Afghan families in Edgware and Kensington had been given less than one day's notice of removal from their temporary accommodation.
- An Officer noted that despite other external pressures, families with children were settling well within the schools. Some children were being placed in lower age groups due to language barriers; however, this should not continue on a long-term basis.
- A Member commented that a large student accommodation development had been approved at Snow Hill and queried whether this could be co-ordinated to create availability for the Further Education Afghan students.

The Chair noted that all comments would be followed up upon the return of Anne Bamford, Strategic Education and Skills Director, to the Corporation following a period of leave and thanked officers in the Community and Children's Services Department for their work so far in this area.

4. **PUBLIC OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Members received a report of the Town Clerk regarding the Board's outstanding actions:

A Member asked why the second action on the list remained on hold until the Governance review had concluded, given it was their understanding that the review had in fact already concluded.

The Chair noted the comment and agreed to follow up upon the return of the Strategic Education and Skills Director.

RESOLVED, that:
the report be noted.

5. **CO-OPTED MEMBER TERM EXTENSION/NOMINATIONS**

Members heard an update from the Chair regarding Co-Opted Member Term Nominations/Extension.

The Chair commented that the Nominations Committee had recommended that the appointment process for the external Member vacancy be postponed until after the Court of Common Council elections had taken place on 24 March 2022, and sought the Board's approval for this, which was agreed.

RESOLVED, that:
the external Member position be retained by Mary Robey until the Court of Common Council elections had taken place on 24 March 2022.

6. **COVID-19 UPDATE**

Members heard an oral update of the Director of Community and Children's Services.

All schools remained open for face-to-face teaching, although some had experienced outbreaks of COVID within their staff teams, with Highbury Grove school experiencing a significant level of staff sickness. Members heard that there was an escalating number of student absences and expressed concern at the report that families were allowing students to take time off despite being well enough to attend school. There had also been a national reduction in school attendance dropping from 95% to 88% as evidenced by data received in January 2022. There wasn't sufficient data on persistent absence available on a national basis to permit wider conclusions to be extrapolated; however, another Member was able to advise that City Schools had not seen a similar fall in attendance. The Board was advised that measures were being taken to increase attendance, with local authorities being pressured to push for higher-level interventions. Relevant safeguarding concerns were being communicated and elective home education was being reported where necessary.

A Member asked what the financial impact had been on schools during the current phase of the pandemic. In response, Officers advised that there had been a very significant financial impact, despite a degree of government support, which would be available for further analysis once budget evaluation meetings had taken place, as well as planning and forecasting meetings at the beginning of the next term.

The Chair extended the Board's grateful thanks to all staff working in schools during this difficult time and discussed the possibility of using strategic funding from September 2022 to provide assistance where it was most needed.

RESOLVED, that:
the report be noted.

**7. EDUCATION, CULTURAL AND CREATIVE LEARNING AND SKILLS
2020/21 ANNUAL REPORT**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding the Education, Cultural and Creative Learning Skills 2020/21 Annual Report. The Chair introduced the item and advised that governance would be a key priority going forward.

Despite the impact of COVID a significant amount of activity had taken place, including a drop in permanent exclusions from eighteen pupils in 2018/19 to one in 2020/21, which was welcomed by all present. Further to this, arising from the Alternative Provision available, the current cohort of Year 11s had all completed their studies with all students in education, employment or training (NEET).

Governors were encouraged to complete all Governor training sessions following low attendance at a recent safeguarding training course and the importance of Governors completing statutory training every two years was highlighted. Comment was made, however, that Governors in daytime employment may find it difficult to take time off to attend in-person daytime meetings. In response to a question posed by a Member, officers advised that some courses were recorded and made available to Governors, but that sessions such as safeguarding could not be recorded due to the sensitive nature of the conversations. Slides and other reference material was however always made available, and two additional Members of CoL staff were now on board and would provide support with training sessions. A query was put as to whether such reference material was circulated to the clerks of governing bodies, who were in a better position than the Chairs of Boards to disseminate the information to their governors.

The Chair welcomed the news that additional funding had been secured for adult education services, as detailed on p29 of the report and commended those involved for their work in obtaining this.

RESOLVED, that:

- i) the report be noted;
- ii) consideration be given to holding Safeguarding training sessions during the evening, to facilitate those Members who found it difficult to attend daytime sessions due to full-time employment;
- iii) that training invitations for Governors be sent to clerks for circulation, as well as individual Governors.

8. **REVIEW EDUCATION BOARD BUDGET UPDATE**

Members received a joint report of the Director of Community and Children's Services and the Chamberlain concerning the Education Board Budget Update.

There had been a small overspend of £6,000 against an overall budget of £2.5 million, and work to reduce this overspend was ongoing.

RESOLVED, that:
the report be noted.

9. **EDUCATION CULTURAL AND CREATIVE LEARNING AND SKILLS UPDATE**

Members noted a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding the Educational, Cultural and Creative Learning and Skills Update.

A City Schools Conference celebrating 150 years of State Education in England (partnered with the Foundation for Educational Development) had taken place in the Livery Hall, Guildhall, in November 2021, with very positive feedback received, although sadly the City Schools Concert had been cancelled due to COVID concerns. Discussions had taken place which included future plans, developing frameworks, equality and inclusion and 'sustaining excellent education', followed by an opportunity to network informally. A Chess Tournament was scheduled to take place on 23 February 2022.

The Chair noted that a Social Mobility Breakfast Briefing (organised by the Education Unit and CoLAT) would take place on Friday 13 May at 08:30am. All Members were encouraged to sign up to attend.

RESOLVED, that:
the report be noted.

10. **TACKLING RACISM TASKFORCE ACTION PLAN**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding the Tackling Racism Taskforce Action Plan and noted that further information would be reported to the next meeting.

RESOLVED, that:
the report be noted.

11. **GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS UPDATE**

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

Those present noted movement in Newham Collegiate Sixth form (NCS) and as well as a number of vacancies in the City of London Academies Trust's local governing bodies and commented that April may be a good time to communicate the elected Member vacancies given the Court of Common Council elections scheduled to take place on 24 March 2022. The Deputy Chair suggested that the Livery website, which received a high level of traffic, would be a good place to advertise vacancies.

There followed a discussion about the recruitment process, with Members agreeing that there should be a focus on diversity when recruiting for governor positions.

RESOLVED, that:
the report be noted.

12. CITY PREMIUM GRANT UPDATE - JANUARY

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding the City Premium Grant Update – January.

RESOLVED, that:
the report be noted.

13. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) STRATEGY

The Board received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy, 50% of which had now been delivered. Oversight and governance of the strategy was retained by the SEND Programme Board, a partnership board which was representative of the statutory agencies as well as having representatives from the parent forum and independent bodies. Throughout the pandemic – including lockdowns – children included in the strategy remained supported by staff. Recent work carried out during the summer term had involved the SEND Advisor visiting all 18 schools in total, which had had the benefit of revitalising the SENCO network.

RESOLVED, that:
the report be noted.

14. CULTURAL MILE LEARNING (CML) CASE FOR INVESTMENT 2022/23

Members considered a report of the Director of the Museum of London concerning the Culture Mile Learning (CML) Case for Investment 2022/23. The Director of the Museum of London introduced the item and noted that the recommendation of the report was a request for funding for work taking place 2022/23.

Members discussed the information in the report and commented that the assistance with the Afghan Refugee programme demonstrated a flexible use of funds and adaptability from the team. It was noted that the 2022/23 programme was to be split into two key areas: Creative Curriculum – with dedicated work being carried out on de-colonising the curriculum – and Social Mobility, with an aim to expand the work experience opportunities with more longer-term placements, especially for vulnerable young people. It was planned to seek grant funding to support additional workstreams from a range of funders including Arts Council England.

The Chair asked why the School Visit Fund referred to an allocation of £16,000 when it had previously totalled at £52,000. Officers clarified that the sum of £16,000 was the annual allocation for grants, with an additional £14,000

allocated for staffing. The standard amount received each year was £30,000 but there had been funds carried forward from previous years, including for the COVID period. Members queried why 66% of the budget had been allocated to staffing with only £82,000 allocated to the projects themselves and it was confirmed that staff leveraged the funds and the contributions from the wider networks combined, meaning the budget was amplified when looking at the resources used.

Members sought clarification as to whether CML was a part of the CoL Corporation, or if it acted as an independent body. In response, the Board heard that CML was a network which delivered projects and had been set up by the Corporation, but which was not formally constituted: its funding was sourced from a strong partnership with the Corporation, as well as other partners and external funds. Another Member asked if consideration had been given to seeking involvement from Livery Companies to assist with funding or community engagement for some projects and it was advised that whilst these channels hadn't previously been investigated, this proposal had merit and would be explored with the Livery in the near future.

The Chair commented that only £32,000 had been allocated for school-based projects and sought further explanation on the use of these funds. In response, Members heard that this related to the social mobility work underway; whilst both the work experience programme and the mentoring programme included school-aged children whilst older children were also enrolled. Additionally, the 'Fusion Futures' project was aimed entirely at Key Stage 5.

Members concluded that, in light of the lack of clarity on certain aspects of the report, additional explanation for several budget allocations would be required before any decision could be made.

RESOLVED, that:

the Board agree to delegate authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair to approve funding for Culture Mile Learning for the 2022/23 financial year, subsequent to receipt of the requested additional information.

15. LONDON CAREERS FESTIVAL

Members received an update from the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding the London Careers Festival.

The London Careers Festival was due to take place from 20 June–1 July 2022: a virtual festival was scheduled to take place from 20–25 June 2022 whilst a physical festival would run from 27-29 June, with an additional day of activities scheduled to take place on 1 July. The festival would be centred around the Guildhall complex and would be tailored to different age groups throughout:

- Monday 27 June for students aged 16+;
- Tuesday 28 June for secondary students;
- Wednesday 29 June for primary students;
- Friday 1 July for apprentices.

The Chair encouraged the Board to promote the festival as widely as possible through social media outlets and business networks and advised that a further update would be brought to the April Board meeting.

RESOLVED, that:
the report be noted.

16. REPORT OF CONNECTING COMMUNITIES (LIVERY)

Members received an update from the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding Connecting Communities (Livery): the programme was funded by a total budget of £18M and would operate for 18 months across 12 London boroughs. The programme's goal was to support adults aged 18 or over who were not in education, training or employment to gain the skills they needed to secure sustainable work. Training on the software package which was vital to this work was scheduled for the Connecting Communities team. The programme included work to support Afghan refugees, with visits made to refugee accommodation to discuss the options available. Training providers, such as City and Guilds, as well as other partner organisations such as Livery Companies, were involved and working closely on the project.

Following a query from a Member in terms of how success would be measured, the Board heard that measurable targets were built into the contract and programme and that the software in use monitored these results. The Board was advised that outcomes were clearly related to sustainable employment, meaning a minimum of 6 months' work.

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 were no items of urgent business.

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.

20. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The non-public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 3 December 2021 were approved as a correct record.

21. NON-PUBLIC OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

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

22. CITY JUNIOR SCHOOL

The Board received a report of the Head of City Junior School.

23. **ACADEMIES BUILDINGS AND EXPANSION PROGRAMME UPDATE**
Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.
24. **CHAIRS' UPDATE**
Members received oral updates from the Chairs of the City Junior School, City of London Academies Trust, the City of London Freeman School, the City of London School and the City of London School for Girls.
25. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE BOARD**
There were none.
26. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**
There was none.

The meeting ended at 1.01 pm

Chairman

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