

Committee(s): Education Board	Dated: 20/10/2022
Subject: Governor Appointments Update and Recommendations	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 3 8 & 10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

This report asks Members to note the appointments of Governors to the Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) of the City of London Academies Trust (CoLAT). An updated list of the governing body membership of the City Family of Schools is attached in **Appendix 2**. Members are also asked to note the guidance and recommendations for LGBs on recruiting skilled and diverse governors.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note:

- The City of London Academies Trust (CoLAT) Board of Trustees (BoT) ratified new appointments to Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) at their meeting on 17 July and 8 September 2022, as detailed in paragraph 5, 7 and 8 of the Report.
- The recommendations and guidance for LGBs on recruiting skilled and diverse governors.

Main Report

Background

1. The City Corporation is an academy sponsor, proprietor of independent schools, and a local education authority and its relation to governor recruitment varies across these roles. An overview of the Governance for the Family of Schools is included in **Appendix 1**.
2. Under the Sponsorship Agreement with the City of London Academies Trust (CoLAT), the Education Board approve the appointment of Chairs to Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) and are consulted on governor vacancies and notified of governor appointments. The current governing body membership of the City Family of Schools is attached in **Appendix 2**.
3. Goal six of the Education Strategy 2019-23 commits to ensuring that there is strong strategic oversight of education, and that delivery is focused on impact. One of the key outcomes under this this goal is strong governance frameworks and appointment processes across the City Family of Schools.
4. At its Meeting on 28 April 2022, Members approved the Annual Action Plan to deliver the Education, Cultural and Creative Learning and Skills Strategies over the 2021/22 academic year. One of the expected outcomes is to ensure that governors are up to date with latest statutory requirements and good practice.

Appointments Update

5. At the CoLAT Board of Trustees meeting on 17 July and 8 September 2022, the following appointments were ratified:
 - The appointment of Andrew Hesketh as a Staff Governor at City of London Academy Islington
 - The appointment of Dr Katy Bell as a Staff Governor at City of London Academy Islington
 - The appointment of Hannah McHugh as Governor at City of London Academy Islington
 - The appointment of Simon Harding-Roots as Governor at City of London Academy Islington
6. Under the CoLAT's Scheme of Delegation, the appointment of Chairs is approved by the Education Board.
7. In order for the Chair of Southwark's Schools to be in post by the start of the new academic year, a report was put forward to the Town Clerk and Chair of the Education Board as a matter of urgency on 15 July 2022. The appointment of Dr Steven Berryman as Chair of the Southwark Schools was approved on 3 August 2022.

8. In addition to Southwark's Schools, another urgent report was put forward to the Town Clerk and Chair of the Education Board as a matter of urgency on 14 September to replace the Chair of Newham Collegiate Sixth Form Centre (The NCS) LGB. The appointment of Simon Beck as Chair The NCS LGB was approved on 22 September 2022.
9. Under the CoLAT standard Terms of Reference of LGBs, Governors serve four-year terms aligning with the academic year.
10. At the CoLAT Board of Trustees meeting on 8 September 2022 the appointment of Catherine McGuinness as Chair of the City of London Academies Board of Trustees (BoT) was also approved.

Skilled and Diverse Governors: National Guidance and Best Practice

11. The Department for Education (DfE) Governance Handbook sets out the government's vision and priorities for effective school and trust governance. The handbook emphasises the expectation that recruitment processes should encourage governors from a wide range of backgrounds, cultures and perspectives in order to better reflect the communities they serve. To achieve this, the DfE put forward the following recommendations:
 - a. Boards should conduct regular audits of the skills they possess in the light of the skills and competences they need, taking account of the DfE Competency Framework for governance, and actively seek to address any gaps identified – through either recruitment or training.
 - b. Membership of each board should focus on the skills required; therefore, the primary consideration in appointment decisions should be acquiring the skills, experience and diversity the board needs to be effective. A board composed of governors and academy trustees who bring a diverse range of skills, experiences, qualifications, characteristics and perspectives and who are from diverse backgrounds and settings will have a positive impact on setting the strategic direction for the organisation.
 - c. It is essential that boards recruit and develop people with the skills to deliver their core functions effectively. However, it is equally important to emphasise that the skills required are those to oversee the success of the school, not to do the school's job for it. For example, a person with financial expertise should use their skills to scrutinise the organisation's accounts, not to help prepare them. If someone on the board does possess skills that the school wishes to use on a pro bono basis, then it is important that this is considered separately from their role in governance, and steps should be taken to minimise conflicts of interest and ensure that this does not blur lines of accountability.
 - d. Where a vacancy needs filling, boards and other appointing bodies should move to fill the vacancy as soon as possible to prevent it impacting on the board's effectiveness. In filling vacancies, boards and

others responsible for nominating or appointing to the board should make use of all available channels to identify suitable people.

- e. It is important that boards reflect the diversity of the school/trust communities that they serve. Consideration should be given to all the protected characteristics. Diverse boards promote inclusive school environments and provide diverse role models for staff and young people.

12. **Governors for Schools** also provide guidance for schools and MATs on recruiting diverse groups of people to ensure LGBs have the most effective governing board. This guidance can be found in **Appendix 3** of this Report.

Recommendations

13. In recruiting skilled and diverse governors, LGBs and others responsible for nominating or appointing to the board should make use of all available channels to identify suitable people. The DfE funds free support to help boards recruit skilled people. These include:
 1. **Academy Ambassadors** who help recruit senior business leaders to serve on the boards of MATs
 2. **Inspiring Governance** who enables schools and colleges to search and identify online people from the world of work with relevant skills and experience who are willing to offer support in a variety of ways, including joining a board.
14. **The National Governance Association** (NGA) has provided further support on how to recruit diverse governors as part of their 'Everyone on Board' campaign, which aims to increase the participation of people from ethnic minorities and young people in school and trust governance. An executive summary of their report on 'Increasing Participation in School and Trust Governance' can be found in **Appendix 4**.
15. Just as parent and staff governors remain crucial in decision making, LGBs are also encouraged to promote pupil voices at a board level. Having pupils present and update Governors (where necessary) during LGB Meetings can improve both the experience and engagement of pupils in decision making processes. This can also be an effective way to show pupils that their voices are being listened to. For example, if the school has an active School Council, there can be informal or formal updates from this body to the LGB.
16. The DfE Governance Handbook is clear that effective governing boards should use active succession planning to ensure the board, and the whole organisation, continues to have the people and leadership it needs to remain effective. Where the appointment of a new chair is the result of a last-minute decision, this could lead to a situation where an appointment is made based on availability or the one who has served the longest. This might not secure the best person for the role. It is therefore crucial that succession planning starts as early as possible. Chairs are also encouraged to consider progression routes

for existing governors, especially those who show potential and desire to become chair.

17. The DfE recognises that there are people who have the skills and the time to serve effectively on a number of boards and does not want to restrict their ability to do so. Where necessary, this guidance should also be adopted across the Family of Schools. However, where a prospective appointee is already governing at another school or MAT, the Chair of the Board should speak to the Chair of the other Board to discuss both the skills of the individual and, where appropriate, their capacity to serve effectively on an additional board

Corporate & Strategic Implications

18. Supporting good and effective governance practices across the Family of Schools is aligned the following strategies and plans:
 - The City Corporation's Corporate Plan 2018-23
 - The Education 2019-23 Strategy

Conclusion

19. A number of governor appointments were ratified by the CoLAT Board of Trustees at their meeting on 17 July and 8 September 2022 as outlined in paragraph 5 of this Report. Along with these governor appointments, a new Chair has also been appointed for the Southwark Schools and for NCS. This report also highlights national guidance on recruiting skilled and diverse governors whilst also putting forward recommendations for LGBs to adopt to ensure there remains strong governance frameworks and appointment processes across the City Family of Schools.

Appendices

- **Appendix 1** – Family of Schools Governance Overview
- **Appendix 2** – Governing Body Membership of the Family of Schools
- **Appendix 3** – Governors for School Guidance
- **Appendix 4** – NGA: A state of the nation report on recruiting and retaining volunteers

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