

Sir Alan Wood note to Education Board June 2024

Opportunities for this consultancy

1.	Opportunity	Conclusion
2.	The creativity and impact of City Premium Grants could benefit from scrutiny to ensure compliance with the Tomlinson Review and best use of the grant.	The intention of Tomlinson is being adhered to with the significant majority of City Corporation philanthropy reaching disadvantaged pupils directly, and through partnership opportunities with the independent schools. The ESU is moving towards fewer but more focussed and thematic bid encouragement through the newly appointed Partnerships Officer which the City Corporation has funded.
3.	There will be a new Chair of the Education Board from January 2024. The time is right to ensure governance and systemic structural arrangements are secure.	Engagement with the new Chair with regular discussion and meeting, providing advice and informal 'mentoring' including chairing the committee, focusing on priorities and engaging with Members and external groups e.g. headteachers.
4.	The relationship between the City Corporation in its MAT sponsorship capacity and CoLAT has experienced some turbulence over the years. To stabilise the position, a revised Sponsorship Agreement has been drafted and is the subject of specialist external legal scrutiny. Trustees and Members can hold both offices which can lead to some conflation of foci. The understanding of the role of a MAT sponsor is also not securely established with all Members and frustration can occur when operational and strategic matters are not aligned or challenged.	Sir Alan visited schools in the Trust and discussed their work and engagement with COLAT and the sponsor (CoLC). He provided advice on the accountability and governance arrangements in the existing Sponsorship Agreement. The revised Sponsorship Agreement has now been agreed by both parties and approved at Education Board Further advice on role and terms of reference of the Company Members Committee has been submitted. This will be proposed to Company Members, using the Trust's form of words at the next meeting.

		<p>Reports and anecdotal reports indicate that relations between the Trust and the Sponsor are improving since early 2023.</p> <p>The new chair and vice chair are clear about the roles of key players and the need to ensure all Members are clear as to roles and responsibilities.</p>
5.	The risks and opportunities of inviting Christ's Hospital School and King Edward's Witley to more closely align with the City Family of Schools.	This aspect was not pursued in this commission.
6.	CoLAT plans to expand to 12 schools, with ultimate aspirations to reach 20 schools whilst pupil numbers are reducing across London. Elected Members seek assurance that they will not be called upon to underwrite any financial liability for any school in the Trust, or the Trust itself.	Sir AW met with colleagues in Lambeth, undertook research linked to due diligence and provided advice on issues relating to the application of London Nautical School to the CoLAT arrangement. The Court of Common Council has approved that the Trust admits LNS when they determine the position is right.
7.	The one maintained Primary School in the City has highly complex historic governance and foundation relationships which may well prove challenging if it decides to academise or is obliged to pursue that path.	The Aldgate School has stated that transfer to academy status is not a consideration currently.
8.	A Partnerships role is being proposed for the CoLAT central team, funded by City Premium Grant. Optimising this opportunity is key to delivery of the City Corporation's intentions. It will be particularly key when impact measures on use of City Premium Grant for disadvantaged pupils, strategic and partnership work is fully available in November for the first time and ongoing.	CoLAT Partnership Lead is in place within the CoLAT central team. Effectiveness is to be assessed annually.
9.	Consideration of the implications for the four independent schools (plus Christ's Hospital School and King Edwards Witley) of changes in their charitable status, tax and VAT, in the event of a change of government following next year's anticipated General Election.	Agreed with DCS/DoE not to do any work on this area given the national political picture and work undertaken with the Chamberlain's teams and independent schools directly.

10.	Advice on Education, Cultural and Creative Learning and Skills Strategies for creation by the end of this calendar year, linking with the development of a new Corporate and Departmental Plan - joining Education Board away days, and other relevant forums, for this purpose.	Sir AW attended Members strategy meeting, several discussions with the then Chair and with the new Chair and his deputy. He engaged with the ESU on the structure of the strategy and various foci-e.g. implementation
11.	Role of the City of London Corporation in partnership with The Aldgate School.	Sir AW heard from the Aldgate School their concerns about the implications of changing Children's Centre existing arrangements, approved by Members. Comms with the school leadership are being strengthened.