

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Education Board – For decision	21 May 2015
<b>Subject:</b> City Schools: Prioritisation for Academy Expansion	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Community and Children’s Services	<b>For Decision</b>

### Summary

The portfolio of City of London Corporation (CoL) Schools is expanding, with approval from the Department for Education (DfE) and Education Funding Agency (EFA) to move into the pre-opening stage for two new CoL Primary Academies. This paper outlines options for the immediate challenges of prioritising education expansion opportunities.

### Recommendation(s)

- Members are asked to approve the prioritisation process for CoL to assess requests to act as sponsor for a school, as outlined in this report

### Main Report

#### Background

1. The City of London Corporation family of schools comprises:
  - **1 Primary School** - Sir John Cass’s Foundation Primary School
  - **1 sponsored CoL Primary Academy** – Redriff Primary City of London Academy
  - **3 sponsored CoL Secondary Academies** - The City Academy Hackney (TCAH) - jointly sponsored with KPMG; The City of London Academy Islington (COLAI) - jointly sponsored with City University; The City of London Academy Southwark (COLAS)
  - **3 Independent Schools for which CoL is the proprietor** – City of London School for Boys, City of London School for Girls, City of London Freeman’s School
2. CoL is accountable in its role as a sponsor for Academy schools through the Court of Common Council, which it then delegates to the Education Board
3. The Education Board is also responsible for recommending to the Court of Common Council the appointment of governors to the CoL’s academies and

representatives on school governing bodies where nomination rights are granted and they do not fall within the remit of any other committee

4. Nationally there is an increasing need for new schools to meet the basic need for school places due to a considerable growth in the population. Most London boroughs are under pressure to find more school places and all have annual data on the planned places required to meet need.
5. A particular difficulty in London is finding the space necessary to expand a school or develop a new one. The majority of Primary schools have reached their capacity and therefore more creative solutions to sites are being explored, such as expanding existing sites to provide more pupil intake and building schools as part of other commercial developments such as shopping centers. These developments require partnership working with several organisations.

### **Current Position**

6. Following requests from their respective Local Authorities, CoL has recently been granted approval by DfE and EFA to expand its education portfolio and move to the pre-opening stage for two new Primary Academy Free schools:
  - **City of London Primary Academy Southwark (COLPAS)** to open in September 2016
  - **City of London Primary Academy Islington (COLPAI)** to open in September 2017
7. Sir John Cass Foundation Primary School is expanding to a two form entry school from 2016, a programme of building work that is being managed by CoL
8. In addition to the present portfolio of schools, there are two proposed Academy school expansions which would also require extensive building programmes which will add to the responsibility of CoL as the sponsor and the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) to ensure these programmes are delivered:
  - COLAS 6<sup>th</sup> Form expansion
  - TCAH 6<sup>th</sup> Form expansion
9. As the portfolio of academy schools expands, CoL must ensure that it has clearly articulated its vision for the future of its education provision, and what the priorities are for the delivery of this vision

### **Prioritisation of education expansion opportunities**

10. DfE states<sup>1</sup> that to be successful, a sponsor needs to show:

- strong planning, including, where necessary, realistic regional growth plans

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<sup>1</sup> Education Select Committee Report - Fourth Special Report  
Academies and free schools: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2014-15

- evidence of achieving lasting educational improvement
- evidence of financial expertise
- clear governance structures and lines of accountability

11. It is recommended in addition to this there should be a CEO in place where there are 7 or more Academies in a chain, and that one sponsor does not exceed more than 9 academies in total

12. The number of Academies CoL sponsors or has committed itself to sponsor is 6 (TACH, COLAI, COLAS, COLPAI, COLPAS, Redriff Primary)

13. Furthermore it is likely that CoL will be asked to sponsor more schools in Boroughs where it already sponsors Academies, such as Hackney and Islington. However in order to be successful CoL will need to ensure before expanding its portfolio of schools further that:

- it has the capacity to support, challenge and manage throughout the process
- it has the resources to sustain the school to achieve outstanding standards. The resources need to be available both locally for the individual school, and centrally to ensure that the sponsor is able to fulfil its duties
- its lines of accountability are clear
- decision making and delegated responsibilities are clear
- the geographical area in which it would consider expansion is defined

14. As such it is realistic that CoL should focus on consolidating and strengthening its commitment as sponsor to the existing Academies. A clear process should be established to follow in exceptional circumstances where there is a compelling case to consider sponsorship of additional schools

### **Prioritisation - process**

15. It is therefore proposed that the following process is approved for considering new requests to sponsor a school should there be a compelling case to do so. This process is set out as below:

i. Initial requests are made with Chief Officer/Town Clerk.



ii. Meeting with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Education Board, and Chairman of Policy and Resources



iii. Proposal to sponsor / MAT (if applicable).



- iv. Proposal enters formal CoL governance process and is submitted to Education Board.



- v. Proposal to Policy and Resources Committee and then if required to Court of Common Council.

### **Prioritisation - due diligence**

16. For each request it is proposed that a due diligence report is developed to help Members assess the viability of the proposal. This report should be submitted to the Education Board (Policy and Resources Committee and then if required to Court of Common Council if applicable) and should cover the following areas:

- a. finance,
- b. risks,
- c. views of parents and local community,
- d. current performance,
- e. governance structure,
- f. asset conditions,
- g. leadership, and
- h. attainment related issues.

### **Prioritisation – issues to consider**

17. For each request it is proposed that the following options appraisal is applied to guide Members in their decision making. This matrix should be submitted along with the due diligence report to the Education Board (Policy and Resources Committee and then if required to Court of Common Council if applicable) and should cover the following areas:

- Do we have an existing school in the locality (organic growth)?
- Can the new school be part of an existing MAT?
- Was CoL invited by another local authority?
- Are parents/staff in support?
- Outcome of due diligence report (analysis).
- Attainment levels.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

18. As part of the Education Strategy refresh that is due to take place this year, CoL will articulate a clear ethos for education expansion and provision that will also set out what is expected of City Governors
19. Any future governance structure will ensure that where CoL is joint sponsor it retains the same amount of control of the Academy, or where it is sole sponsor it maintains total control of the Academy

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