MINUTES OF THE DIGITAL INCLUSION IN EDUCATION TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Tuesday, 8 March 2022 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Colin Elliott (Chair), Caroline Kalu and Paul Maslin and

APOLOGIES: Councillors Obajimi Adefiranye, Liz Johnston-Franklin and Clive Caseley

ALSO PRESENT: John Bardens (Scrutiny Manager)

1. Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the last meeting be agreed as a true record.

2. Declarations of interest

There were none.

3. Draft final report

Cllr Colin Elliott introduced the item and invited the Task and Finish Group to comment on and agree the draft final report and recommendations to Mayor .

RESOLVED:

That the Task and Finish Group's report be agreed with the inclusion of the following recommendations and be submitted to Mayor and Cabinet:

The Digital Inclusion in Education Task and Finish Group:

1) Encourages the council's education department and schools to continue to make the most of London Grid for Learning (LGfL) offers on more affordable devices, and in particular the special data and device offers being developed through the work of the Mayor of London, and to make sure that all schools are aware of the offers available.

2) Recommends that the council's education department and schools produce information and guidance for parents and pupils on where and how to access affordable data (e.g. social tariffs) and devices (e.g. refurbished), as well as where and how they can access local digital support (i.e. libraries, housing providers) and skills (adult education). This should also include guidance on the specifications of devices/hardware that pupils will need and guidance on making the best use of the software and platforms commonly used by schools.

3) Recommends that the council's education department states to schools that it is best practice to include guidance on digital platforms in the induction process for new parents, and to consider issues relating to digital inclusion as part of end-of-term evaluations for each subject.

4) Recommends that that the council's education department engages with other local authorities, through the Mayor of London's digital inclusion programme and the LGA's digital inclusion forum (and other similar national forums) about best practice and benchmarking in relation to digital inclusion in education.

5) Recommends that the council's education department and schools produce information and guidance on the best digital platforms, tools and websites for learning, particularly in relation to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

6) Recommends that any information and guidance for parents is available in different languages and signposted to those most likely to experience barriers to digitally inclusion – such as families with children with SEND, families with English as an additional language (EAL), and families living in temporary accommodation.

7) Recommends that the council routinely takes digital inclusion into account in Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessments, including the digital skills of parents/carers, and consider the adoption of a definition (see Chair's introduction) of digital inclusion to better identify pupils who need support.

8) Recommends that the council's education, housing and IT departments explore the feasibility of providing Wi-Fi in council-managed temporary accommodation and hostel accommodation.

9) Recommends that the council's education and IT departments and schools explore the feasibility of at-scale and ongoing technical support (such as a dedicated IT helpline) for teachers, pupils and parents in relation to devices and platforms used by the school.

10) Encourages the councils education department to continue to provide CPD for teachers in relation to developing and upskilling relevant digital skills.

11) Encourages schools to appoint link-governors for digital inclusion and support for parents.

12) Recommends that the council's education department works with schools, libraries, community centres and Youth First to audit and explore opportunities for in-person digital support hubs for pupils. Particular consideration should be given to those areas likely to be the most digitally excluded.

13) Recommends that young people are asked for their feedback on any in-person support like that mentioned in the previous recommendation (including the development of the new Catford Library, for example) at an early stage and throughout.

14) Recommends that the council explores the feasibility of working with the Young Mayor Team to establish a network of digital champions to continue to consider issues relating to digital inclusion in education.

15) Recommends that the council's education department's briefing session for headteachers discusses and comments on the recommendations of this task & finish group when it meets in the summer.

The meeting ended at 6.40 pm

Chair:

Date: