



## Digital Inclusion in Education Task & Finish Group

### Confirmation of Chair of the Digital Inclusion in Education Task & Finish Group (TFG)

**Date:** 5 July 2021

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Assistant Chief Executive (Scrutiny Manager)

### Outline and recommendations

Further to the Annual General Meeting of Council and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 May 2021, this report informs the task and finish group (TFG) of the appointment of a Chair of the *Digital Inclusion in Education Task & Finish Group*.

Members are advised to:

- Confirm the election of Councillor Colin Elliott as Chair of the TFG.

## 1 Summary

- 1.1. On 26 May 2021 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report setting out the appointment of three time-limited scrutiny task and finish groups (TFGs) and the membership of each of these.
- 1.2. The agreed membership of the digital inclusion in education TFG is as follows:
  - Cllr Colin Elliot (Chair)
  - Cllr Paul Maslin
  - Cllr Jimi Adefiranye
  - Cllr Liz Johnston-Franklin
  - Cllr Caroline Kalu
  - Clive Caseley (Secondary School Parent Governor Representative)

## 2. Recommendation

2.1. The task and finish group is recommended to:

- (i) Confirm the election of Councillor Colin Elliott as Chair of the TFG.

## 3. Policy Context

3.1. The Council's *Corporate Strategy (2018-2022)* outlines the Council's vision to deliver for residents over the next four years. Delivering this strategy includes the following priority outcomes that relate to digital inclusion in education:

- *Giving children and young people the best start in life - Every child has access to an outstanding and inspiring education, and is given the support they need to keep them safe, well and able to achieve their full potential.*
- *Building an inclusive local economy - Everyone can access high-quality job opportunities, with decent pay and security in our thriving and inclusive local economy.*

3.2. The Council's Covid-19 Recovery Plan, *Future Lewisham*, also outlines four strategic themes: *An economically sound future; a healthy and well future; a greener future; and a future we all have a part in.* The first of these is particularly relevant to digital inclusion in education:

- *An economically sound future: We are working to get the borough back in business, with a future where everyone has the jobs and skills they need to get the best that London has to offer. We are a borough with businesses that are adaptable and prepared for change, a thriving local economy that sees 'local' as the first and best choice, with digital inclusion at the heart of our plans. We do all we can to support residents into jobs that pay fairly and provide families with the opportunities and security they deserve*

## 4. Task and Finish Groups

4.1. As a result of the Local Democracy Review, the Local Democracy Working Group recommended some changes to the Council's practice and approach to scrutiny, including the introduction of time limited Task and Finish Groups (TFGs) to look at topical issues of importance or concern. Most of the practice changes were put into practice during the 2021/22 municipal year, apart from the introduction of TFGs. This was put on hold due to the pandemic. It is now proposed to establish three TFGs.

4.2. It has been agreed that:

- *The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will agree which TFGs should be established and their duration; but TFGs will not last longer than 12 months.*
- *Each TFG will meet at least twice in public (one meeting to scope out the work required and one to agree a final report and recommendations).*
- *Evidence will be collected in between formal meetings in a variety of ways. Methods will include, but will not be limited to, desktop research, telephone/MS Teams conferences, site visits, good practice visits and a wide range of*

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*engagement activities. Some evidence may be collected at a formal, public meeting of the TFG where expert witnesses are asked to give evidence.*

- *The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will agree the membership of TFGs on the basis of political party nominations. The membership will be politically proportionate.*
- *Each TFG will have five members. However, the membership of any TFG looking at education matters will be open to the statutory parent governor and diocesan representatives, who can choose to sit on the group (as full members with voting rights) if they wish. Such TFGS will therefore have more than 5 members.*
- *TFGs are effectively time limited Select Committees with the same constitutional powers as standing Select Committees. This includes the power to make reports to the Executive.*
- *The TFG will conduct an investigation into the issue it was established to scrutinise, agree a report on the basis of the evidence heard and report directly to Mayor and Cabinet / the relevant external organisation for a response within two months.*
- *TFGs will focus on producing a small number of focused, evidence-based recommendations.*
- *A copy of each TFG's final report will be circulated by email to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note, and the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny may suggest that the report is presented to full Council to allow for wider debate, in addition to it being considered by the Mayor and Cabinet for an executive response<sup>1</sup>.*
- *The TFG will be disbanded once it has made its final report. Its final set of minutes will go to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for agreement.*
- *The Mayoral response to the TFG will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The relevant TFG Members will be invited to lead the discussion on the response. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may request an update on the implementation of agreed recommendations in six or 12 months' time to itself or an appropriate Select Committee.*

## **5. Financial implications**

- 5.1. Scrutiny work is managed within existing budgets. Formal recommendations to the Mayor arising out of any TFG investigations; specific work items within select committee work programmes; or items considered by the full Overview and Scrutiny Committee are evaluated in the usual way through the process of formal reports. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **6. Legal implications**

- 6.1. The Council's Constitution provides at paragraph 6.11, Article 6 that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may from time to time appoint sub-committees, to be known as task and finish groups which will exist for a period of no less than 3 months, nor more than 12 months from the date of their creation. It further adds that "Any task and finish group shall consist of 5 members and be established for the purpose of examining a particular issue in depth. The terms of reference of any task and finish group shall be agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which shall also appoint members to it."

## **7. Equalities implications**

- 7.1. Equality Act 2010 brought together all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act included a new public sector equality duty, replacing the separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality. The duty came into

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force on 6 April 2011. It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

7.2. The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

## **8. Climate change and environmental implications**

8.1. There are no direct climate change or environmental implications arising from the implementation of the recommendation in this report.

## **9. Crime and disorder implications**

9.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from the implementation of the recommendation in this report.

## **10. Health and wellbeing implications**

10.1. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from the implementation of the recommendation in this report.

## **11. Background papers**

11.1. [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee AGM – 26 May 2021](#)

## **12. Report contact**

12.1. If you have any questions about this report please contact John Bardens or Timothy Andrew:

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