**The Role of the Local Governing Committee in the**

**Cardinal Newman Multi Academy Trust.**

*“God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.*

*I have my mission…*

*I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work.”*

*Saint John Henry Newman*

**Introduction:**

The Newman Catholic Trust has ambitious aims for all the schools and people that make up the fabric of our communities and it is committed to securing an outstanding education for all of its students. To do this, the Trust is focussed on supporting the existing excellent work of our schools and our people to ensure that our students continue to be cared for, continue to thrive and continue to excel. Therefore, the Board of Directors is responsible for designing the future of the Trust and maintaining strategic oversight over the Trust’s schools as a collective and as an organisation. The Local Governing Committees (LGC) play an essential role and function in realising these ambitions - acting as the stewards, critical friends, facilitators for school standards and improvement and support for the school. The LGC exists to improve educational standards so that children and young people have the chance to realise their full potential. The LGC are the local expertise that will help translate Trust policy into an effective and appropriate reality, as effective governance is the key to improving school performance.

*“Trustees and governors are, in my view, the unsung heroes of the system.”*

*Sir David Carter National Schools Commissioner*

**The role of the Local Governing Committee:**

The principal focus of the LGC is to ensure that the school provides a safe environment and the best education it possibly can for every student in the school. The LGC monitors the Academy's key performance indicators, particularly those related to student progress (which is not just about academic progress). It is the responsibility of the the LGC to ensure that our children have an education underpinned by character development, faith formation, and outstanding academics to set them apart from their contemporaries and ensures they thrive in the future. The LGC achieves this by working closely with the Principal and the Academy's senior leadership team to set strategic plans which are aligned to this vision. Throughout the year, the LGC is responsible for monitoring how well these plans are being implemented and improving school standards. It is the role of the LGC to challenge and support the Principal in equal measure to ensure that every student is getting the best all round education that the school can provide. Every year the LGC will work to refine the Academy’s Strategic Improvement Plans (SIP) based on their experience of working with and in the school to improve outcomes year on year.

Naturally, the children are the LGC’s number one priority; however, our staff are vital in the delivery of this vision. Therefore, the LGC is responsible for recruiting, appraising, supporting and developing the staffing team to help drive the school forward. The LGC is also accountable for the well-being of staff and ensuring that the Academy is a good place to work where all staff feel valued and empowered to give their best in the students' interests.

**Key responsibilities and duties:**

The Local Governing Committees are responsible for overseeing the management side of a school. This includes:

* **Strategic planning.** The LGCs are a key strategic decision-maker in every academy. Utilising their local knowledge and the wide range of skills and expertise they bring from their professional lives, the LGCs are responsible for working with the Principal and SLT to construcut an ambitious and realistic SIP that will ensure the Academy is working to fulfil its full potential. This means setting the Academy’s aims and objectives around how the school will develop and improve. They set policies, formulate plans and agree on targets to help the school achieve these objectives, as well as regularly reviewing their strategic framework in light of that progress
* **Local policy writing and implementation** (e.g. curriculum, behaviour, attendance, admissions etc.): The Trust is responsible for maintaining the policies related to wider Trust provision and ensuring there is rigour and reliability across approaches to key core functions, e.g. appraisal, pay, financial procedures, health &safety, grievance, complaints and more. However, the LGC is responsible for maintaining policies that directly relate to local provision and the identity of the curriculum and school life for their school.
* **School improvement:** The LGC is there to support and challenge the Academy’s senior leadership team. They play a crucial role in holding the Principal to account for securing the best possible outcomes for pupils. By challenging key decisions, conducting monitoring and evaluation visits, asking pertinent questions related to key strategic priorities, analysing and questioning the school’s performance data, LGCs aim to guarantee high standards in education.
* **Ensuring financial probity:** The Trust is responsible for the overall financial management of the Academies as individuals and the Trust as a whole. Therefore, the Trust will deploy the CEO, CFO and other Trust staff to support the schools in setting, monitoring and managing school budgets and finances. As part of this role, the Trust will work to manage the centralised services and contracts that it negotiates on behalf of the schools. The Trust will then delegate the rest of the budgets to the local Academy to decide on how it will allocate its funds in line with the school’s needs and strategic priorities. Therefore, the LGC still has a key strategic role in the financial management of schools. Their responsibilities include setting financial priorities through the school development plan, keeping regular oversight of the school’s budget and in-year spends, ensuring Academy funds are spent wisely and in a manner which secures highly-effective provision and deciding on how the school’s delegated budget should be spent in accordance with the school improvement plan and statutory curriculum requirement.

**Does the role of a Local Governing Committee change now that we are a Trust?**

In short, the answer is - not really. Governors will still work together to provide independent oversight of a school's management and operation, aiming to improve the quality of education provided and raise standards. An Academy's LGC body does not run the school on a day-to-day basis; this is the job of the Principal and other senior staff. However, it is responsible for influencing strategic improvement and development.

The LGC will still meet and conduct Governing body meetings

*Full LGC meetings are typically held once a term, and whilst there are many important aspects of the role, the most important is the business that takes place at these meetings.*

The LGC is still expected to and **must** conduct school visits:

*LGCs are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of a school and its curriculum. School visits will help governors to understand more about their school and the reality of school life. Governor visits to classrooms are not a form of inspection but serve as a clear monitoring function on the implementation of the school’s strategic planning.*

The LGC will still have Committees and, therefore, Committee meetings:

*A Local Governing Committee is required to have certain statutory committees in line with the Trust’s Scheme of Delegation. However, it is free to also establish other committees that it feels are important to the local Academy and school improvement. Most governors will be members of one or two committees, and their work is reported back to the full LGC. This is so all governors are kept informed of matters and working progress. Governors work together to provide independent oversight of the management and operation of a school, with the aim of improving the quality of education provided and raising standards.*

Governors were responsible for reading key documents and agendas prior to meetings – and they still are:

*LGCs will receive an agenda, a copy of the minutes from the previous meeting and any other relevant papers that are to be discussed from the clerk. The LGC will still need to take the time to read and familiarise themselves with these documents prior to meetings. Governirs will still make notes of anything you are unsure of so, or questions they wish to ask so they can provide an active and constructive role within meetings.*

Our Local Governing Committees play a key core role insecuring the future of our schools, the future of our children and the future of our Trust. We are wholy grateful for our governors. Each school is a unique link in the Trust chain and we stronger together. Therefore, we will continue to work collectively to ensure that our decisions and our work ensure our children receive the academic, spiritual and emotional development that allows them to grow as people of God and become the inspirational individuals who will know who God has called them to be and set the world on fire!