



Notes of Meeting: North West Advisory Board

13th December 2022

Attendance

Attendance data is published annually on the GOV.UK website.

AB members who sent their apologies for the meeting have, where possible, been consulted on all projects before the meeting. Their views are reflected in the discussion at the meeting (where appropriate). This excludes items where that member declared a conflict of interest.

Regional Director (RD) chair

- Vicky Beer (RD)

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Anita Ghidotti
- Karen Burns
- Annette Williams
- George Beveridge
- Nic Brindle
- Jonathan Nichols
- Tania Lewyckyj
- Helen O'Neill

Guests

- None

Apologies

- Please insert any necessary details as bullet points.

DfE senior civil servants

- SFSO representatives

Representations received

- No representations were made for any items discussed at this meeting.

General Discussion Points

Local Update

- The board discussed the current climate of schools across the North West Region.

AB member reflections

- Members reflected on their experience of the Advisory Board and the decision-making process.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Discussion to consider The District CofE Primary School, St Helens, to convert and join Rainbow Education MAT.

AB discussion:

- Board agreed that this is a sensible proposal.
- SFSO have recommended an SRMA visit.
- The board also agreed for RG to commission an external review of governance.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: Jonathan Nichols was not present for this discussion

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Cowley International College, St Helens, to convert and join Rainbow Education MAT.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the trust's plans and potential to grow further in secondary education and agreed that this is both a good proposal and wider strategic plan for the trust's growth.
- SFSO have recommended an SRMA visit.
- The board also agreed for RG to commission an external review of governance.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: Jonathan Nichols was not present for this discussion

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Hartford Primary School, Cheshire West & Chester, to convert and join Create Learning Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board agreed that this is a sensible proposal but shared concerns regarding the longer-term growth opportunities.
- The board shared concerns regarding the trust's governance board, reflecting on the number of parents on the board.
- SFSO suggested that we provide an external review of governance to examine the effectiveness of the board.
- SFSO also recommended an SRMA visit.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Abraham Moss Community School, Manchester, to convert and join The Dean Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board shared concerns regarding the trust's capacity to acquire another school, considering the challenges the trust is currently facing at Dean Trust Wigan.
- The board have asked for assurances that the trust have enough staff on the leadership team to support the delivery of this school.
- The board have also asked to see a more convincing School Improvement strategy which demonstrates how they will make the necessary improvements and provide challenge at Wigan.
- SFSO recognised that despite having an accountant as a member of the trust, they require a finance representative on the trust board.

RD decision: Deferred

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to update RD and board on information requested above.

Project: Discussion to consider Priestnall School, Stockport, to convert and join The Laurus Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board agreed that this is a sensible geographical proposal and good acquisition for the trust.
- The board acknowledged the support already provided to the school and the relationship already established.
- The board recognised that there is a low level of academisation in Stockport and questioned where the trust would move next in the local area.
- SFSO recommended a supportive SRMA deployment.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Holden Clough Community Primary, Tameside, to convert and join Victorious Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board acknowledged the impact the trust has already had on the school and recognised that this proposal would provide a consistent approach to consolidate an already established relationship.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: Karen Burns was not present for this discussion

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Ashton Community Science College, Lancashire, to convert and join The Bay Learning Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board agreed that this is a sensible proposal which supports the emerging geographical cluster.
- The board would like to see more detail on what the trust's School Improvement model will look like moving forward and how they will build capacity internally to provide additional support.
- SFSO have recommended an SRMA visit.
- The board also agreed for RG to commission an external review of governance.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Lindal and Marton Primary School, Cumbria, to convert and join Furness Education Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board encouraged a nursery provision which would not affect the conversion.
- The board also recognised low number of members on the trust which may not pose as an immediate risk but suggested appointing another member which would provide a little more resilience.

- The board reflected on the large number of trustees on the board.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Sponsored Route:

Points discussed in relation to a school's sponsor status.

Project: Discussion to consider Brentnall Primary School, Salford, sponsor options. FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

AB discussion:

- The board were provided with a summary of the sponsor options for this school.

RD decision: FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to progress.

Project: Discussion to consider Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School, Lancashire, to convert and join Star Academies.

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the significant safeguarding concerns from the recent Ofsted report and the need for change in the school.
- The board recognised the strengths of the proposed sponsor and were confident that Star would effectively support and improve the school.
- The board raised concerns about the pace of approving the sponsor but understood the need to ensure strong support from January and the benefits of this being from the preferred sponsor.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school and Trust of decision.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

List of decisions taken by the RD outside of AB meetings.

Project: Moorfield Community Primary School, Salford, to convert and join Kings Academy Trust.

Decision type: Converter Academy Order

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Christleton High School (The Learning Trust), Cheshire West & Chester, to expand physical capacity of teaching space to accommodate the increase of pupil numbers.

Decision type: Significant Change

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school of decision.