



## Notes of Meeting: West Midlands Advisory Board

Date of meeting – 16 September 2021

### 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 Schools Commissioner (RSC) chair

- Andrew Warren.

### Advisory Board (AB) members

- Sajid Gulzar.
- Dame Maureen Brennan.
- Kate Brunt.
- Margaret Yates.
- Sinead Smith.
- Sir Mark Grundy.
- Mike Donoghue.

### Guests

- None.

### Apologies

- None.

### DfE senior civil servants

- Claire Trewartha (Deputy Director)
- Dawn Dandy (Deputy Director)

### Representations received

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

# General Discussion Points

## Local Update

- The RSC and AB members discussed the current climate in schools across the West Midlands Region.

## AB member reflections

- AB members reflected on their experiences in schools regarding Test and Trace and vaccinations.

## Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

**Project:** Whether to issue an Academy Order to Oakfield Lodge School, Cheshire East, to convert and become an academy and join Manor Hall Multi Academy Trust, Cheshire East.

### **AB discussion:**

- Oakfield Lodge School Pupil Referral Unit, situated in Crewe, caters for children aged 11-16 who are permanently excluded. The school holds a current Ofsted judgement of 'Requires Improvement' with a monitoring visit taking place recently in May 2021.
- Manor Hall Multi Academy Trust is made up of 13 schools in Staffordshire with a well-developed School Improvement offer. It is made up entirely of special schools and is expanding further within the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) community to include Pupil Referral Units/Alternative Provisions.
- A sponsor match was approved for Oakfield in 2016 however due to an Ofsted Inspection, it was put on hold; despite this Oakfield have continued to develop a strong relationship with the Trust.
- The board discussed the capacity of the Trust including its future growth plan, school improvement record and also its governance structure.
- The board were supportive of the recommendation.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform The School and Trust of the decision.

## Sponsored Route:

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

**Project:** For North Bromsgrove High School, Worcestershire, to be sponsored by Shires Multi Academy Trust, Warwickshire.

**Reason for Academy Order:** Ofsted category 4

### AB discussion:

- North Bromsgrove High School is a secondary located in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. The school hold a current Ofsted judgement of 'Requires Improvement' from 2019.
- Shires Multi Academy Trust is looking to grow its capacity and support further schools around the West Midlands area. The trust has a strong record of school improvement with its Chief Executive Officer (CEO), an experienced National Leader of Education (NLE).
- The sponsor is local to the high school and is a choice supported by both the school and the Local Authority due an established working relationship.
- The financial status of both the School and Trust were discussed by the board due to North Bromsgrove's private finance initiative (PFI) and whether a form of support would be offered. Leadership and the Governance structure were also points considered whilst looking at the recommendation.
- The board supported the recommendation and the RSC set a condition of an SRMA visit prior to the transfer.

**RSC decision:** Approve with a condition.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform School and Trust of the decision.

## Sponsor Application

Points discussed in relation to applications for sponsor application.

**Project:** Shires Multi Academy Trust, Warwickshire.

### **AB discussion:**

- Shires Multi Academy Trust is a 3 school MAT formed in September 2020. All 3 schools are Ofsted judged either 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.
- The Trust currently only has 1 secondary school and would like to sponsor further secondary schools in the future to aid in strategic growth locally and then regionally. Its current growth model looks to add between 6-8 schools.
- The Trusts application looks to have a positive effect on the local area including local schools which are looking for sponsor matches.
- The board discussed the Trust's current School Improvement resources and experience including their governance model. The board also reviewed the financial figures submitted by the trust and discussed suggested support offers if the sponsorship were to be approved for North Bromsgrove High School.
- The board supported the recommendation.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform Trust of decision.

## Significant Change

Points discussed in relation to significant change application(s).

**Project:** Marfields Primary Academy, Cheshire east – the establishment of a Special Educational Needs Resource Provision.

### **AB discussion:**

- Marfields Primary Academy is a 1 school MAT based in Congleton, Cheshire East, with a current Ofsted judgement of 'Good'.
- The school currently serves several pupils successfully with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, therefore there is capacity to deliver the change and where necessary extra staff will be taken on for the new 7 pupils.
- Following a review of the provision by the LA, a need was identified across the area.
- Due diligence has been completed by the LA who fully support and will fund the proposed change. A full consultation has been completed, 3 concerns were raised and have now been addressed with all in favour of the proposal.  
The application is being taken forward as a retrospective change due to the facility being open from 1 September 2021.
- The board supported the recommendation.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform school of decision.

## Trust Change

Points discussed in relation to academies moving to a new trust.

**Project:** Holyhead School, Birmingham, to join Central Region School Trust, Birmingham.

### **AB discussion:**

- Holyhead School, Birmingham, is a secondary school located in Ladywood. The School was last judged as 'Good'; by Ofsted in February 2020.
- Central Region Schools (CRS) Trust is a 9 school MAT with academies in Worcestershire and Sandwell.
- Holyhead has a close and longstanding relationship with CRS and are the sole remaining member of the RSA Academies umbrella.
- This will be a voluntary transfer to the Trust after working collaboratively for some time and identifying an opportunity for capacity growth.
- The transfer of the School to the Trust will enable both to share varying expertise and experience amongst staff and enabling further capacity to school improvement plans.
- Staff forecasts and capacity of skill sharing were discussed by the board, notably the sustainability of the support offered by the school to the trust.
- The board members supported the recommendation.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform School and Trust of decision.

**Project:** Hockley Heath Academy Trust, Solihull, to join Tudor Grange Trust, Solihull.

### **AB discussion:**

- Hockley Heath Academy Trust is a Single Academy Trust consisting of a primary school based in Solihull with a current Ofsted judgement of 'Good'.
- Tudor Grange Academies Trust is a MAT comprising of 11 schools.
- As a result of conversations between the department and the SAT's board, a condition was put in place that the SAT would need to join a MAT to secure stability for the future of the Trust.
- Tudor Grange taking on Hockley Heath follows its long term plans of growing three hubs close to its pre-existing academies.
- The board reviewed the capacity of Tudor Grange and its future growth plans in the area. The board discussed the sustainability of the school-to-school support offered by the Trusts.
- The board members supported the recommendation.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform School and Trust of decision.



## Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

**Project:** Rudheath Primary Academy and Nursery, Cheshire and Cheshire.

**Decision type:** Significant Change to increase capacity.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the school.

**Project:** Longlands Primary School, Shropshire.

**Decision type:** Significant Change to add a nursery provision and increase age range.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the school.

**Project:** City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College, Stoke-on-Trent.

**Decision type:** Significant Change to increase capacity and expand the premises.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the school.

**Project:** Aston University Engineering Academy, Birmingham.

**Decision type:** Significant Change to increase capacity.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the school.

**Project:** Wolverley Sebright Primary Academy, Worcestershire.

**Decision type:** Significant Change to expand physical capacity and addition of a classroom.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the school.

**Project:** Worcester Sixth Form College, Worcestershire.

**Decision type:** Significant Change to increase capacity and expansion of the premises.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the school.

**Project:** King Edward VI College, Warwickshire.

**Decision type:** Significant Change for a physical expansion.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the school.

**Project:** St Weonard's Primary, Herefordshire.

**Decision type:** Significant Change to increase age range and addition of a nursery provision.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the school.

**Project:** Hereford Sixth Form College, Herefordshire.

**Decision type:** Significant Change to increase capacity and expansion of premises.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the school.