

Notes of Meeting: North Advisory Board

Thursday 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 school commissioner (RSC) chair

- Katherine Cowell (RSC)

Advisory board (AB) members

- George Beveridge (AB)
- Lesley Powell (AB)
- Elizabeth Horne (AB)
- Chris Clarke (AB)
- Sir Michael Wilkins (AB)
- Nick Hurn (AB)
- Andy Bayston (AB)

Guests

- None

Apologies

- Zoe Carr (AB)

DfE senior civil servants

- None

Representations received

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

General discussion points

Points discussed in the meeting.

RSC welcomed board members to the meeting. RSC provided the board with a high-level overview on the decisions made during 2020/21.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: This is a proposal for St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Bishop Auckland, Durham and Blessed John Duckett Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Durham to convert and join Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board was advised that this proposal is in line with the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese's vision on Catholic education.
- St Wilfrid's was judged to be 'Good' by Ofsted in January 2019 and Blessed John Duckett was judged to be 'Good' in May 2012, a short inspection took place in November 2020 and the school remained 'Good'.
- The board was advised that Blessed John Duckett is a high performing school that will add further capacity to the trust.
- The board was informed that St Wilfrid's will benefit from being part of the trust, with a focus on school improvement to be implemented at the school to help drive up performance standards.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school/trust of decision

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: This is a proposal for Ellenborough and Ewanrigg Infant School, Cumbria to convert and join The Good Shepherd Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- Ellenborough & Ewanrigg was judged by Ofsted to be 'Good', with 'Outstanding' features in October 2014. A short inspection took place in September 2019 and the school remained 'Good'.
- Ellenborough and Ewanrigg is providing ongoing support to a GSMAT school. Joining the trust will formalise the collaboration and support.
- The board recognised that by joining GSMAT the school will benefit from the trust's experience in dealing with small schools.
- The board discussed the school's financial health and an action plan has been put in place to ensure improvements are made.
- The board suggested that the school continues to work collaboratively with local/feeder schools to ensure relationships are maintained in the locality and school transition is not impacted.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school/trust of decision

Sponsor Application

Points discussed in relation to applications for sponsor approval.

Project: This is a proposal for Prince Regent Street Trust, Stockton on Tees to apply for sponsor status.

AB discussion:

- Prince Regent consists of three primary schools, which are very different in size and demographic.
- The trust is very keen to support schools throughout Tees Valley, as well as in the enhanced support area within Durham and beyond, if needed.
- Prince Regent is eager to grow and has developed strong links with a number of schools in the Tees Valley area.
- Current governance structure is 3 members and 7 trustees, this is not in line with DfE preference.
- The board discussed concerns with the current mix of skills on the board and the possible conflict between members and trustees. The board agreed that the governance structure needs strengthening.
- The board supported this proposal, however, they recommended that the trust must review its governance structure and work with Academy Ambassadors to help improve the trust board.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school/trust of decision

Decisions taken between AB meetings

Project: Harrogate High School – North Yorkshire

Decision type: Significant Change - application to increase the duration of the temporary closure of their sixth form for another two years.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school/trust of decision

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