

## **Notes of Meeting: Lancashire & West Yorkshire Advisory Board**

**16<sup>th</sup> December 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**

- Vicky Beer (RSC)

### **Advisory Board (AB) members**

- Karen Bramwell
- Julie Bradley
- Jonathan Nichols
- Lesley Gwinnett
- Julian Appleyard
- Chris Melia

### **Apologies**

- Duncan Jacques

### **DfE senior civil servants**

- ESFA Representatives

### **Representations received**

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

## **General Discussion Points**

### **Local Update**

- RSC provided a COVID 19 local update (as of 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021) to the board

### **AB member reflections**

- The board reflected on the impact the pandemic has had on their schools and the wider community
- The board discussed the updated guidance for schools following recent updates

## Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

**Project:** Discussion to consider Baildon CofE Primary School, Bradford to convert and join Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust

**AB discussion:**

- The board supported this proposal

**RSC decision: Approved**

**Conflicts: None**

**Further actions required:** Project lead to inform Trust and DCS of decision

**Project:** Discussion to consider Springside Primary School, Bury, to convert and join Prestolee Multi-Academy Trust

**AB discussion:**

- The board identified expertise gaps on the trust board and advised that the CFO and CEO seek a mentoring programme and to hire a member with financial expertise on the trust board.
- Advisory Board would also like visibility on what the trust's plans are for a better trust board model. This will be based on experience and expertise and will also include appropriate challenge too.
- An SRMA to be deployed to support the trust and provide help in managing its challenges.

**RSC decision: Approved with conditions**

**Conflicts: None**

**Further actions required:** Project lead to inform Trust and DCS of decision

**Project:** Discussion to consider an approved sponsor for Frodsham Weaver Vale Primary School, Cheshire West & Chester

**AB discussion:**

- The board supported this proposal

**RSC decision: Approved**

**Conflicts: None**

**Further actions required:** Project lead to inform Trust and DCS of decision

## Sponsored Route:

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

**Project:** Discussion to consider Micklefield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Leeds, to convert and join Collaborative Learning Trust

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

### AB discussion:

- The board agreed the school requires a Multi-Academy Trust to take on its challenges
- The board queried the proximity of the school and the trust's nearest schools.
- ESFA shared concerns regarding the school's finances, stating this could put a further strain on the trust.
- The board identified expertise gaps on the trust board. The trust will need to provide a development strategy which outlines where their school education (particularly primary) expertise will come from.
- The trust must focus on its school improvement plan to ensure there is an emphasis on challenge and development in order to take on the school.
- Trust to provide a finance plan incorporating Micklefield
- An SRMA to be deployed to support the trust and provide help in managing its challenges.

**RSC decision:** Approved with conditions

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Project lead to inform Trust and DCS of decision

**Project:** Discussion to consider Sacred Heart Catholic College, Sefton, to convert and join Pope Francis Multi Academy Trust

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

### AB discussion:

- Approval of an off-role CFO. This is contingent on confirmation of how the interim CFO arrangements will work in practice with St Joseph's MAT, forecasted costs and assurance that the CFO has capacity to do both roles.
- RDD has an early meeting with the interim CEO and interim CFO to ensure clear expectations around school improvement and financial planning are set.
- Clear plan for how the trust will manage school improvement partners for the trust, across both schools; the commissioning arrangements in place for Sacred Heart; who will monitor the impact and how will the partners be held to account.
- Production of a robust plan for managing Sacred Hearts finances to ensure the school remains in cumulative surplus for the next 5 year.
- Strengthened governance with finance specialist and MAT expertise added

- Review membership
- The permanent trust CEO/CFO post should be advertised before Sacred Heart converts.

**RSC decision: Approved with conditions**

**Conflicts: None**

**Further actions required:** Project lead to inform Trust and DCS of decision

**Project:** Discussion to review sponsor options for Castle View Primary School, Lancashire  
FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

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

**AB discussion:**

- The trust's School Improvement strategy relies on support from external consultants. The trust will need to review its internal infrastructure.
- The trust will also need to improve its HR team particularly if they are looking grow the trust.
- SRMA to be deployed

**RSC decision: FOR DISCUSSION ONLY**

**Conflicts: None**

**Further actions required:** No further actions required

## Sponsor Application

Points discussed in relation to applications for sponsor application.

**Project:** Discussion to consider Bolton and Farnworth Church of England Primary Multi Academy Trust, Bolton, sponsor application

### **AB discussion:**

- The trust's School Improvement strategy relies on support from external consultants. The trust will need to review its internal infrastructure.
- The trust will also need to improve its HR team particularly if they are looking grow the trust.
- SRMA to be deployed

**RSC decision: Approved with conditions**

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Project lead to inform Trust and DCS of decision

## Significant Change

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

**Project:** Discussion to consider the resource provision at Bradford Academy, Bradford

**AB discussion:**

- The board queried the proposed timeline, agreeing that it may be optimistic. They also shared concerns that a detailed contingency plan had not been put together to provide assurances in case the project fails to meet the September 2022 timeline.
- A meeting to be organised between the RSC team, Local Authority and SEND colleagues to have a robust review of the LA's SEND strategy in the new year.
- A discussion to take place with Bradford Academy about how they might be able to be part of/shape the contingency plans, tilted towards their plans for the future i.e. joining a MAT.

**RSC decision: Approved**

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Project lead to inform the trust of decision