



Notes of Meeting: East Midlands Advisory Board.

9 November 2022.

Attendance

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

Advisory Board 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

- Kate Copley.
- Carol Gray.

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Chris Wheatley.
- Inderjit Sandhu.
- Julian Scholefield.
- Sian Hampton.
- Paul West.
- Mark Thomas.
- Sarah Armitage.
- Paul Heery.

Guests

- None.

Apologies

- None.

DfE senior civil servants

- Kelly Hughes, Deputy Director, East Midlands Regions Group.
- SFSO representative.

Representations received

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

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Whether to approve Snarestone Church of England Primary School, Leicestershire, to convert and join Rise Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

Snarestone Church of England Primary School is a smaller-than-average voluntary aided primary school with 69 pupils on roll. It was inspected in March 2020 (section 5) and judged overall as requires improvement.

Following due diligence, the governing body of Snarestone Church of England Primary School passed a resolution to convert to academy status and join Rise Multi Academy Trust. The governing body determined that Rise Multi Academy Trust's vision, values and ethos align closely with those of the school, and that the trust has demonstrated the capacity and commitment to continue the school improvement work that has started under the trust partnership arrangement which has been in place since February 2022. The Diocese of Leicester has provided consent to the school's conversion.

Snarestone Church of England Primary School will join Rise Multi Academy Trust's 'west cluster' which already contains 5 schools, the closest being 3.7 miles away. The school has already worked closely with these schools during the pandemic and through the trust partnership, and would benefit from further opportunities for collaboration, networks, and moderation as part of Rise Multi Academy Trust.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Rise Multi Academy Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

The board was in agreement with this proposal.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: Paul Heery. Paul was not in attendance for this part of the meeting, nor was he in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school, Leicestershire County Council and trust of the decision.

Sponsored Route:

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

Project: Discuss sponsor options for the transfer of Eckington School, Derbyshire, from Learner Engagement and Achievement Partnership Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

Eckington School is a secondary school in North-East Derbyshire. The school converted into Learner Engagement and Achievement Partnership Multi Academy Trust in April 2018. Ofsted judged the school as requires improvement in 2016 and 2018.

In June 2022, Ofsted inspected Eckington School and found it to be inadequate.

On 23 September 2022, a Termination Warning Notice was issued to the trust in respect of Eckington School.

Following the inadequate judgement, Learner Engagement and Achievement Partnership Multi Academy Trust brokered support from Chorus Education Trust.

Chorus Education Trust has been working with the school and Learner Engagement and Achievement Partnership Multi Academy Trust under a service level agreement since August 2022. Following the Ofsted inspection, they have been supporting the Learner Engagement and Achievement Partnership Multi Academy Trust in driving immediate school improvement.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Learner Engagement and Achievement Partnership Multi Academy Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

Whilst the board agreed that the 2 sponsor options presented to them were both strong, Chorus were seen as the better fit having the advantage of already worked closely with Eckington School and Learner Engagement and Achievement Partnership Multi Academy Trust.

The board was in agreement with this proposal.

RD decision: Approved – Chorus Education Trust.

Conflicts: None.

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

Free School Presumption – Sponsor Approval

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

Project: To discuss a sponsor match approval for a proposed special free school in Tiffield, West Northamptonshire.

AB discussion:

West Northamptonshire Council has identified a need for, and seeks to establish a new, special school with places for pupils on the autistic spectrum continuum, with speech, language and communication needs and severe learning difficulties, to open in September 2024.

West Northamptonshire Council ran an initial consultation in May and June 2022 on the proposal to commission a new special free school under the free school presumption route. Over 300 of 330 responses were 'supportive' or 'very supportive' of the proposal.

Three proposals were received to sponsor the proposed special free school. The Local Authority interviewed the proposed sponsors in August 2022. The Local Authority's preferred sponsor is Greenwood Academies Trust.

Greenwood Academies Trust has 35 academies, a mixture of primary, secondary, special and all-through, across 2 regions (East Midlands and East of England). Purple Oaks Academy (special free school) in West Northamptonshire was awarded 'advanced status' by the National Autistic Society's Autism Accreditation Committee; it is among the closest Greenwood Academies Trust schools to the proposed site for the new Tiffield special academy (21 minutes by car).

Greenwood Academies Trust has strong educational vision and strong leadership within the trust. A new special free school would be used effectively to establish an ambitious curriculum that ensures a high quality and personalised education for pupils at every stage of their development. Greenwood Academies Trust has experience of opening free schools and of providing high quality education to children with similar needs to those at the new special free school. They have also committed to providing outreach to other special schools, mainstream providers and SEN forums, to help raise the standard of education for students with SEND across West Northamptonshire.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Greenwood Academies Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

ESFA recommended the supportive deployment of a school resource management adviser to gain more insight into the trust's financial operating model. The Board agreed the school resource management adviser recommendation on this basis.

The board was in agreement with this proposal.

RD decision: Approved – Greenwood Academies Trust

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the trust and West Northamptonshire Council of the decision. The supportive deployment of a school resource management advisor was recommended.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Iveshead School.

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 1 December 2022.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Project: Selston CofE Infant and Nursery School.

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 1 December 2022.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Project: Huthwaite All Saint's CofE (Aided) Infant & Preschool.

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 1 December 2022.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Project: Etwall Primary School.

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 1 December 2022.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Significant Change

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

Project: Whether to agree an increase to the capacity of Bramcote College (The White Hills Park Trust), Nottinghamshire, from 600 to 750 places.

AB discussion:

Nottinghamshire County Council established a requirement for an increase in capacity following a review of the basic need in the area.

There is going to be a rebuild of the school buildings at the main site, Bramcote College, that are run down and no longer fit for purpose. This will be funding through selling an off-site playing field.

This significant change will increase the capacity of the replacement school from 600 to 750 places at Y7 to Y11, increasing the PAN from 120 to 150 (5 form entry). Sixth-form places will remain unchanged at 200.

A consultation to increase capacity ran from 19 April 2022 to 6 June 2022. Of the 94 responses, 93 of them were in favour.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at The White Hills Park Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered

The board was in agreement with this proposal.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: Paul Heery. Paul was not in attendance for this part of the meeting, nor was he in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the academy and trust of the decision.

Trust Change

Points discussed in relation to academies moving to another trust.

Project: Whether to approve the transfer of Loughborough Church of England Primary School (single-academy trust), Leicestershire, to join Rise Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

Loughborough Church of England Primary School is a 1-form entry Church of England primary school located in the Charnwood district of Leicestershire. It converted to become a standalone academy on 1 June 2014. The school was judged by Ofsted to be good in November 2012 and inspectors confirmed that the school continued to be good at a short inspection in May 2017.

Following a period of due diligence, the board of Loughborough Church of England Primary School resolved to join a multi-academy trust, and consent to the transfer was provided by the Diocese of Leicester. The transfer of Loughborough Church of England Primary School into Rise Multi Academy Trust will enable it to join a trust that operates in the same geographic area, shares a similar ethos, and more easily share resources.

Rise Multi Academy Trust has recently moved to a hub model for strategic growth and Loughborough would form part of its central hub.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Rise Multi Academy Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

The board was in agreement with this proposal.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: Paul Heery. Paul was not in attendance for this part of the meeting, nor was he in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the single-academy trust and multi-academy trust of the decision.

Project: Whether to approve the transfer of Westgate Academy Ltd (single-academy trust), Lincolnshire, to join Aspire Schools Trust.

AB discussion:

Westgate Academy Ltd (Westgate Academy) is seeking approval to join Aspire Schools Trust with a proposed transfer date of 1st March 2023. Both trust boards have passed a resolution in favour of the transfer.

Westgate Academy Ltd is a primary single-academy trust in Lincoln which opened in June 2011. It received a good Ofsted judgment in June 2016. Ofsted conducted a section 8 review in November 2021 which showed that the academy continues to be good.

Westgate Academy Ltd identified Aspire Schools Trust as the best match, as the culture of the schools under their umbrella closely match the approach at Westgate. They began to develop a relationship with Aspire Schools Trust when they began providing financial services support.

The financial health of Westgate, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Aspire Schools Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

The board has requested additional information on this proposal before a decision can be taken.

RD decision: Deferred.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the single-academy trust and multi-academy trust of the decision and bring further information to next advisory board meeting.

© Crown copyright 2022.