



## Notes of Meeting: West Midlands Advisory Board

24 November 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

- Andrew Warren

### Advisory Board (AB) members

- Dame Mo Brennan
- Mike Donoghue
- Guy Shears
- Sarah Finch
- Amarjit Cheema
- Dan Parkes
- Lizana Oberholzer
- Tom Leverage

### Guests

- None.

### Apologies

- None.

### DfE senior civil servants

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

## **Representations received**

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

## **General Discussion Points**

### **Local Update**

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

### **AB member reflections**

- AB members reflected on The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) funding and the impacts it has had on education provisions regarding language skill uptake and recruitment of Modern Foreign Language teachers. There was also discussion on the Autumn Statement, including its details on funding.

## Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

**Project:** Whether to issue an Academy order to Greenfield Primary School, Walsall, to convert and become an Academy and join Central Co-Operative Learning Trust, Staffordshire.

### **AB discussion:**

- Greenfield Primary School, Walsall, is an Ofsted rated 'Good' school who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust, allowing them to become part of a strong family of schools.
- Central Co-Operative Learning Trust comprises of 8 schools based across Staffordshire, Walsall and Derbyshire. The trust have proposed to add further capacity to the trust via Greenfield, who would support a planned hub.
- The trust would like to build upon capacity in the local area as Walsall is recognised as a Priority Education Investment Area (PEIA). Greenfield and Central have established a strong working relationship in preparation for the conversion and ensured that both ethos and values align.
- CCLT has identified 7 key areas for improvement at the school and has set out plans to address these areas. Improvements and development would be set out in maths, staff development and coaching.
- The board discussed the recent School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) visit, seeking feedback on savings and financial forecasts.
- The board supported the recommendation.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Converter Academy Order to be issued to Chair of Governors. Trust and DCS to be informed of the decision.

**Project:** Whether to issue an Academy order to Tillington Manor Primary School, Staffordshire, to convert and become an Academy and join Perry Hall Multi Academy Trust, Wolverhampton.

### **AB discussion:**

- Tillington Manor Primary School, Staffordshire, is an Ofsted rated 'Good' Primary who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- Perry Hall is a primary only trust, comprising of 9 schools within the areas of Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, Worcester and Sandwell.
- The school has been collaborating with the trust for the last 2 years and has established a very successful working relationship as an associate partner. The benefits of the collaboration are mutual and have recognised that the inclusive approach will enhance the quality of support that can be given trust wide.
- PH has carried out a skills audit of their trust board to ensure they have expertise in all areas with school improvement and its impact, reported to the Trust Board.

- The board discussed school improvement and PH's trust board. They sought assurances on leadership support and school performance.
- The board supported the recommendation with the RD approving a recommendation of an External Governance Review (EGR) and SRMA.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** Amarjit Cheema.

**Further actions required:** Converter Academy Order to be issued to Chair of Governors. Trust and DCS to be informed of the decision.

## Significant Change

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

**Project:** Whether to approve a physical expansion at Walton Hall Academy, Staffordshire.

### **AB discussion:**

- Walton Hall Academy is a special school located in rural Staffordshire with a current Ofsted judgement of 'Good'.
- The academy has proposed to increase its physical capacity by building 2 modular classrooms, this is to accommodate a natural growth in number over the last 5 years.
- The academy accommodates pupils with moderate severe or complex learning difficulties and autism.
- A 4-week consultation has been completed with all responses received being in support of the proposal.
- The board raised questions on current pupil numbers, including the increase that had not been reported to the Department for Education. The Local Authority are in support of this as there are a shortage of places.
- The board supported the recommendation.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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