



Notes of Meeting: North East Advisory Board

Thursday 15 December 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

- Katherine Cowell (RD)

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Jason Brine (AB)
- Dame Maura Regan (AB)
- Dame Nicola Stephenson (AB)
- Anita Bath (AB)
- Colin Lofthouse (AB)
- Robert Tarn (AB)
- Jo Heaton (AB)

Apologies

- Elizabeth Horne (AB)

DfE senior civil servants

- N/A

Representations received

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

General Discussion Points

- RD welcomed board members to the meeting.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: This is a proposal for Belmont Church of England Primary School, Durham to convert and join Melrose Learning Trust (MLT)

AB discussion:

- Belmont Church of England Primary School in Durham was judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' in October 2021.
- The school is currently under capacity at 75% full but pupil numbers are forecasted to be stable.
- In line with the Diocese of Durham's vision, Belmont would like to be part of a strong Church of England Multi Academy Trust.
- MLT was created in 2015 and currently have four academies in the trust across Stockton-on-Tees, Durham and Darlington, with the following Ofsted ratings: one outstanding, one good, and two yet to be inspected since converting.
- The board discussed MLT's governance structure and recommended an external review to be completed in advance of further growth to support the trust's continued development.
- The board agreed that a School Resource Management Advisor should be deployed to undertake a review of the trust's financial position and offer any advice.
- The board agreed that the trust has the capacity and capability to support this school and, therefore, supported this proposal.

RD decision: Approve with conditions

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

- Project Lead to inform school and Multi Academy Trust of decision.
- School Resource Management Advisor deployment to be scheduled within three months of joining MLT.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: This is a proposal for Easington Church of England Primary School, Durham to convert and join Melrose Learning Trust

AB discussion:

- Easington Church of England Primary School, Durham was judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' in July 2015.
- The school is currently under capacity at 84% full but pupil numbers are stable.
- In line with the Diocese of Durham's vision, Easington would like to be part of a strong Church of England Multi Academy Trust.

- MLT was created in 2015 and currently have four academies in the trust across Stockton-on-Tees, Durham and Darlington, with the following Ofsted ratings: one outstanding, one good, and two yet to be inspected.
- The board discussed MLTs governance structure and recommended a review to be completed in advance of further growth.
- It was suggested by the board that a School Resource Management Advisor should be deployed to undertake a review of the trust's financial position and offer any advice.
- The board agreed that the trust has the capacity and capability to support this school and, therefore, supported this proposal

RD decision: Approve with conditions

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

- Project Lead to inform school and Multi Academy Trust of decision.
- School Resource Management Advisor deployment to be scheduled within three months of joining MLT.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: This is a proposal for Ward Jackson Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Hartlepool to convert and join Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust (DNDLT)

AB discussion:

- Ward Jackson Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Hartlepool was judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' in April 2019.
- The school is currently under capacity at 49% full and is the last remaining diocesan school to convert in Hartlepool.
- The board discussed the school's viability as it serves a transient population, however school pupil numbers are static at 51% over the next four years.
- DNDLT was established on 1 November 2017 as the Durham Diocesan MAT in response to a request from the Bishop and Education Board of Durham to serve schools in the Diocese and later expanded to serve the Newcastle diocese too.
- DNDLT currently have eleven academies in the trust across Darlington, Durham, Hartlepool, Stockton-on-Tees, Sunderland with ten rated as Ofsted 'Good' or above, and one sponsored academy.
- The board discussed reinforcing the planned deployment of an SRMA to undertake a review of the trust's financial position and offer any advice.
- The board agreed that the trust has the capacity and capability to support this school and, therefore, supported this proposal.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

- Project Lead to inform school and Multi Academy Trust of decision.

Trust Change

Points discussed in relation to academies moving to another trust.

Project: This is a proposal for The Tyne Community Learning Trust (TCLT), Northumberland to join The Three Rivers Learning Trust (TRLT), Northumberland and be renamed The Cheviot Learning Trust (CLT)

AB discussion:

- TCLT is a mixed Multi Academy Trust (MAT), consisting of first, middle and high school academies across Northumberland.
- The nine TCLT academies have been previously rated as 'Good' or above by Ofsted.
- TRLT is a mixed MAT, consisting of first, middle and high school academies across Northumberland.
- Seven of the eight TRLT academies have been previously rated as 'Good' or above by Ofsted, with the remaining school rated as 'Requires Improvement' prior to conversion.
- The headquarters for each existing MAT are 26 miles apart.
- The board discussed the rationale for these two trusts coming together in terms of strengthening School Improvement capacity and greater economies of scale. The board also discussed the geographical and strategic rationale. The board was keen to understand the leadership arrangements to ensure there is clear accountability.
- It was suggested by the board that a School Resource Management Advisor should be deployed to undertake a review of the merged trust's financial position and offer any advice.
- The board recommended CLT to join up with a trust of similar size to seek leadership and governance advice and support to ensure the much larger trust is effective.
- The board agreed that TRLT and TCLT have the capacity and capability to support this development and therefore, supported this proposal.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts:

- Dame Maura Regan (AB)
- Anita Bath (AB)

Further actions required:

- Project Lead to inform school and Multi Academy Trust of decision.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

Project: This is a proposal for Barley Fields Primary School Stockton-on-Tees to convert and join Prince Regent Street Trust

Decision type: Converter Academy Orders

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

- Project Lead to inform school and Multi Academy Trust of decision.

Project: West Newcastle Academy, Newcastle

Decision type: Significant Change - to add nursery provision for three to four year-olds

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

- Project Lead to inform school and Multi Academy Trust of decision.

Sponsored Route:

Project: Roman Road Primary School, North Tyneside, to be sponsored by Laidlaw Schools Trust, Newcastle

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts:

- Robert Tarn (AB)
- Dame Nicola Stephenson (AB)
- Colin Lofthouse (AB)

Further actions required:

- Project Lead to inform school and Multi Academy Trust of decision.

Sponsored Route:

Project: Whitehouse Primary School, North Tyneside, to be sponsored by NEAT Academy Trust (NEAT), North Tyneside

RD decision: Approve with conditions

Conflicts:

- Robert Tarn (AB)
- Dame Nicola Stephenson (AB)
- Colin Lofthouse (AB)

Further actions required:

- Project Lead to inform school and Multi Academy Trust of decision.
- New trust to undertake School Resource Management Advisor visit after formation.