



## Notes of Meeting: West Midlands Advisory Board

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

- Andrew Warren

### Advisory Board (AB) members

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

### Guests

- None.

### Apologies

- Amarjit Cheema

### DfE senior civil servants

- Dawn Dandy (Deputy Director)

## **Representations received**

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

## **General Discussion Points**

### **Safeguarding**

- Members discussed the current Safeguarding processes in place within the system, and what factors within a concern would trigger the start of departmental process.

### **Local Update**

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

### **AB member reflections**

- Members reflected on their experience of the Advisory Board and the decision-making process. There where also discussion on current teacher recruitment campaigns reviewing figures of new teaching staff entering the sector.

## Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

**Project:** Whether to issue an Academy order to Much Wenlock Primary School, Shropshire, to convert and become an Academy and join The 3-18 Education Trust, Shropshire.

### **AB discussion:**

- Much Wenlock Primary School, Shropshire, is an Ofsted rated 'Good' school who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust to collaborate further with other schools in the local area.
- The 3-18 Trust comprises of 5 schools across Shropshire. The trust propose that the addition of Much Wenlock will add further capacity to the trust and will benefit from additional support of the trust in areas such as Human resources (HR), IT and finance.
- The primary school are keen to develop a seamless curriculum with its feeder secondary school, William Brookes School, which is part of The 3-18 Trust.
- Staff at the Much Wenlock Primary will add to the Trust's consultant Network whilst benefiting from established network groups which include Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), behaviour, teaching and learning.
- The board discussed the current governance board's impact, seeking assurances in financial responsibility and community need within the trust.
- The board supported the recommendation.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** Sarah Finch.

**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 Green Lea First School, Staffordshire, to convert and become an Academy and join The Creative Learning Partnership, Staffordshire.

### **AB discussion:**

- Green Lea First School, a rural village school in Staffordshire, has an Ofsted rating of 'Good'. The school has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust to benefit from the strategic priorities of a trust.
- Creative Learning Partnership Trust consists of 7 Staffordshire based school. The conversion of the school will benefit the trust and allow further economies of scale within the terms of the trust's operations.
- The trust has focused on a school improvement plan for Green Lea which will include quality of teaching, phonics support and implementing a new IT strategy.
- The leadership of the school is committed to maintain the uniqueness of the rural school; a view that is endorsed by the leadership of the MAT too.
- The board discussed governance at the trust which included assurances that an external governance review had taken place.
- 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 Springhead Primary School, Staffordshire, to convert and become an Academy and join Children First Learning Partnership, Staffordshire.

**AB discussion:**

- Springhead Primary School, Staffordshire, is situated in Stoke-on-Trent which an Ofsted judgement of 'Good'. The school has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust to enable development and continuous improvement within the school.
- CFLP consists of 5 academies, all with a footprint across Staffordshire.
- Over recent years, the school has found the traditional support and challenge mechanisms from the LA have deteriorated and now finds itself more isolated as a standalone school. Th school wishes to join a trust that will both support and challenge the schools that it can develop and improve the learning experiences of the children.
- The board discussed the trust's finances, seeking assurances on the reserves currently being held and plans to distribute them with school improvement strategies.
- The board supported the recommendation with the RD approving a condition for a School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) to visit.

**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 Bridge Short Stay School, Staffordshire, to convert and become an Academy and join The Arthur Terry Learning Partnership, Birmingham.

**AB discussion:**

- Bridge Short Stay School, Staffordshire, is situated in Staffordshire, and has an Ofsted judgement of 'Good'. The school has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- The Arthur Terry Learning Partnership consist of 19 schools across Birmingham, Staffordshire, and Warwickshire.
- The school would like to convert and join an established trust to benefit and contribute to the strategic priorities of ATLP. The management committee of the school have voted to join ATLP as they have alignment of vision and values.
- Bridges would be the first alternative provision within ATLP and will bring the perspective that this sector has to offer in dealing with challenging and vulnerable students.

- The board discussed the trust's financial planning model, highlighting the process of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) identifying the risks and processing the proposal through ATLP's due diligence tests.
- 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 All Saints CofE Primary School, Staffordshire, to convert and become an Academy and join John Taylor Multi Academy Trust, Staffordshire.

**AB discussion:**

- All Saints CofE Primary School, Staffordshire, has an Ofsted judgement of 'Requires Improvement'. The school has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- John Taylor is a Trust consisting of 17 academies across Staffordshire and Derbyshire.
- The school has identified the need to join a local, strong performing trust with a track record of school improvement to ensure its future sustainability and continue its improvement in the educational outcomes of its children. The school also believe their ethos, vision and values are all aligned with that of the trust including the support of the school's Christian ethos.
- The school believe that it can benefit from the trusts centralised systems including HR, finance, governance and safeguarding.
- The board discussed the clear rationale for the school to join the trust including the trusts financial model to enable improvements at the school.
- The board supported the recommendation.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** Mike Donoghue.

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

## Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

**Project:** Prees CofE Primary School and Nursery.

**Decision type:** Significant Change – Change in age range.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

**Project:** Whixall CE Primary School.

**Decision type:** Significant Change – Change in age range.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## List of projects listed on the published draft agenda, but were removed before the meeting

List of projects that were on the published draft agenda but not discussed at the AB meeting.

**Project:** The Cheadle Academy, Staffordshire, to merge with The Moorlands Primary Federation, Stoke-on-Trent.

**Type of decision:** Trust Change.

**Reason for why it was taken off agenda:** Insufficient information to present at AB.

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