



## Notes of Meeting: West Midlands Advisory Board

Date of meeting – 18 May 2023

### 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
- Sarah Finch
- Amarjit Cheema
- Dan Parkes
- Tom Leverage
- Lizana Oberholzer

### 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**

- Members reflected on NPQs and how the recent bank holidays have affected schools attendance from both students and staff.
- AB members reflected on the Departmental strategy plans and noted strategy for the Birmingham and central area.

## Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

**Project:** Whether to issue an Academy Order to Langley Primary School, Solihull, to convert and become an academy and join Tudor Grange Academies Trust, Solihull.

### **AB discussion:**

- Langley Primary School, Solihull is an Ofsted “Good” school who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust to develop its strategy and utilise a support structure to develop school improvement.
- Tudor Grange Academies Trust consists of 12 academies across the East and West Midlands.
- Langley Primary school have an inclusive ethos and would look to work with Tudor Grange Academies Trust to open a new Special Educational and Mental Health Additionally Resourced Provision (SEMH ARP).
- The board discussed the benefits of the conversion, focussing on the capacity growth this opportunity could give to the trust.
- 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 Dove Bank Primary School, Staffordshire, to convert and become an academy and join The Learning For Life Partnership, Staffordshire.

### **AB discussion:**

- Dove Bank Primary School, Staffordshire is an Ofsted “Good” school who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust to secure better outcomes for pupils at the school.
- The Learning for Life Partnership Trust consists of 5 academies across Cheshire East.
- Dove Bank has a pre-existing relationship with TLFLP, working collaboratively to offer support plans to staff and improve outcomes for the children.
- The board discussed the benefits whilst considering recommendations to help improve the proposal and allow for sustained improved outcomes.
- 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 St Mary's CofE (A) Primary School, Staffordshire, to convert and become an academy and join The Key Educational Trust, Staffordshire.

**AB discussion:**

- St Mary's CofE (A) Primary School, Staffordshire is an Ofsted "Good" school who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust to create stronger links with local schools and provide opportunities for staff and children.
- The Key Educational Trust consists of 3 academies across Staffordshire. The school wishes to join the Trust having recognised the benefits following a 12-month partnership agreement.
- KET's ethos closely matches that of St Mary's, and both parties share a similar vision for the future, as well as Christian values.
- The board discussed the school improvement strategies within the Trust and also sustainable viability options.
- 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 Holden Lane Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, to convert and become an academy and Alpha Academies Trust, Stoke-on-Trent.

**AB discussion:**

- Holden Lane Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent is an Ofsted "Good" school who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust to develop its strategy and utilise a support structure to develop school improvement.
- Alpha Academies Trust consists of 5 academies across Stoke-on-Trent. The school wishes to join the Trust having recognised the benefits following a 12-month partnership agreement.
- ALPHA has a clear framework for its strategy of SI and assesses its schools against school improvement tiers, with a values system of best practice and strategic development.
- The board discussed the benefits of the conversion, focussing on the opportunity could give to the trust and school.
- 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 Springdale Primary School, Wolverhampton, to convert and become an academy and join Highfields School, Wolverhampton.

**AB discussion:**

- Springdale Primary School, Wolverhampton is an Ofsted “Good” school who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust to best opportunity to maintain and further develop the provision they currently offer.
- Highfields is an empty MAT that formed on 1 December 2015 with the conversion of Highfields School. The school is a large, oversubscribed secondary school in south-west Wolverhampton.
- Springdale will bring expertise of the primary curriculum and their speech and language resource base. Shared use of facilities and specialist equipment will enable wide opportunities for the local children.
- The board discussed the benefits of the conversion, focussing on the opportunity could give to the trust and school.
- 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 Warstones Primary School, Wolverhampton, to convert and become an academy and join Highfields School, Wolverhampton.

**AB discussion:**

- Warstones Primary School, Wolverhampton is an Ofsted “Good” school who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust to best opportunity to maintain and further develop the provision they currently offer.
- Highfields is an empty MAT that formed on 1 December 2015 with the conversion of Highfields School. The school is a large, oversubscribed secondary school in south-west Wolverhampton.
- Governors and staff have met and discussed the concerns and opportunities raised in joining the trust and overwhelmingly feel this move is beneficial to all stakeholders. They feel that the school shares the same ethos and values as the Trust.

- The board discussed the benefits of the conversion, focussing on the opportunity could give to the trust and school.
- 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.

## Sponsored Route:

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

**Project:** Whether to approve a sponsor for Stoke Prior Primary School, Herefordshire.

### **AB discussion:**

- Stoke Prior Primary School, Herefordshire, is an Ofsted rated "Inadequate" school who require a sponsor to develop improved school outcomes.
- Three Counties Academy Trust (TCAT) consists of 3 schools placed across rural North Herefordshire, closely bordering Worcestershire and Shropshire.
- TCAT wants to assist and enable Stoke Prior to return to the provision of an at least Good education within the next inspection cycle, and work with Stoke Prior as part of TCAT to further develop and enhance their primary provision.
- The board discussed the benefits of the conversion, focussing on the opportunity could give to the trust and school.
- The board supported the recommendation.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the School and Sponsor.

## Significant Change

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

**Project:** Whether to approve an age range change with the addition of a nursery at Dove CE Academy, Staffordshire.

### **AB discussion:**

- Dove CE Academy, Staffordshire, is an Ofsted rated 'Requires Improvement' from May 2019. The Academy wish to extend the age range of provision from 5-9 to 3-9 to include children of nursery age.
- The reason for the change is that the only nursery provision (First Steps) currently available in the village has announced its intention to close on March 31st 2023. By extending the provision at Dove CE Academy, the community would be supported by offering much needed continuity to local children and their families.
- The community has a need for this provision with families relying on public transport when traveling in and out of the village.
- The board discussed the financial viability of the school, reviewing people outcomes and the schools next outcome for an Ofsted inspection.
- The board supported the recommendation.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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



## Trust Change

Points discussed in relation to academies moving to another trust.

**Project:** Whether to approve Kickstart Academy, Telford and Wrekin, to transfer from TCAT Multi Academy Trust to Learning Community Trust, Telford and Wrekin.

### **AB discussion:**

- Kickstart Academy, Telford and Wrekin is an Ofsted 'Requires Improvement' school which sits as a standalone school within TCAT. The proposal for a secure transfer is due to a risk of closure.
- Learning Community Trust is built up of 9 schools spread across Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire. LCT have a pre-existing relationship with Kickstart, providing extensive support since 2020 and will be willing to offer a permanent site solution.
- Following extensive work since July 2020, funding has been secured in principle to provide a permanent site subject to the proposed transfer to LCT.
- The board sought assurances on performance at Ercall Wood along and a discussion was had on the trust's plan and strategy to improve the academy.
- The board supported the recommendation.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

**Project:** Blue Coat School.

**Decision type:** Significant Change – Expansion of physical capacity.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

**Project:** Finham Park 2.

**Decision type:** Significant Change – Expansion of physical capacity.

**RD 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:** Whether to approve a sponsor for Crowmoor Primary School, Shropshire.

**Type of decision:** Sponsored Route.

**Reason for why it was taken off agenda:** The Ofsted report had not yet been published.

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