



Notes of Meeting: North West Advisory Board

28 June 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

- Vicky Beer (RD)

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Anita Ghidotti
- Karen Burns
- George Beveridge
- Nic Brindle
- Helen O'Neill
- Annette Williams
- Tania Lewyckyj

Guests

- None

Apologies

- None

DfE senior civil servants

- Mark Taylor, Deputy Director, North West Regions Group

Representations received

- One received. Discussion to consider the transfer of Chatsworth MAT, Salford, to The Sovereign Trust. Trust Change.

This representation was shared in advance of the meeting with all attendees and considered alongside their corresponding item.

General Discussion Points

- No points of general discussion took place.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Discussion to consider St John's VA Church of England Primary School, Thornham, Rochdale, to convert and join Cranmer Education Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board supported this proposal, with one condition.
- Recommendation for School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) to be deployed.

RD decision: Approve with conditions:

1. There is a need for the Trust board to review and strengthen their primary expertise.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust, Local Authority and Diocese of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Barnoldswick, Lancashire, to convert and join The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation that there is a high level of confidence in the sponsor.
- The board sought clarity on the school improvement support that is in place and were pleased to note the school is in a strong network of local primary schools and that this should remain in place.
- A School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) has recently been deployed.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust, Local Authority and Diocese of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider St Alban's Catholic Primary School, Wirral, to convert and join Holy Family Catholic MAT.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation, with two conditions.

- Recommendation for School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) to be deployed.

RD decision: Approve with conditions:

1. The board advised of the need to appoint a trustee with secondary expertise.
2. The board were pleased to hear that a legal/HR trustee is to be recruited to broaden the experience of the trustee board. This should be in place before the school joins the trust.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust, Local Authority and Diocese of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Cheshire West and Chester, to convert and join Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation.
- Recommendation for School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) to be deployed.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust, Local Authority and Diocese of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Millfields Primary School and Nursery, Cheshire East, to convert and join North West Academies Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation, with one condition.
- A School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) deployment has already taken place.

RD decision: Approve with conditions:

1. Appoint a trustee with financial expertise in line with expectations set out in the Academy Trust Handbook.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and Local Authority of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider the proposal of the following schools to convert and join Liverpool Joint Catholic and Church of England Academy Trust:

- **St Cleopas' Church of England Junior Mixed and Infant School, Liverpool.**
- **St Teresa of Lisieux Catholic Primary School, Liverpool.**

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation, in particular the sequencing of schools joining Liverpool Joint Catholic and Church of England Academy Trust.
- The board were pleased to hear that the trust is reflecting on their growth i.e., doubling in size, in terms of what this will mean practically and strategically.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust, Local Authority and Diocese of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Sponsored Route:

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

Project: Discussion to consider Alexandra Park Junior School, Oldham, sponsor options.

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on suitable sponsor options and requested that the recommendation for the preferred sponsor is discussed at the next Advisory Board meeting in July.

RD decision: For discussion only

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: The preferred sponsor recommendation will be discussed at the next Advisory Board meeting.

Project: Discussion to consider Little Heaton Church of England Primary School, Rochdale, sponsor options.

AB discussion:

- The board agreed that the Cranmer Education Trust is the preferred sponsor option.
- This project will also support the place strategy in Rochdale.
- Although Cranmer Education Trust are in the early stages of developing their primary offer, two conditions have been set.

RD decision: Approve with conditions:

1. To increase their primary expertise.
2. To articulate their school improvement approach and strategy.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust, Local Authority and Diocese of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Medlock Primary School, Manchester, to convert and join The Co-operative Academies Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board were reassured that due consideration of several sponsor options has taken place and support this recommendation.

- Recommendation for School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) to be deployed.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and Local Authority of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Wellfield Academy, Lancashire, to convert and join Endeavor Learning Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board support the project recommendation as sensible strategic growth for the trust.
- Recommendation for School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) to be deployed.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and Local Authority of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Kirkby Thore School, Westmorland and Furness, to convert and join Changing Lives Learning Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the financial and geographical risks and that mitigations are in place to manage these risks as the trust grows.
- The board requested more information about the school improvement strategy and capacity of the trust.

RD decision: Defer

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and Local Authority of decision.

Project: Discussion to consider Ridgeway High School, Wirral, to convert and join Oak Trees Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board commented that this is a good example of a smaller trust's growth plan, demonstrating their strategic planning.

- The board reflected on the trust's journey and the planned addition of secondary expertise from the potential transfer of Hilbre High School.
- Confirmation was provided that a School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) deployment is in progress.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and Local Authority of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider the proposal of the following schools to convert and join Liverpool Joint Catholic and Church of England Academy Trust:

- **St Mary's Junior School, St Helens.**
- **St Mary's Infant School, St Helens.**

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation, as part of the discussion on page 5 in the Academy Converter Orders section, regarding St Cleopas' Church of England Junior Mixed and Infant School and St Teresa of Lisieux Catholic Primary School to also join Liverpool Catholic and Church of England Academy Trust,
- The board were pleased to hear that the trust is reflecting on their growth i.e. doubling in size, in terms of what this will mean practically and strategically.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust, Local Authority and Diocese of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Sponsor Application

Points discussed in relation to applications for sponsor approval.

Project: Discussion to consider Oak Trees Multi Academy Trust, Wirral, sponsor application.

AB discussion:

- The board commented that this is a good example of a smaller trust's growth plan, demonstrating their strategic planning.
- The board reflected on the trust's journey and the planned additional of secondary expertise from the potential transfer of Hilbre High School.
- Confirmation was provided that a School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) deployment is in progress.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust of decision.

Trust Change

Points discussed in relation to academies moving to another trust.

Project: Discussion to consider the transfer of Chatsworth MAT, Salford, to The Sovereign Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board sought further information about the management of financial risk for Sovereign Trust.
- The board gave due consideration to the representation raised and acknowledged that Sovereign are happy to continue with a shared use arrangement of the PFI building.
- Recommendation for School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) to be deployed.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust of decision.

Project: Discussion to consider the transfer of Hilbre High School SAT, Wirral, to Oak Trees Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board supported this transfer as a good example of a smaller trust's growth plan, demonstrating their forward planning and the strategic alignment of opportunities.
- The board reflected on the trust's journey and that they are now acquiring the necessary secondary expertise from the transfer of Hilbre High School.
- Confirmation was provided that a School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) deployment is in progress.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust of decision.

Project: Discussion to consider the transfer of The Macclesfield Academy SAT, Cheshire East, to The Sir John Brunner Foundation.

AB discussion:

- The board positively noted this as further consolidation of a Single Academy Trust with a Multi Academy Trust.
- SFSO recommended a conversation with the trust about its reserves.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust of decision.

Decisions taken by another RD

List of decisions taken by another RD.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Discussion to consider Dove Bank Primary School, Staffordshire, to convert and join The Learning for Life Partnership.

AB discussion:

- The board were advised that the decision to approve has been made by the West Midlands Regional Director as the school sits within that region.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust of decision.

Sponsored Route:

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

Project: Discussion to consider Bakewell Methodist Junior, Derbyshire, to convert and join Epworth Education Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board were advised that the decision to approve has been made by the East Midlands Regional Director as the school sits within that region.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust of decision.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

Project: Clitheroe Royal Grammar School, Lancashire for physical expansion.

Decision type: Significant change

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

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