



Notes of Meeting: West Midlands Advisory Board

Date of meeting – 24 January 2024

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
- Amarjit Cheema
- Tom Leverage

Guests

- None.

Apologies

- Dan Parkes
- Sarah Finch

DfE senior civil servants

- Dawn Dandy

Representations received

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

General Discussion Points

Local Update

- None.

Trust Change

Points discussed in relation to academies moving to another trust.

Project: To discuss the application for the transfer of King Solomon International Business School, Birmingham, to Star Academies.

AB discussion:

- King Solomon International Business School (KSIBS) opened as a Free School in September 2015. It was judged Inadequate by Ofsted and requiring special measures in 2018. Following a period of exceptional support, provided by the Department, the trust in place at the time made the decision to transfer the school to a Multi-Academy Trust.
- In June 2023, the department were advised of Star Academies interest in taking KSIBS into their trust from its current trust which plans to close. The school would benefit from the support of Star who have an excellent track record in school improvement.
- Star Academies is a multi-academy trust with 33 schools which are both faith designated and non-faith. They are a highly capable trust with a strong track record, including in and around Birmingham. All sponsored academies in the trust have shown progress since joining the trust.
- The board sought assurances around the school's religious designation, finances, and pupil numbers, and discussed the curriculum offer at KSIBS under Star Academies.
- The board supported the recommendation.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: To inform the Trusts.

Project: To discuss the application for the transfer of Florence MacWilliams Academy, Stoke-on-Trent, to Co-op Academies Trust.

AB discussion:

- In February 2021, Educo AT was approved to open Florence MacWilliams Secondary Free School.
- Educo AT has submitted a transfer application to join The Co-op Academies Trust.
- A permanent building is scheduled to open in September 2025, with planning permission currently being sought to provide 120 places in temporary accommodation in 2024/25. This has been confirmed as a necessity by the Local Authority.

- Co-op AT is a 33-academy trust with a presence in Stoke-on-Trent, as well as Manchester, Liverpool, Bradford, Kirklees and Leeds and has experience in successfully opening and running Free Schools.
- The board discussed the timetable for the transfer and the need for September 2024 school places in Stoke-on-Trent.
- The board supported the recommendation.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: Tom Leverage, who has completed Trust and School Improvement work (TSIO) at trust level for The Co-op Academies Trust, was not present and did not receive the papers for this project.

Further actions required: To inform the Trusts.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

Project: Kingsland CofE Academy, Stoke-on-Trent

Decision type: Significant Change - To lower the age-range of the school from 3 to 11, to 2 to 11 to accommodate the nursery for 01.01.24 or as soon as proposed change is approved.

RD decision: Approved.

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: None.

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