



Notes of Meeting: North East Advisory Board

Thursday 15 February 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 note of 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

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

DfE senior civil servants

Matt Beer (Deputy Director, North East Regions Group)

Representations received

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

General Discussion Points

The RD welcomed board members to the meeting, a presentation was given by colleagues from the DfE Careers For Young People Unit on the Strategic Action Plan for Careers.

This was followed by a presentation on Commissioning High-Quality Trusts and how the Department for Education's Regions Group use the High Quality Trust Framework.

[Commissioning High-Quality Trusts \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Sponsored Route:

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

Project: Sponsor match for Wallsend St Peters CofE Aided Primary School, North Tyneside.

AB discussion:

- This is a proposal to seek a decision in principle on the preferred sponsor for Wallsend St Peters CofE Aided Primary School, part of the Diocese of Newcastle.
- The school was inspected by Ofsted in June 2023 and received a Requires Improvement (RI) judgement in all areas. The school had received two RI judgements prior to this in March 2017 and September 2019.
- Wallsend St Peters has capacity for 208 pupils with 140 currently on roll.
- Percentage of Free School Meals and SEN support is higher than the national average.
- Performance results in Phonics and at KS1 are below national average however in KS2, performance has improved significantly since 2022 and is now in line with, or above the national average.
- Board members discussed the strategy for the area, the needs of the school and the school improvement capacity in the proposed sponsor. Additional information was sought before a final decision could be made by the RD.

RD decision: Defer

Conflicts: Jo Heaton left the meeting whilst this project was discussed due to being the CEO of Northern Lights Learning Trust, one of only a few CofE trusts in the region that the school could be considered to join.

Further actions required: Sponsor match to be brought back to March Advisory Board.

Sponsored Route:

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

Project: Sponsor match discussion for Harrowgate Hill Primary School, Darlington.

AB discussion:

- This is a proposal to seek a decision in principle on the preferred sponsor for Harrowgate Hill Primary School.
- The school was built through a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract.
- It has capacity for 708 pupils with 543 currently on roll. In September 2023 it reduced its pupil admission numbers from 3 to 2 form entry.
- Percentage of Free School Meals is high whilst the percentage of pupils with SEN Support or whose first language is not English is below the national average.
- The school was inspected by Ofsted in September 2023 and received its second consecutive Requires Improvement (RI) judgement. Following this the Governing Body outlined its readiness to convert and join a strong trust.
- Consideration has been given to several trusts as potential sponsors using the High Quality Trust Framework (HQTF).
- The preferred sponsor is Dales Academy Trust, a 14 school mixed MAT based in North Yorkshire and Stockton On Tees, with its closest school being 6.1 miles away and a further 7 schools located within an 18 mile radius.
- The board discussed the trust's capacity to drive improvement. The board also discussed the current governance structure and asked for assurance around capacity to provide financial and HR expertise.
- The RD recommended mentoring / peer support for the CFO, and to ensure the trust was accessing the range of support provided by the ESFA.
- The board members considered the details of the project and supported the recommendation.

RD decision: Approve with conditions of an SRMA deployment and provision of consolidated accounts for Trust & School.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school and send conditions to trust.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Deaf Hill Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/03/2024

Further actions required: No further action required.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Grange Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/03/2024

Further actions required: No further action required.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Spring Gardens Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/03/2024

Further actions required: No further action required.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Kelloe Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/03/2024

Further actions required: No further action required.

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