



Notes of meeting: North West Advisory Board

23rd April 2024

Attendance

Attendance data is published annually on the GOV.UK website.

Regional Director (RD) chair

- Vicky Beer (RD)

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Shane Ierston
- Karen Burns
- George Beveridge
- Tania Lewyckyj
- Annette Williams
- Nic Brindle
- Helen O'Neill

Guests

- None

Apologies

- None

DfE senior civil servants

- Jon Howlin, Deputy Director, North West region.

- Mark Taylor, Deputy Director, North West region.

General discussion points

- No discussion points were raised.

Liverpool City Region, Warrington, Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester

Trust Changes

Project: To discuss the transfer of Warrington UTC to Aldridge Education

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendations and acknowledged the trust's UTC experience.
- ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) confirmed that they are working with the trust and Warrington UTC on their current financial position.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust and Local Authority.

Project: To discuss the transfer of the following schools to Northern Schools Trust:

- **Roscoe Primary School, Liverpool**
- **New Park Primary School, Liverpool**

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the school-to-school support and the plans for primary support.
- The board suggested that the trust continues to develop its governance as it grows.

RD decision: Approve with 1 condition:

1. Trust to join discussion to review their governance model.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust and Local Authority, setting out the condition.

Project: To discuss the transfer of The Russett School, Cheshire West and Chester, to Shaw Education Trust

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board commented that this transfer makes good strategic sense.
- The board suggested the trust continues to develop the skills mix on the board as it grows.
- ESFA recommended an offer of a School Resource Management Officer (SRMA) deployment.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust and Local Authority.

Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen, Lancashire, Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness

Converter academy orders

Project: To discuss the proposal of the following schools to convert and join The Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust:

- **Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Warton, Blackpool**
- **St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Medlar-with-Wesham, Blackpool**
- **The Willows Catholic Primary School, Kirkham, Blackpool**

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board noted that a Schools Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) deployment is scheduled to take place in May.
- The board noted that the sequencing of the school transfers has been given full consideration by the trust and diocese.

RD decision: Approve with 1 condition:

1. The trust should work with ESFA and take action on findings and recommendations following the SRMA deployment in May.

Conflicts: Helen O'Neill did not receive any papers and did not participate in discussions or provide advice on this project due to a professional connection as the CEO of The Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust and Local Authority, setting out the condition.

Project: To discuss the proposal of Baines School, Lancashire, to convert and join Cidari Education Trust

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- This project was discussed alongside the trust change project for South Shore Academy, Blackpool.
- The board reflected on Cidari Education Trust's capacity and the support that is already in place and in the pipeline.

RD decision: Approve with 3 conditions:

The conditions are for Cidari Education Trust to:

1. Complete due diligence and provide the department with a financial plan.
2. Work to develop a plan to ensure that key stakeholders are supported, this should include a family engagement plan and discussions with key LA stakeholders.
3. RD requested that there is a follow-up conversation within the next few weeks with trust board representatives to ensure that the due diligence and plans are fit for purpose.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust and Local Authority, setting out the conditions.

Project: To discuss the proposal of Moor Park Primary School, Blackpool, to convert and join Synergy Education Trust Limited.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- This project was discussed alongside the trust change project for Lotus School, Blackpool.
- The board supported the project recommendations for both schools to transfer to Synergy Education Trust Limited.
- The board reflected that this is a new trust with SEND leadership experience.
- ESFA advised that a focussed Schools Resource Management Advisor (SRMA)

deployment is scheduled for Synergy Education Trust.

RD decision: Approve with 3 conditions:

1. The sequencing enables Lotus School to be the first to transfer out of Champion Education Trust to Synergy Education Trust Limited.
2. There is a closure plan in place for Champion Education Trust.
3. Lotus School Termination Warning Notice (TWN) progress meetings continue.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust and Local Authority, setting out the conditions.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the transfer of South Shore Academy, Blackpool, to Cidari Education Trust

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- This project was discussed alongside the converter academy order project for Baines School, Lancashire.
- The board reflected on Cidari Education Trust's capacity and the support that is already in place and in the pipeline.
- The board discussed the need for the trust and South Shore Academy's leadership team's plans to fully engage with the local authority, community and partners.

RD decision: Approve with 3 conditions:

The conditions are for Cidari Education Trust to:

1. Complete due diligence and provide the department with a financial plan.
2. Work to develop a plan to ensure that key stakeholders are supported, this should include a family engagement plan and discussions with key LA stakeholders.
3. RD requested that there is a follow-up conversation within the next few weeks with trust board representatives to ensure that the due diligence and plans are appropriate.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust and Local Authority, setting out the conditions.

Project: To discuss the transfer of Lotus School, Blackpool, to Synergy Education Trust Limited.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- This project was discussed alongside the converter academy order project for Moor Park Primary School, Blackpool.
- The board supported the project recommendations for both schools to transfer to Synergy Education Trust Limited.
- The board reflected that this is a new trust with SEND leadership experience.
- ESFA advised that a focussed Schools Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) deployment is scheduled for Synergy Education Trust.

RD decision: Approve with 3 conditions:

1. The sequencing enables Lotus School to be the first to transfer out of Champion Education Trust to Synergy Education Trust Limited.
2. There is a closure plan in place for Champion Education Trust.
3. Lotus School Termination Warning Notice (TWN) progress meetings continue.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust and Local Authority, setting out the conditions.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the transfer of Kirkbie Kendal School, Westmorland and Furness, to Lunesdale Learning Trust.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board suggested that the trust looks to increase its financial experience on the board as it continues to grow.
- ESFA advised that a School Resource Management Officer (SRMA) deployment is scheduled to take place and that they will work with the trust on any recommendations following the deployment.
- The board suggested the trust participates in formal leadership training and networking to assist the development of the trust's governance and strategic growth plans.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust and Local Authority, setting out the condition.

Joint Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen, Lancashire, Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness & Greater Manchester Project

Converter academy orders

Project: To discuss the proposal of Philips High School, Bury, to convert and join Oak Learning Partnership.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- This project was discussed alongside the trust change project for Oak Learning Partnership.
- The board supported the project recommendations for these schools to transfer to Oak Learning Partnership.
- ESFA recommended a supportive SRMA deployment is scheduled for the Oak Learning Partnership and to commission a governance model review.

RD decision: Approve with 2 conditions:

1. The sequencing enables Lotus School to be the first to transfer out of Champion Education Trust to Synergy Education Trust Limited.
2. There is a closure plan in place for Champion Education Trust.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust and Local Authority, setting out the conditions.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the transfer of the following schools to Oak Learning Partnership:

- **Blackburn Central High School, Blackburn with Darwen**
- **Crosshill Special School, Blackburn with Darwen**

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- This project was discussed alongside the converter academy order project for Philips High School.
- The board supported the project recommendations for these schools to transfer to Oak Learning Partnership.
- ESFA recommended a supportive SRMA deployment is scheduled for the Oak Learning Partnership and to commission a governance model review.

RD decision: Approve with 2 conditions:

1. The sequencing enables Lotus School to be the first to transfer out of Champion Education Trust to Synergy Education Trust Limited.
2. There is a closure plan in place for Champion Education Trust.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust and Local Authority, setting out the conditions.

Greater Manchester

Converter academy orders

Project: To discuss the proposal of the following schools to convert and join Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust:

- St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Tameside
- St Paul's Catholic Primary School, Tameside
- St Aidan's Catholic Primary School, Manchester
- Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School, Trafford
- St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Tameside

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board members considered the details of the project and did not raise any concerns in relation to the recommendation.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust, Local Authority and Diocese.

Trust Changes

Project: To discuss the transfer of the following schools to The Sycamore Church of England Trust Limited:

- Holy Trinity Primary School, Bury
- St Thomas Church of England Primary School, Bury

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board members considered the details of the project and did not raise any concerns in relation to the recommendation.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust, Local Authority and Diocese.

Project: To discuss the transfer of Fairfield High School for Girls, Tameside, to Stamford Park Trust.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendations.
- The board suggested the trust increases its education experience on its board as the trust continues to grow.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust and Local Authority.

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss the proposal of Thomas Ashton School, Tameside, to be sponsored by New Bridge MAT.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the strong experience of the trust leadership.
- The board suggested that the trust looks to increase its financial experience on the board as it continues to grow.
- ESFA advised that a Schools Resource Management Advisor deployment is in progress.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust and Local Authority.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

Converter Academy Orders

Project: Oakdene Primary School, St Helens, to convert and join Wade Deacon Trust

- This project was deferred in the March Advisory Board meeting where the board suggested additional financial information that the team and the Regional Director might wish to gather from the trust as part of the decision making process.
- The decision was made to defer in order to review the additional information, with members to be updated on the RD's decision taken between meetings at the next meeting on the 23rd April.
- The project lead worked with ESFA and confirmed the requirement for a SRMA deployment to provide supportive advice to the trust.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust and Local Authority.

Project: The following schools to convert and join Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Trust:

- **Our Lady of Wolsingham Primary School, Sefton**
 - **St Edmunds & St Thomas Catholic Primary School, Sefton**
 - **Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, Sefton**
 - **St Marys Catholic Primary School, Sefton**
- This project was deferred in the March Advisory Board meeting. The board reflected positively on the proposal, the early improvements being seen in the schools within Pope Francis and the detailed thinking the trust has done on the proposal.
 - The decision was made to defer in order to request further information from the trust on their plans to bring in primary expertise and experience, with members to be updated on a decision between meetings at the next meeting on the 23rd April.
 - The trust has provided sufficient additional information on their primary school improvement plans.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust, Local Authority and Diocese.

Significant changes

Project: Grange Community Nursery & Primary School, Cheshire West and Chester, Weaver Trust

- Age range change from 3 – 11 years to 2 – 11 years.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust and Local Authority.

Project: Wheelock Primary School, Cheshire East, The Learning Partnership Academies Trust

- To expand from a 1.5 form entry school to a 2-form entry school.
- To do this the school requires three additional classrooms, a hall extension, and reconfiguration of the internal layout of the school.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust and Local Authority.

Project: Egerton Primary School, Cheshire East, The Learning Partnership Academies Trust

- To lower the age range of the school from 4-11 years to 2-11 years.
- This is to incorporate the onsite charity nursery which would mean adding an additional 30 places in the first year.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback the decision to the Trust and Local Authority.

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

Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen, Lancashire, Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness

Sponsored Route

To discuss the proposal of the Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School, Church, Lancashire, to be sponsored by Romero Catholic Academy Trust

Reason it was taken off agenda:

- A decision has been made to defer Sacred Heart joining Romero Catholic Academy Trust prior to the AB meeting taking place.
- There are outstanding aspects with this project that are being worked through. Once completed, this will be discussed at a future AB meeting.

© Crown copyright 2024