



Notes of meeting: North West Advisory Board

Date of meeting – 21 May 2024

Attendance

AB members who sent their apologies for the meeting but sent in their comments on agenda items, are listed under the apologies section. These members' views are reflected in the discussions below, unless the AB member(s) declared a conflict of interest.

Regional Director (RD) chair

- Vicky Beer

Advisory Board (AB) members

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

Guests

- None

Apologies

- Tania Lewyckyj

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

Converter academy orders

Project: To discuss the application from Prescott Primary School, Knowsley, to convert and become an academy and join The Rowan Learning Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board were informed that the trust recently received a School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) deployment.
- The board discussed the trust's maturity and development and that the trust is keen to grow and add primary schools to their portfolio.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Feedback the decision to the school and trust.

Project: To discuss the application from Wirral Hospitals' School, Wirral, to convert and become an academy and join Skylark Partnership.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed similar scenarios in which national models for specialist education have worked well, despite the distance between schools.
- The board reflected on how the trust will support the school despite the distance.

RD decision: Approve with one condition

1. Trust to receive a supportive School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) deployment.

Conflicts: Nic Brindle – due to working with and supporting the Skylark Partnership in his role as CEO at the Youth Engagement Schools Trust. Member raised the conflict and did not participate in the discussion for this project.

Further actions required:

Feedback the decision to school and trust setting out the conditions.

Project: To discuss the application from Lower Park School, Cheshire East, to convert and become an academy and join The Fallibroome Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The Regional Director reflected on a recent visit to one of the trust's schools and the support the trust is accessing as part of its ongoing development as a trust.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: Karen Burns – previously a member for the Fallibroome Trust. Member did not participate in the discussion for this project.

Further actions required:

Feedback the decision to the school and trust.

Sponsored academy orders:

Project: To discuss the proposal for North West Academies Trust to sponsor St John's CofE Primary School, Cheshire East.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the dioceses support for this proposal
- The board discussed the geographical distance between the school and the trust's other schools and central team. They were informed that the trust want to grow in the area.

RD decision: Approved with one condition

1. Trust to receive a supportive School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) deployment.

Conflicts: Nic Brindle – member supported his chair of the Youth Engagement Schools Trust when they acted as the chair of the IEB put in place at St John's following their inadequate judgement. The member raised this conflict and did not participate in the discussion for this project.

Further actions required:

Feedback the decision to school and trust setting out the conditions.

Project: To discuss the proposal for Endeavour Learning Trust to sponsor Linaker Primary School, Sefton.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- This project was discussed alongside the application from Brindle Gregson Lane Primary School, Lancashire, to convert and become an academy and join Endeavor Learning Trust.
- The board reflected on the pupil numbers at each of the schools and the pupil projections.
- The board were informed that the trust is receiving support from the Education and Schools Funding Agency

RD decision: Approve with one condition

1. Trust to receive a supportive School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) deployment.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Feedback the decision to school/trust setting out the conditions.

Trust Changes

Project: To discuss the proposal for Pear Tree Primary School, Cheshire East to move from The Pear Tree Alliance to The Cornovii Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the trust's financial position and noted the steps the trust was taking to strengthen.
- The board reflected on the CEO's role in leading school improvement and how the trust will bring in capacity to take on the SI role as the trust grows.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Greater Manchester

Converter academy orders

Project: To discuss the application from Oakdale School, Tameside, to convert and become an academy and join Kingfisher Learning Trust.

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/comments in relation to the recommendation.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

- Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: To discuss the application from Heap Bridge Village Primary School, Rochdale, to convert and become an academy and join Hollingworth Academy Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed trustees employed by the trust and the potential to evolve, managing risk and ensuring accountability as they grow.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: To discuss the application from the following schools to convert and become academies and to join Ambition Community Trust:

- **Meade Hill School, Manchester**
- **Southern Cross School, Manchester**

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on realistic sequencing for future onboarding of schools, ensuring the trust is not too ambitious with its plans. They discussed the work that would be needed to substantiate the trust's long-term vision.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: To discuss the application from Hollingworth Primary School, Tameside, to convert and become an academy and join Prestolee Multi Academy Trust.

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/comments in relation to the recommendation.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: To discuss the application from Bolshaw Primary School, Stockport, to convert and become an academy and join Mellor Primary School (changing from SAT to MAT).

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the trust's commitment and enthusiasm to grow, and the variety the trust would add to the local authority.
- The Education and Skills Funding Agency discussed the financial position of the trust and recommended offering involvement in a CFO mentoring programme.
- The board were informed that the trust have asked for a supportive School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) deployment.
- The regional director recommended the trust refresh and evolve their governance model to ensure they are ready for future growth.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: To discuss the application from Cloverlea Primary School, Trafford, to convert and become an academy and join Inspiring Learners Multi Academy Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board complimented the financial narrative in the project and reflected that the level of context clarified the position of the trust and its projections.
- The Regional Director reflected that this is an opportunity for the trust to refresh its governance and ensure it is ready for future growth.
- There were queries regarding the inconsistency surrounding the recording of capacity at the school, and the reasoning for this, which can occur due to older funding agreements and don't always match the physical capacity of the building.
- It was recommended that the trust be offered a supportive School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) deployment.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: To discuss the application from St Paul's CofE Primary School, Oldham, to convert and become an academy and join Crompton House CofE Academy Trust.

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/comments in relation to the recommendation.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Sponsored academy orders:

Project: To discuss the proposal for Tame River Educational Trust to sponsor Hyde High School, Tameside.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the capacity of the trust and their enthusiasm for growth in the area, as well as the strategy behind the project.

RD decision: Approve with one condition

- Trust to receive a supportive School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) deployment.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Feedback decision to school/trust setting out the conditions.

Project: To discuss the proposal for Prospere Learning Trust to sponsor Camberwell Park, Manchester.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.
- **AB discussion:**
 - The board were informed that the trust had recently received a supportive School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) deployment and the Education and Skills Funding Agency are working closely with them.
 - The Regional Director reflected that this is a strong trust with a good track record and good relationship with the Local Authority.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Trust Changes

Project: To discuss transfer options for Waterhead Academy, Oldham.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board were informed of the shortlist of options available for the transfer of Waterhead Academy, and the reasoning behind decision making so far.
- The board discussed the school's community presence and overall outcomes in the Oldham area.
- The Education and Skills Funding Agency informed the board that they are working closely with the regional team to work towards this transfer.
- The board made recommendations regarding the information needed to proceed with a transfer, including setting out background, national performance and Local Authority support.

RD decision: For discussion only

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

No action required

Project: to discuss the proposal for the following schools to move from Greengate Academy Trust to The Rowan Learning Trust:

- **Orrell Holgate Academy, Wigan**
- **Orrell Lamberhead Green Academy, Wigan**

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/comments in relation to the recommendation.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

- Feedback decision to the school/trust.

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

Converter academy orders

Project: To discuss the application from Brindle Gregson Lane Primary School, Lancashire, to convert and become an academy and join Endeavour Learning Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- This project was discussed alongside the proposal for Endeavour Learning Trust to sponsor Linaker Primary School, Sefton.

RD decision: Approve with one condition

1. Trust to receive a supportive School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) deployment.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Feedback decision to school/trust setting out the conditions.

Trust Changes

Project: To discuss the proposal for Cockermouth School, Cumberland to move from Cockermouth School Academy to Learning for Life Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the CEOs secondary experience.

RD decision: Approve with two conditions

1. Trust to receive a supportive School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) deployment.
2. Trust to receive mentorship and transition governance to ensure they are informed of best practice and can move from a small to a growing trust.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Feedback decision to school/trust setting out the conditions.