



Notes of meeting: North West Advisory Board

Date of meeting – 17 October 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

A temperature check was completed for the region.

Liverpool City Region, Warrington, Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester and Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool and Lancashire and Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness.

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from Chester Diocesan Learning Trust to create a new Multi Academy Trust and for the following schools to convert and become academies and join Chester Diocesan Learning Trust:

- Hoole Church of England Primary School, Chester West and Chester
- West Kirby St Bridget's CofE Primary School, Wirral
- Capenhurst CofE Primary, Chester West and Chester
- Hoylake Holy Trinity CofE Primary School, Wirral
- Lostock Gralam CofE Primary School, Chester West and Chester
- Davenham CofE Primary School, Chester West and Chester
- St Andrew's CofE Aided Primary School, Wirral

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation.
- The board agreed that a key area of focus for the trust is to move forward at pace with the substantive recruitment of their critical posts that are currently appointed on an interim basis.
- The board recommended a tailored SRMA deployment to support their preparation and finance planning to become a multi academy trust.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from the following schools to convert and become academies and join Chester Diocesan Academies Trust:

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation.
- The board agreed that a key area of focus for the trust is to move forward at pace with the substantive recruitment of their critical posts that are currently appointed on an interim basis.
- A tailored SRMA deployment was recommended to support their preparation and finance planning to become a multi academy trust.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from the following schools to convert and become academies and join Chester Diocesan Academies Trust:

- St Thomas' CofE Primary School, Warrington
- Oxton St Saviour's CofE Aided Primary School, Wirral

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation.
- The board paused to reflect on the staffing model currently used to manage school budgets and asked that clarity is sought on the financial oversight at trust level.
- The board noted that a SRMA has recently been deployed and will work closely with the project lead on the findings and next steps.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from Pendle Vale College, Lancashire, to convert and become an academy and join The Pennine Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from Callands Primary School, Warrington, to convert and become an academy and join Warrington Primary Academies Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation.
- The board commented that the trust should look at recruitment of additional trustees.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from Freckleton Strike 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:

- The board supported the project recommendation.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Sponsored academy orders

Project: A proposal for Star Academies to sponsor Eldon Primary School, Lancashire County Council.

Representations received:

- Eight representations were received.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation as Star Academies is a strong

trust with proven track record in working with schools.

- The board acknowledged the school's good outcomes despite the challenges they are experiencing.
- The board acknowledged the eight representations, some of which support the conversion, others which express concerns about the inspection and conversion.
- The board recommended that a School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) meets with the trust as it has been three years since the last deployment.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Trust changes

Project: A request for Stapeley Broad Lane CofE Primary School, Cheshire East Local Authority to transfer from a SAT to join the Cornovii Trust MAT

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation, acknowledging the positive effect of the school improvement support.
- The board commented on the declining finances. SFSO advised they are working closely with the trust.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Greater Manchester

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from St Anne's Primary School, Tameside, to convert and become an academy and join Victorious Academies Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation.
- The board reflected on what the appropriate proportion of schools in the same trust within a local authority should be and were satisfied that there were no concerns with this project.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Karen Burns

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from the following schools, to convert and become academies and join Forward as One Church of England Multi Academy Trust

- Blackrod Anglican/Methodist Primary School, Bolton
- St Thomas' Church of England Primary School, Rochdale

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from High Lane Primary School, Stockport, to convert and become an academy and join Four Rivers Multi Academy Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation.
- The board commented on the plans to open additional resource in view of declining pupil numbers.
- The board agreed to flag these plans as part of the agreed SRMA deployment.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from Sedgley Park Community Primary School, Bury, to convert and become an academy and join The Collective Community Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from the following schools, to convert and become an academy and join Leverhulme Academy CofE Community Trust

- Beaumont Primary School, Bolton
- Lostock Primary School, Bolton

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation, acknowledging that this is a good strategic development of the trust's primary provision.
- Due to declining finances, the board set an expectation that a SRMA deployment is accepted.

RD decision: Approve with 1 condition.

- For the trust to accept a SRMA deployment.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust

Project: An application from St Luke's CofE Primary School, Salford to convert and become an academy and join Thrive Church of England Academy Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation, acknowledging the significant impact of the school improvement support.
- The board commented that the trust board requires more educational expertise.
- The board recommended a tailored SRMA deployment to focus on the trust's development of their central support team.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust

Project: An application from The Deans Primary School, Salford to convert and become an academy and join Kings Academy Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board were in support of deferring the decision (which may be made between meetings).
- In addition, the board asked that the project lead gains the trust's reassurance on the support in place for Arbour Academy.
- The board asked the project lead to clarify the trust's governance, particularly education expertise arrangements.
- The board advised that there should be a review of the trust's growth plan and of their due diligence process.

RD decision: Defer

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust detailing further information required.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

List of decisions taken outside of AB meetings

Project: To discuss Alt Academy, The Harmony Trust LTD, Oldham, increasing the age range from 3-11 to 2-11.

Decision type: Significant Change

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

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

Project: To discuss Grange Community Nursery and Primary School, Weaver Trust Limited, Cheshire West and Chester, adding a 10-place resourced provision.

Decision type: Significant Change

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

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

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