

Notes of Meeting: North West Advisory Board

Monday 24th April 2023

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

- Vicky Beer (RD)

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Anita Ghidotti
- Karen Burns
- George Beveridge
- Nic Brindle
- Helen O'Neill

Apologies

- Annette Williams
- Tania Lewyckyj

DfE senior civil servants

- SFSO representatives

Representations received

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

General Discussion Points

- The board discussed the latest updates on the Regulatory Review and reflected on how this will affect the sector.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Discussion to consider St Hugh's Church of England Primary School, Oldham, to convert and join Crompton House Church of England Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- Board agreed that this proposal is sensible but recognised a few areas of improvement.
- The board identified an overlap of roles on the trustee board. The board also agreed that as the trust continues to grow and finances become more complex, the trust could benefit from having a qualified accountant to fill the role of CFO.
- The board advocated for a supportive SRMA deployment.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider St Thomas Church of England Primary School, Oldham, to convert and join Crompton House Church of England Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- Board agreed that this proposal is sensible but recognised a few areas of improvement.
- The board identified an overlap of roles on the trustee board. The board also agreed that as the trust continues to grow and finances become more complex, the trust could benefit from having a qualified accountant to fill the role of CFO.
- The board advocated for a supportive SRMA deployment.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider St George's CE Primary School, Tameside, to convert and join Forward as One Church of England Multi-Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board agreed that this was a sensible proposal and a good consolidation of the trust's geographical cluster.
- The board proposed that the trust take proactive measures to appoint a new member to

its trust board.

- The trust should also ensure to follow through with their SRMA visit which has already been agreed.

RD decision: Approved with conditions

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider James Brindley Primary School, Salford, to convert and join The Link Education Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board were supportive of this proposal, however, they suggested that the committee structure of the governance model required further clarification.
- The board also queried whether the trust's Scheme of Delegation had been updated.
- The board encouraged both CEO and Chair to participate in training programmes to provide additional support in operating a trust.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Irlam Primary School, Salford, to convert and join The Link Education Trust.

- The board were supportive of this proposal, however, they suggested that the committee structure of the governance model required further clarification.
- The board also queried whether the trust's Scheme of Delegation had been updated.
- The board encouraged both CEO and Chair to participate in training programmes to provide additional support in operating a trust.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Wharton Primary School, Salford, to convert and join The Link Education Trust.

- The board were supportive of this proposal, however, they suggested that the committee structure of the governance model required further clarification.
- The board also queried whether the trust's Scheme of Delegation had been updated.

- The board encouraged both CEO and Chair to participate in training programmes to provide additional support in operating a trust.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Grosvenor Road Primary School, Salford, to convert and join The Link Education Trust.

- The board were supportive of this proposal, however, they suggested that the committee structure of the governance model required further clarification.
- The board also queried whether the trust's Scheme of Delegation had been updated.
- The board encouraged both CEO and Chair to participate in training programmes to provide additional support in operating a trust.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Springwood Primary School, Salford, to convert and join The Link Education Trust.

- The board were supportive of this proposal, however, they suggested that the committee structure of the governance model required further clarification.
- The board also queried whether the trust's Scheme of Delegation had been updated.
- The board encouraged both CEO and Chair to participate in training programmes to provide additional support in operating a trust.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Alder Brook Primary School, Salford, to convert and join The Link Education Trust.

- The board were supportive of this proposal, however, they suggested that the committee structure of the governance model required further clarification.
- The board also queried whether the trust's Scheme of Delegation had been updated.
- The board encouraged both CEO and Chair to participate in training programmes to provide additional support in operating a trust.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider South Walney Junior School, Westmorland & Furness, to convert and join South Cumbria Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board agreed that the trust should prioritise aligning its governance structure with best practices, ensuring clear separation between each layer of governance, including the trustees and Local Governing Bodies.
- The board also suggested that the trust actively pursue the inclusion of a strategic primary expertise within the trust board to ensure effective oversight and provide necessary challenge.

RD decision: Approved with conditions

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Cambridge Primary School, Westmorland & Furness, to convert and join South Cumbria Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board agreed that the trust should prioritise aligning its governance structure with best practices, ensuring clear separation between each layer of governance, including the trustees and Local Governing Bodies.
- The board also suggested that the trust actively pursue the inclusion of a strategic primary expertise within the trust board to ensure effective oversight and provide necessary challenge.

RD decision: Approved with conditions

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Newbarns Primary and Nursery School, Westmorland & Furness, to convert and join South Cumbria Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board agreed that the trust should prioritise aligning its governance structure with best practices, ensuring clear separation between each layer of governance, including the trustees and Local Governing Bodies.
- The board also suggested that the trust actively pursue the inclusion of a strategic primary expertise within the trust board to ensure effective oversight and provide necessary challenge.

RD decision: Approved with conditions

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Balshaw Lane Community Primary School, Lancashire, to convert and join Aspirational Futures Multi-Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board sought clarity over the individual responsible for providing financial challenge on the trust board, whilst acknowledging the trust's ongoing review of expertise on the board.
- The board recommended the CEO join a network group to receive support on leading and operating a trust.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Highfield Community Primary School, Lancashire, to convert and join Aspirational Futures Multi-Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board sought clarity over the individual responsible for providing financial challenge on the trust board, whilst acknowledging the trust's ongoing review of expertise on the board.
- The board recommended the CEO join a network group to receive support on leading and operating a trust.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Bishop Martin Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, to convert and join Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board were supportive of this proposal but recognised a few areas of improvement.
- The board highlighted concerns regarding the governance board, however, they acknowledged that the trust is aware of these issues and are making efforts to address them.
- The board also asked for clarity on how the operating models suits the growth of the trust.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Heswall Primary School, Wirral, to convert and join Oak Trees MAT.

AB discussion:

- The board were supportive of this proposal but queried who provides financial challenge on the trust board.
- The Delivery Officer was able to respond with the necessary information to the board's satisfaction.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Thingwall Primary School, Wirral, to convert and join Oak Trees MAT.

AB discussion:

- The board were supportive of this proposal but queried who provides financial challenge on the trust board.

- The Delivery Officer was able to respond with the necessary information to the board's satisfaction.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Sponsored Route:

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

Project: Discussion to consider Blackshaw Lane Primary & Nursery School, Oldham, to convert and join Kingfisher Learning Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board recognised the significant impact that the trust has already made through its collaboration with the school.
- The board agreed that the trust should continue with reviewing the maturity of their School Improvement (SI) plan.
- The board asked for clarity on how the trust will adapt their SI plan from an exclusively special school trust to a mix of mainstream.
- The suggested an SRMA to be deployed.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Trust Change

Points discussed in relation to academies moving to another trust.

Project: Discussion to consider the transfer of Hope Academy (Newton Academy Trust), St Helens, to Liverpool Joint Catholic and Church of England Academies Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board were supportive of this proposal and recognised the successes of the leadership team.
- The board suggested that the trust modify their School Improvement strategy once the consolidation of the two schools is completed.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision.

Project: Discussion to consider the transfer of St Margaret's Church of England Academy, Liverpool, to Liverpool Joint Catholic and Church of England Academies Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board were supportive of this proposal and recognised the successes of the leadership team.
- The board suggested that the trust modify their School Improvement strategy once the consolidation of the two schools is completed.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision.

Project: Discussion to consider the merger of The Learning for Life Partnership and The Learning Alliance, Cheshire East, to form a new trust, The Learning Partnership

AB discussion:

- The board identified a significant number of members on the trust board. They recommended that the trust conducts a review of board expertise and reduces the size to 10 members, ensuring the addition of more secondary expertise.
- The board observed that the trust's SI plan relies heavily on collaborative efforts. They agree that this approach may not be suitable for a trust of this size.
- There is a need for clarification regarding the source of the trust's secondary expertise.

- The board agreed that they required information regarding the trust board strategy, identification of the relevant educational leads and information on what support the trust leader will receive to manage these schools.

RD decision: Deferred

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision.

Project: Discussion to consider the transfer of Birchwood High School, Warrington, to One Community Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board were supportive of this proposal but agreed the trust board requires a balance of business representation and not just educational expertise.
- The board also queried where the trust will receive challenge at MAT level from a secondary expert.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform Trust and DCS of decision.

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