

Consultation on Hub Governance: A letter from Iain Grafton, Chair of Trustees, WeST, 14 March 2022

Dear Parents, Carers, Governors and Staff,

Rob Haring, CEO of Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST), wrote to schools in late February to notify them that the WeST Trust Board were taking a decision on the mechanisms we use in future to ensure good governance across the Trust.

Within a multi-academy trust, the Trust Board is the employer, and Trustees are responsible for holding schools to account for their performance, for checking that children are safe and well-educated and for ensuring the appropriate use of funds across the Trust. Within WeST, these duties are delegated to the CEO and to the Executive Leadership Team.

WeST has grown from two to 27 schools, and that has started to challenge our current system of local governing bodies. At present, several local governing bodies are struggling to recruit a full complement of governors, and others are struggling to recruit clerks.

To deal with these risks, Trustees have considered a number of options from retaining the status quo to dissolving local governance mechanisms.

After considerable debate, the Trustees believe that WeST would be best served, at this stage in its development, by a system of hub advisory boards which will replace local governing bodies on 1 September 2022. Trustees recognise the significant personal investment that many governors have made in our schools, and I would like to thank you for the time and commitment you have given to our pupils and staff. I very much hope that you will want to be part of what comes next.

The purpose of this paper is to consult parents, staff and school communities on the make-up and remit of the new hub advisory boards.

Number and location of hub advisory boards.

The Board proposes to establish 4 hub advisory boards. All hubs will have between 6 and 8 schools, at least one of which will be a secondary school. Schools within each hub will be geographically close, in order that the hub may maintain links with the broad community that the schools within the hub serve.

Membership of hub advisory boards

The Board wants to create hubs which add value to the work of the Trust. Trustees recognise the important role of our school communities in influencing the direction of the Trust. With this in mind, the Board intends to invite interested parents, staff and local business people to apply for a seat on a hub advisory board. The Trust will consider the skills and experience of everyone who applies and will select just over half of each hub's members from them. The Chair of the hub advisory board will be elected from this group.

In addition to this group, a number of seats equal to the number of schools within the hub, will be appointed. Parents and carers from each WeST school will be able to apply to serve on their hub. Again, the Trust will consider the skills and experience of everyone who applies and will select from them. This group will support the hub in thinking about the communities served by the hub schools. The Trust Board is clear that these elected members are not representatives of a particular school but will have the interests of WeST 4.0 and all its 14,000 learners at heart.

All hub members will serve for a maximum term of three years.

The headteacher from each school will be appointed to the hub advisory board.

Remit of hub advisory boards

Each hub advisory board's remit will be to consider and advise the Trust Board on matters to do with curriculum, community involvement and safeguarding. The Trustees are very clear that they wish each hub advisory board to act as the eyes and ears of Trustees. Hub advisory boards will have no decision-making powers.

Meeting pattern

Each hub advisory board will meet three times each year to discuss items within a set agenda.

The Chair of each hub advisory board will be invited to a forum termly, in advance of WeST Trust Board, to meet with me as Trust Chair and Rob Haring CEO to bring forward the main points of advice from that meeting.

The Trust has considered carefully the advantages and disadvantages for the proposals for the operation of hub advisory boards and would now like you to give your views on the proposed route ahead, or suggestions on constituting the hubs differently.

You can do this using the following methods:

- Complete our [online form](#)
- Email with heading WeST Hub Advisory Board Consultation to clerk@westst.org.uk

The consultation period will end at **5pm Monday 28th March 2022**.

The Trust will consider your views at the next Trust Board meeting. Thank you for taking the time to read this, and for your interest in our schools.

With best wishes

Iain Grafton MBE
Chair of Trustees