

9 May 2022

Dear all,

Governance review

I am writing to you following our recent consultation on the proposed shape of the hub advisory boards which will replace local governing bodies, and on the decisions made at our Trust Board meeting on Thursday 5th May 2022.

I know that, for some of you, our decision to move to a hub model has led to some robust and healthy debate. I'd like to thank you for the way in which this has been conducted, in a spirit of respect for differing viewpoints.

Thank you to everyone who responded and, in doing so, has contributed to shaping the future governance of WeST. 414 consultation responses were received, and each response was read and considered. These are from a WeST community that exceeds 28,000 parents. The majority of responses, around 60%, were against our decision to create a hub model for a number of reasons.

Within the responses, some key themes emerged, particularly in terms of the loss of individual school / community / parent links. Our aim, working through the hubs and our directors of education, who line manage headteachers, is that the voice of each of our schools will be strengthened, particularly by the meeting three times each year of hub Chairs with the CEO and Chair of Trustees.

We were particularly struck by the opposition to our proposal for a three-year maximum term for members of a hub advisory board. Many commented on the potential loss of experience that this proposal might cause. As a result, we have decided that members of the hub advisory board may apply for reselection when their three-year period of office comes to an end.

In all other respects, Trustees decided to move forward in line with the proposals in the consultation paper, but to give time to the process, hub advisory boards will replace local governing bodies on 1st January 2023. The exact number and shape of each hub will be considered by the Trust Board over the next few months, and I will keep you informed of our decisions and about our progress with this exciting work.

Yours faithfully

Iain Grafton
Chair of the WeST Trust Board