



Notes of Meeting: South East and South London

17th December 2020

Attendance

Attendance data is published annually on the GOV.UK website.

HTB members who apologised have been consulted on all projects, where available, before the meeting. This excludes items where there were conflicts. Their views are reflected in the discussion at the meeting (where appropriate).

Regional school commissioner (RSC) chair

- Claire Burton

Headteacher board (HTB) members

- Alison Beane
- Stephen Carey
- Andrew Carter
- Jon Chaloner
- Mark Ducker
- Paula Farrow

Guests

- Kaylene Alder (DfE)
- Jackie McCarthy (DfE)
- Renee Smith Gorringe (DfE)
- Patricia Bourke (DfE)
- Matt Stevenson (DfE)
- Vaso Paraschidou (DfE)
- Marie Griffiths (DfE)

Apologies

- David Boyle

DfE senior civil servants

- Anna Barker

General discussion points

Points discussed in the meeting.

Conflict of interest:

- None

Minutes to previous meeting - agreed

RSC update

- An update was provided by the RSC on the latest position across the region with relation to the Covid crisis.

Discussion of projects, including decisions made by RSC with advice from HTB

All decisions are made in reference to relevant legislation and the published criteria.

Significant change

Project: Portsmouth and Winchester Diocesan Academies Trust Isle of Wight schools to transfer to Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust

HTB discussion:

Concerns with regards to quality of education as well as safeguarding are key issues in both schools. They will require funding. DCAT also plan to apply for TCAF funding.

Members recognised that this is an opportunity to increase trust capacity on the Isle of Wight. There is however a need for a comprehensive improvement plan and this is where additional funding should be focused towards.

RSC decision:

Approve

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required:

Claire to meet with the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust SLT to discuss their 2020/21 growth plan in more detail.

Academy Orders and MAT Approvals

Project: Fleetdown Primary School, Kent, to join The Galaxy Trust

HTB discussion: A 3FE school with leadership capacity challenges. Galaxy Trust have been providing support for several months and the school now wants to join the trust.

RSC decision:

Approve

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required:

None

Project: Fairview Community Primary School, Medway, to join The Westbrook Trust

HTB discussion: The school was asked to do a formal consultation before the HTB decision after parents raised concerns. A majority of responses to the consultation were not in favour of the school to join Westbrook Trust. The governing body, having taken these concerns into consideration, but still feel The Westbrook Trust is the best option for the school.

It was noted that the LA had formally raised concerns surrounding the governing body's decision making, specifically around transparency and community engagement. Members raised concerns that the governing body was at odds with the school community. The RSC was minded to ask the LA to work with the school to address the concerns.

RSC decision:

Decline

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required:

RSC has requested that Medway LA take the necessary actions to address concerns raised.

Project: Sandwich Infant School, Kent, to join Aquila The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust

HTB discussion: The LA has raised concerns about the proposal with regards to the primary school's viability. Consultation is ongoing and will end soon. RSC's steer has been that Infants and Junior should join the same trust. However, the junior school has shown no immediate interest in converting to academy status.

There was a discussion on mixed MATs and to check with Aquila how their vision fits in on how inclusive they are for non-secular schools.

RSC decision:

Approve

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required:

Aquila to consider if their vision statement is clear.

Claire to write to Juniors to consider joining at a later date or to convert.

Sponsor paper

Project: Bucklers Mead Academy (SAT), Somerset, to merge with Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

HTB discussion: MNSP was identified as the strongest trust after having exhausted other options. The geography of the MAT is crucial as the nearest school is only 30 minutes away. Cross checking key areas, identified by Ofsted in their report, shows that those areas have been improved by MNSP at similar schools.

RSC decision:

Approve

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required:

None

Decisions taken between HTB meetings

Project: Frimley CofE Junior School to join The Prospect Trust

RSC decision:

Approve

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required:

None

Project: John Keats Primary School request to amend age range

RSC decision:

Approve

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required:

None

Projects listed on the published draft agenda but were removed before the meeting

Project: King's Academy Trust to merge with Folio Academy Trust

Reason for removal:

Awaiting further information needed for the paper.