



## Notes of Meeting: South East and South London

25<sup>th</sup> March 2021

### Attendance

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

Where HTB members send apologies they are consulted on all projects, where available, before the meeting. This excludes items where there are 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
- David Boyle

### Guests

- None

### Apologies

- None

### DfE senior civil servants

- Anna Barker

## General discussion points

Points discussed in the meeting.

Conflict of interest:

- Paula Farrow

Minutes to previous meeting - agreed

## RSC update

- RSC reflected on the wider opening of schools. This has been a real challenge for schools, but one which they have managed extremely effectively. Across the region attendance levels are very positive. Transmission is broadly low although some parts of the region are still seeing slightly higher rates, and this is reflected in slightly lower attendance levels.
- RSC has been running roundtables across the region, a range of questions are being raised with key themes arising around assessment, inspection and recovery. Expecting assessment materials from rewarding bodies and department in the week commencing 31 March.
- Kevan Collins (recovery commissioner) is in post, his remit is broad, covering early years through to post-16 education. RSCs are engaging with the recovery agenda and will seek to bring trust leaders and colleagues into discussions of proposals and delivery.
- HTB members fed back some concerns on the delivery model of the National Tutoring Programme. Issues raised included: the cost for schools, variations in the quality of provision and a concern with press reports of some tutors being paid less than the industry average. HTB members also questioned whether the delivery of the scheme highlighted a tension between autonomy of trusts to decide on the best way of delivering tutoring, and a nationally established framework for providers.

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

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

### Significant change

Project: Bradfields Academy, Medway - physical expansion

Discussed financial capacity of the trust.

HTB noted that the case highlights a national problem. High numbers needed for SEND places not matched by funding in the system.

Questions around staffing and staffing cost ratio, and the context of the SRMA report, all of which needs to be balanced with the need in the local area.

There is an expectation that the trust will strengthen the governance in accordance with DfE preference.

RSC decision:

Approve with condition

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required:

Condition- trust continues to improve the accuracy of financial forecasting.

Ongoing monitoring

Project: Thistle Hill Academy & Finberry Primary School, Kent - change of SRP from SEMH to ASD

Discussion about how common this change is and complexities of changing SEMH.

School improvement strategy was not detailed in the paper.

Question on the number of members.

Discussion on whether a conversation needs to happen with Kent LA to understand the LA's strategy for SEND provision.

RSC decision:

Approve

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required:

Recommendation that CEO joins the new CEO induction programme.

RSC team to arrange conversation with LA

Project: Hillview School for Girls, Kent - physical expansion

School want to open a satellite to their sixth form to offer level 1 and 2 provision.

Lease arrangement was discussed. The school has an option regarding the lease for one year.

RSC decision:

Defer

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required:

Minister to make decision on sixth form provision. RSC minded to recommend approval.

A proposition from school on what governance will look like

Discussion with school regarding longer lease

## Sponsored route

Project: Leigh Academies Trust (LAT), Kent, merger with Brook Learning Trust (BLT)

Recognition that this is a pragmatic decision.

Discussion about the capacity of LAT and its recent growth.

RSC decision:

Approve

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required:

LAT to undertake a period of consolidation following the merger.

## Converter Academy Orders

Project: South East London Catholic Academy Trust - forming a new MAT

Discussion of the success criteria for the Diocesan pilot programme. The purpose and the long term objectives of the national programme was outlined.

There is a shift of strategy amongst the Arch-Diocese in SESL, which is likely to see the growth of further Catholic trusts over the coming months and years.

Discussion on the need for funding equality across all trusts, not just for existing or proposed faith MATs.

Question on the minimum threshold for number of trusts that can come together within the pilot.

RSC decision:

Approve

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required: None

## Significant change

Project: Platanos College, Lambeth – PAN reduction

Discussion about the interaction of basic need and parent choice, as well as the impact of the new Harris Sixth Form and a declining basic need picture in Lambeth.

The Harris Sixth Form will undermine the need for places in the north of the borough and the Platanos sixth form may exacerbate this.

Need clarity from the trust if this is going to be a Platanos offer or a pan-London offer.

RSC decision:

Defer

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required:

Minister to make decision on sixth form provision. RSC minded to recommend approval.

Before going to the Minister, recommendation that we:

Discuss with the trust what their offer will be: a pan-London or Platanos offer?

Discuss sixth form strategy with Lambeth

## Sponsored route

Project: Moulsecoomb Primary School, Brighton and Hove - sponsor options

Discussion about the resilience of the trusts being considered.

Capacity of the sponsor trust is also an important consideration.

Good to see that trusts slightly further away do understand the local context and have local partners.

RSC decision:

Defer

Conflicts:

Paula Farrow was not present for this item

Further actions required:

Minister to make decision on sponsor approval. Recommendation for Minister to approve sponsor.

Project: Hurstpierpoint College, West Sussex - application to be a sponsor

Discussed the rationale and overall plans as a sponsor from the independent sector coming into the state sector.

Discussed the dual plans for the trust/sponsor: future applications to convert from LA-maintained schools and a potential free school bid.

Discussed the need to review the sponsor application when we have more information on the schools keen to join the trust.

RSC decision:

Defer

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required:

Come forward with further details on the proposed MAT structure and the schools that wish to join the trust.



## Significant change

Project: Coppice Spring Academy, Hampshire – increase in PAN and physical expansion

LA is supportive of the proposal and is providing funding.

It was noted that the current model is already in place both in their own academy as well as another academy in Hampshire.

RSC decision:

Approve

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required:

Follow up with East of England team about their views.

Project: Rumboldswyke CofE Infants' School (Bishop Luffa Learning Partnership) – change of phase

The Local Authority opposed the change on the ground that there were surplus places in the planning area. It was noted that Ofsted 'good' local schools were increasingly full. Other stakeholders (including local schools) welcomed the proposal, including the reduction in PAN from 40 to 18. The composition of the Board of Trustees was noted.

RSC decision:

Approve with condition

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required:

Approve with condition that by 1 September 2021 no employees of the trust (apart from the CEO) would be serving as academy trustees, in order to retain clear lines of accountability through the academy trust's single senior executive leader.

Project: Barton Farm Primary – PAN variation request

LA supportive of the proposal.

General agreement that the proposal shouldn't be a permanent arrangement.

RSC decision:

Approve with condition

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required:

Approve for two years.

## Decisions taken between HTB meetings

Project: Chamberlayne College for the Arts, Southampton - intermediate funding

Decision type: Sponsored Route

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Inform school of decision

Project: Royal Harbour Academy, Kent, Sponsor Match

Decision type: Sponsored Route

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Inform school of decision