

Notes of Meeting: South West Advisory Board

Date of meeting – Monday 20 September 2021

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 Schools Commissioner (RSC) chair

- Hannah Woodhouse (RSC)

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Joy Tubbs (AB)
- Steve Savory (AB)
- Suzanne Flack (AB)
- Brian Hooper (AB)
- Alun Williams (AB)
- Sally Apps (AB)
- Michael Larsen (AB)
- Paul Jones (AB)

Apologies

- None

DfE senior civil servants

- Lucy Livings (Deputy Director)
- Matt Stevenson (Deputy Director)

Representations received

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

General Discussion Points

Strategic Update

- SW RSC gave AB members a strategic update at the start of a new academic year, topics included:
 - Update on the Ministerial changes in the Department following the government re-shuffle.
 - Update on the upcoming spending review
 - School measures, academisations, SEND and levelling up – place based worked.
 - Trust review programme.
 - Upcoming advisory board elections.
 - Covid update (restart, testing, vaccinations, LA relationships).
 - Disadvantage gap in the SW.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Whether to approve Hillbourne Primary School, **Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole** to convert to academy status and join Hamwic Education Trust

AB discussion:

Governance

- Members discussed the trust's governance structure, notably the need to remove the overlap between the members and trustees.

Performance

- Members discussed that the trust currently has several challenging schools. Six of its schools have a 'requires Improvement' judgment.

The AB would like to see more evidence of the trust's school improvement impact particularly in terms of Ofsted outcomes of existing schools.

Other

- Members recognised that there is a viability risk with Hillbourne, as it is currently only at 55% capacity. Members were made aware of upcoming housing developments in the area.

RSC decision: Approve with conditions.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school and trust, and share conditions with the trust.

Project: Whether to approve the following schools of the Beacon Federation converting to academy status and joining Westcountry Schools Trust:

- Ugborough Primary School, **Devon**
- Ermington Primary School, **Devon**
- Manor Primary School, **Devon**

AB discussion:

Governance

- Members would like to see progress on amending governance structures at the trust continuing

Finances

- AB members noted that the reserves held by the trust mean the in-year deficits predicted, if realised, are unlikely to have substantial implications on the Trust's overall financial security.

School improvement

- Members agreed that the trust had recently strengthened their school improvement capacity, but also want to ensure that the trust is not growing too quickly or taking on too many challenges.

Other

- Members noted that these schools would provide capacity to the trust and were happy to approve.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school and trust.

Trust Change

Points discussed in relation to academies moving to a new trust.

Project: Whether to approve Preston School Academy, **Somerset** (SAT) to transfer to Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

AB discussion:

Governance

- Members noted that this proposal fits with the overall growth strategy of the trust to set up a hub in Yeovil now that the Bath hub is fully established.

- Members discussed the challenges the trust (and other trusts more widely) are experiencing in recruiting good trustees, LGB members

School Improvement

- Members noted that the school improvement plan for the trust was comprehensive.

Other

- Members discussed the secondary capacity of the trust but noted that improvements are being seen at Writhlington school, evidenced by recent Ofsted monitoring reports

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Alun Williams, Sally Apps and Brian Hooper were not present for this item and did not receive the papers.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school and trust.

Project: Whether to approve Winton Primary School, **Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole** (SAT) to transfer to The Delta Education Trust

AB discussion:

Governance

- Members noted that the member and trustee boards were well balanced in terms of skills and expertise.

School improvement

- It was noted that Winton Primary would bring strong KS2 capacity to the trust.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school and trust.

Project: Whether to approve Plympton Academy, **Plymouth** (SAT) to transfer to The Thinking Schools Academy Trust (TSAT).

AB discussion:

Governance

- AB members raised the issue of trustees sitting on the Academy Advisory Board and noted that it was a temporary measure.

Other

- Members recognised that this proposal would consolidate the position of TSAT in Plymouth as well as secure the sustainable future of the hub.
- AB members were made aware that this proposal supports the RDD objective to rationalise the secondary trust landscape in the city by SATs joining strong MATs.
- Members discussed the consultation for this proposal, noting that no issues were raised.

Finances

- Members discussed Plympton's finance position and TSAT's financial health.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school and trust.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

List of decisions taken by the RSC outside of AB meetings.

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application from Special Partnership Trust (SPT) MAT to transfer Area Based Resource currently run from Mount Charles Primary School (part of CELT MAT) to SPT's Pencalenick School in Cornwall

Decision type: Significant change

AB discussion:

- Sufficient evidence of the Area Based Resource (ARB) is integrated with the mainstream school.
- This proposal formalises the move of the pupils from roll at CELT to SPT.

RSC decision: approve (via internal meeting on 27 September 2021)

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school and trust.

List of projects listed on the published draft agenda, but were removed before the meeting

List of projects that were on the published draft agenda but not discussed at the AB meeting.

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application for Teignmouth Community School, Mill Lane, **Devon** (Osprey Learning Trust) to add eight additional places to its reserved provision for SEN pupils.

Type of decision: Significant change

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Decision deferred as more information needed from the school/trust

Project Whether to approve a significant change application for Westcliff Primary Academy, **Devon** (The First Federation Trust) to add a reserved provision for SEN pupils of eight places.

Type of decision: Significant change

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Project postponed as more information needed from the school/trust

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application for Great Torrington School, Devon (Great Torrington School Academy Trust) to add a reserved provision for SEN pupils of eight places.

Type of decision: Significant change

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Project postponed as more information needed from the school/trust

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application for Okehampton Primary School, **Devon** (Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust) to add a reserved provision for SEN pupils of eight places

Type of decision: Significant change

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Project postponed as more information needed from the school/trust