



Notes of Meeting: South-East England and South London

25 November 2021

Attendance

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

AB members who send their apologies for the meeting are, where possible, 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

- Claire Burton

Advisory Board (AB) members

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

Guests

- None

Apologies

- David Boyle

DfE senior civil servants

- Paul Schofield

Representations received

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

General Discussion Points

RSC update

- Minutes from previous meeting agreed.
- Discussion on school system resilience and Covid.
- RSC provided a brief overview of themes from strategic conversations with academy trusts across the region.
- RSC provided an update on Advisory Board elections.
- AB discussed the Covid recovery measures, and in particular the 1-2-1 tuition programme and how it might be further developed.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Orchard Way Primary School, Croydon, to join South Orpington Learning Alliance (SOLA)

AB discussion: The proposal is for Orchard Way Primary School to convert to an academy and join South Orpington Learning Alliance (SOLA). Orchard Way Primary School is a small 1FE primary in Croydon with 206 pupils aged 4-11. The school remains Ofsted good after having a short inspection in May 2018.

AB noted that the trust currently has 3 members and 9 trustees.

AB also noted that SOLA are looking to grow and recommended that they look for support and challenge.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To explore linking SOLA with other trusts, and discuss the future for the trust and what partnerships they are looking at in the area.

Project: Holland Junior School, Surrey, to join The Pioneer Academy

AB discussion: This is a small 1FE school that has become vulnerable given the reduced pupil numbers in the locality and the increased size of the other local, now all through primary school, the effects of which have been felt since 2018.

The new head has identified The Pioneer Academy as being most closely aligned with the school's values and ethos. The trust also has a strong track record of SI and will be able to provide support.

AB noted that Hurst Green is also looking to join Pioneer Academy and recommended a period of consolidation for the trust following their current planned growth.

AB discussed the viability of the school.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: RSC's office to discuss with the trust growth and consolidation plans.

Trust change

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

Project: Noadswood School (SAT), Hampshire, to join Inspire Learning Partnership

AB discussion: The proposed change is for Noadswood School (which is currently a SAT) to voluntarily join ILP MAT on 1 September 2022.

AB noted that ILP MAT is in the process of transferring in a fifth school.

AB discussed the trust's financial health and noted that the ESFA is working closely with the trust on the conversion of St Monica's.

The AB discussed the SI function for secondary.

RSC decision: Approve with condition

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Condition for Trust to provide details of a school improvement plan specific to secondary schools. RDD to raise the option of TCAF funding with the ILP MAT.

Significant change:

Points discussed in relation to significant changes application(s).

Project: Willow Dene School, Greenwich, all-through expansion

AB discussion: The proposed expansion is at the request of Royal Borough of Greenwich and as such the LA is providing the capital investment for the required building work.

The expansion is to increase the number of specialist primary and secondary-phase places at the school, and to provide sixth form places for the first time, for young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with complex educational needs.

AB discussed the risk of the big expansion, effectively doubling in size. Noted that the expansion is over three years.

AB discussed capacities and structures within the school.

RSC decision: Defer

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Seek further assurances on proposed leadership structure and how the trust will manage the phasing. RSC happy to consider this proposal outside of AB in light of the discussion at this meeting.

Project: Coombe Boys' School, Kingston upon Thames, to add SRP unit for hearing impaired boys

AB discussion: Coombe Boys School has established a Specialist Resource Provision unit (SRP) for boys with moderate to profound bilateral hearing loss. The unit originally opened on a trial basis and, due to its success, the LA asked Coombe Boys' School to base it at their premises on a permanent basis. They subsequently applied to the department through the full business case/significant change process.

There was a question on governance as one of the trust members is also the chair of trustees.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Recommendation for separation of trustees and members to be in line with the departments best practice model.

Project: Kings College Guildford, Surrey, removal of physical disability unit

AB discussion: Kings College Guildford, part of Athena-GEP is proposing to remove the Special Educational Needs Physical Disability Unit from December 2021. The space vacated by this unit will be redirected for educational use and/or community use.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No further action required

Project: Snowfields Academy, Kent, to increase capacity and open satellite site

AB discussion: The proposed change would see Snowfields Academy increase its capacity from 140 to 280 by opening a satellite provision on the site currently occupied by High Weald Academy (HWA) in Cranbrook, Kent, which is due to close on 31 August 2022.

The proposal will see Kent meet a significant need where growth need is high and noted that it has support from KCC.

AB discussed risks such as the risk of doubling in size.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Recommendation to work closely with Leigh Academy and monitor how they will deliver the satellite provision in conjunction with the existing Snowfields provision.

Decisions taken between HTB meetings

Project: Franciscan Primary School (part of Graveney Trust) – increasing of age range from 3-11 to 2-11

Decision type: Significant change

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: No further action required

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