



Notes of Meeting: South West Advisory Board

13 December 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

Advisory Board (AB) members

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

Guests

- None

Apologies

- None

DfE senior civil servants

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

Representations received

- 2; Coast Academies, academy transfer

These representations were shared in advance of the meeting with all attendees and considered alongside their corresponding item.

General Discussion Points

AB member reflections

- AB members reflected on their time as board members. The board review AB activity, impact and process.
- The RSC thanked the AB members for their contributions.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Whether to approve Burlescombe Church of England Primary School and Webber's Church of England Primary School, **Devon** to convert to academy status and join Alumnis Multi Academy Trust

AB discussion:

Governance:

- AB members discussed the Articles of Association and the separation between members and trust board.

School Improvement:

- AB members discussed the school improvement processes at the trust and noted the complexities of running small primaries in rural settings.
- AB members considered the benefits of a trust-wide improvement model and noted the importance of receiving further evidence of trust-wide improvement prior to future growth.

Finances:

- An ESFA official noted that the trust is in a reasonable financial position with a projected trust deficit and confirmed that the trust has agreed to the deployment of a School Resource Management Adviser (SMRA).
- AB members were content with the support the ESFA are providing the trust.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

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

Project: Whether to approve Lifton Community Primary School, **Devon** to convert to academy status and join Learning Academies Partnership (South West)

AB discussion:

Governance:

- AB members discussed the role of the Chair's Forum.

School Improvement:

- AB members noted the trust's geographical spread and discussed the benefits of school hubs to aid with school improvement.

Other:

- AB members recognised the strength of the trust.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

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

Project: Whether to approve Widden Primary School, Gloucestershire to convert to academy status and join Dame Joan Cooke Education Trust (The Crypt School)

AB discussion:

Leadership:

- AB members considered the benefits of mentorship for the Executive Headteacher.

Governance:

- AB members discussed the trust's proposed governance model and noted the importance of having a clear scheme of delegation.
- AB members noted the absence of primary expertise on the proposed board and acknowledged the willingness of the senior leadership team to increase their knowledge in this area.

Finance:

- AB members queried the trust's large financial reserve.

Other:

- AB members were content with the match.

RSC decision: Approve with conditions

Conflicts: None

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

Free School Presumption – Sponsor Approval

Points discussed in relation to a free school's sponsor status.

Project: Whether to approve the local authority's recommendation of the sponsor of the new primary presumption free school at Comeytrowe, **Somerset**

AB discussion:

Governance:

- AB members discussed the recommended trust's governance structure and noted a need for further clarity on this. AB members were made aware that the

recommended trust had been approved for an external review of governance, and that this should identify and help address any issues.

School improvement:

- AB members discussed the recommended trust's primary expertise and school improvement capacity. AB members were made aware of the trust's appointment of a primary executive headteacher (EHT) in 2020, and of the primary EHT's track record of school improvement.

RSC decision: Approve with a condition

- **Conflicts:** Suzanne Flack

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

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Ermington Primary School, **Devon** (Westcountry Schools Trust)

AB discussion:

- Opening date 1 January 2022
- No issues raised.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Manor Primary School, **Devon** (Westcountry Schools Trust)

AB discussion:

- Opening date 1 January 2022
- No issues raised.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Ugborough Primary School, **Devon** (Westcountry Schools Trust)

AB discussion:

- Opening date 1 January 2022
- No issues raised.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Wroughton Infant School, **Swindon** (Grove Learning Trust)

AB discussion:

- Opening date 1 February 2022
- No issues raised.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Wroughton Junior School, **Swindon** (Grove Learning Trust)

AB discussion:

- Opening date 1 February 2022
- No issues raised.

Further actions required: No action required.

Trust Change

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

Project: Whether to approve the academy transfer of the following three academies from Coast Academies to Connect Academy Trust:

- Eden Park Primary and Nursery, **Torbay**
- Cockington Primary School, **Torbay**
- Preston Primary School, **Torbay**

AB discussion:

Governance:

- AB members discussed the history of this case and the fact that the board had decided which trust they would take their schools into after a very long process. They discussed the proposed governance structure and queried the role allocation.

School Improvement:

- AB members noted that Connect would benefit from external school improvement expertise to strengthen the trust's support for underperforming schools.

Finances:

- AB members queried who the financial auditors will be.

Other:

- AB members acknowledged the representations.

RSC decision: Approve with conditions

Conditions:

- Trust to appoint a National Leader of Governance to advise on a strong governance structure in line with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook.
- Trust to appoint an external school improvement partner to support progress at all its schools.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the trusts.

Project: Whether to approve Torre Church of England Academy, **Devon** (SAT) to transfer to The Academy for Character and Excellence

AB discussion:

Other:

- AB members noted that the location and capacity of the school made this a sensible option.
- AB members noted that they would expect the land transfer discussions to conclude for the trust's current transfer, prior to commencing this project.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: Brian Hooper

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the trusts.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application for the Camborne based satellite provision of ACE Schools, **Plymouth** (Transforming Futures Trust), to transfer site.

Decision type: Significant change

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the trust.

Project: Whether to approve the significant change application for Hambridge Community Primary School, **Somerset** to change the age range from 2-11 to 4-11

Decision type: Significant change

RSC decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the trust.

Project: Whether to approve the significant change application for Launceston College, **Cornwall** to increase capacity by 85 places

Decision type: Significant change

RSC decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the 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 the following five academies from Greenwood Tree Academy Trust transferring to Wessex Multi Academy Trust:

- St Mary's Church of England Middle School, Puddletown, **Dorset**
- Frome Valley CofE VA First School, **Dorset**
- Milborne St Andrew First School, **Dorset**
- Piddle Valley Church of England First School, **Dorset**
- Puddletown Church of England First School, **Dorset**

Type of decision: Trust change

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Necessary papers were not ready.

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application for Bishop Wordsworth's Church of England Grammar School, **Wiltshire** to increase capacity from 884 to 1200

Decision type: Significant change

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Necessary papers were not ready.

Project: Whether to approve a sponsor for Peak Academy, **Gloucestershire**

Decision type: Trust change

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Necessary papers were not ready.

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