



Department  
for Education

## Notes of Meeting: South West Advisory Board

21 March 2022

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

### Guests

- Baroness Barran, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for the School System) attended as an observer for part of the meeting.

### Apologies

- None

### DfE senior civil servants

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

## Representations received

- 9 representations: Crowan Primary School approval of new trust
- 1 representation: Wendron Church of England Primary School approval of new trust
- 1 representation: Greenwood Tree Academy Trust transferring to Wessex MAT

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

## General Discussion Points

### RSC Update

- AB members were provided an update on the recent AB elections and the announcement of the four successful candidates elected to the Advisory Board with next steps. AB members were again thanked for their continued support.
- The Schools White Paper is due to be published week of 28 March
- SEND and alternative provision green paper will follow and build on the Schools White Paper
- There is a Trust Leaders event to be held on 30 March with opportunity for discussion and feedback on both papers
- Lucy Livings, Deputy Director provided an update for Southerly Point Co-operative Multi Academy Trust ahead of the project discussion

## Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

**Project:** Whether to approve Whitchurch Community Primary School, **Devon** converting to academy status and joining The First Federation Trust

### AB discussion:

No concern

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** Paul Jones and Steve Savory

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

**Project:** Whether to approve St Budeaux Foundation Church of England (Aided) Junior School, **Plymouth** converting to academy status and joining The First Federation Trust

### AB discussion:

No concern

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** Paul Jones and Steve Savory

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

**Project:** Whether to approve Bridlewood Primary School, **Swindon** converting to academy status and joining The Park Academies Trust

**AB discussion:**

No concern

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

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

**Project:** Whether to approve the conversion of the following schools to form a new trust, the North Cotswold Schools Federation Multi Academy Trust:

- Longborough Church of England Primary School, **Gloucestershire**
- Swell Church of England Primary School, **Gloucestershire**
- St James and Ebrington Church of England Primary School, **Gloucestershire**
- Cold Aston Church of England Primary School, **Gloucestershire**

AB discussion:

**Leadership:**

- AB members discussed the leadership arrangements and requested further assurances

**Governance:**

- AB members discussed the governance structure and senior leadership roles

**School Improvement:**

- AB members discussed the trust's school improvement model

**Finances:**

- AB members commented on the long-term viability of the MAT without future growth
- AB members noted the absence of financial expertise without an appointed CFO

**Other:**

- AB members acknowledged the need for more trusts in parts of Gloucestershire and a greater diversity of provision, to increase options for VA schools

**RSC decision:** Defer - decision taken by the RSC outside of AB meeting following receipt of further evidence.

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Project lead to inform the schools and trust

## **Sponsor Route**

Points discussed in relation to sponsor status.

**Project:** Whether to approve Watermoor Church of England Primary School, **Gloucestershire** becoming an academy sponsored by The Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust

**AB discussion:**

**Governance:**

- AB members discussed the leadership and governance structure of the trust, which will need to evolve ahead of the trust's next phase of growth.

**Other:**

- AB members acknowledged that Watermoor Primary school needs support

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

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

**Project:** Whether to approve Mount Tamar School, **Plymouth**, becoming an academy sponsored by Transforming Futures Trust

**AB discussion:**

**Governance:**

- AB members commented on the composition and improved strength of the Trust board.

**School Improvement:**

- AB members acknowledged the trust's experience of working with SEMH schools and managing school satellites. The trust's expertise on trauma informed practice was also recognised.

**Other:**

- AB members commented on the condition of the school site and noted the safeguarding concerns raised in the Ofsted report.

**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 the transfer of the following two schools within Southerly Point Co-operative Multi Academy Trust to new trusts:

- Crowan Primary School, **Cornwall**
- Wendron Church of England Primary School, **Cornwall**

**AB discussion:**

**Finance:**

- AB members commented on the financial information. An ESFA official provided an update on working with the trust to improve the accuracy of financial forecasts and data

**Other:**

- AB members acknowledged the representations received from staff and the local community and these were discussed at length
- AB members acknowledged the strength of the relationship with the community and the interim Headteacher
- AB members acknowledged the risk associated with transferring both schools to one trust
- AB members discussed the track record on school improvement of the proposed trusts
- AB members discussed the request that ideally the school would transfer at the end of the academic year to avoid disruption for students

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** Michael Larsen and Steve Savory

**Further actions required:** Project lead to inform the schools and trusts.

**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**

**AB discussion:**

**Governance:**

- AB members discussed the governance structure, and it was noted that the trust is undertaking an external review of governance

**School Improvement:**

- AB members discussed the trust's SI strategy for primary and secondary schools and its development going forward.

**Other:**

- AB members acknowledged the representation received from the Chair of the Local Governing Body for St. Mary's CoE Middle School
- AB members acknowledged the strategic approach and the opportunity for Wessex Multi Academy Trust to grow

**RSC decision:** Approve with conditions

**Conditions:**

- Continue to strengthen school improvement strategy and investment in primary expertise
- Conclude external review of governance

**Conflicts:** Brian Hooper

**Further actions required:** Project lead to inform the trusts.

**Project:** Whether to approve Christ Church Church of England Primary School (SAT), Gloucestershire transferring to The Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust

**AB discussion:**

**Governance:**

- AB members discussed the leadership and governance structure of the trust, which will need to evolve ahead of the trust's next phase of growth

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Project lead to inform the trusts.

**Project:** Whether to approve Brixham College (SAT), Torbay transferring to The Thinking Schools Academy Trust

**AB discussion:**

No concern

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**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 for Holyrood Academy, **Somerset** to increase capacity by 225.

**Decision type:** Significant Change

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Project lead to inform the trust.

**Project:** Whether to approve a significant change for Shortlanesend School, **Cornwall** to lower the age range from 4-11 to 2-11, along with an increase to PAN from 20 to 30. Additionally, the proposal is to increase capacity from 140 to 210, along with a new 26 place nursery.

**Decision type:** Significant Change

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

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

**Project:** Whether to approve a retrospective significant change for Shiphams CofE First School, **Somerset** to lower the age range from 4-9 to 2-9

**Decision type:** Significant Change

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

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

**Project:** Whether to approve a retrospective significant change for Draycott and Rodney Stoke CofE First School, **Somerset** to lower the age range from 5-9 to 3-9

**Decision type:** Significant Change

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

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

**Project:** Whether to approve a significant change for Ivy Lane Primary School, **Wiltshire** to lower the age range from 4-11 to 3-11 and to increase the funding agreement capacity figure from 357 to 420

**Decision type:** Significant Change

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

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

**Project:** Whether to approve the conversion of the following schools to form a new trust, the North Cotswold Schools Federation Multi Academy Trust:

- Longborough Church of England Primary School, **Gloucestershire**
- Swell Church of England Primary School, **Gloucestershire**
- St James and Ebrington Church of England Primary School, **Gloucestershire**
- Cold Aston Church of England Primary School, **Gloucestershire**

**Decision type:** Converter Academy Order

**RSC decision:** Approve with conditions

**Conditions:**

- That the federation provides a 3-year MAT financial plan no later than 8 weeks prior to opening
- To commission the support of an SMRA
- To appoint a CFO no later than 1 September 2022
- To appoint a trustee through the academy ambassador programme with financial experience no later than 1 September 2022
- To update us on interim leadership arrangements for the trust no later than 1 June 2022

**Conflicts:** None

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

## **Academy Opening Approved in Principle**

List of academies approved to open.

**Project:** Hillbourne Primary School, **Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole** (Hamwic Education Trust)

**AB discussion:**

- Opening date 1 April 2022
- No issues raised.



**Further actions required:** No action required.

**Project:** Lifton Community Primary School, **Devon** (Learning Academy Partnership (South West))

**AB discussion:**

- Opening date 1 April 2022
- No issues raised.

**Further actions required:** No action required.

**Project:** St Andrew's Primary School, **North Somerset**, (Lighthouse Schools Partnership)

**AB discussion:**

- Opening date 1 April 2022
- No issues raised.

**Further actions required:** No action required.

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

None

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