

Notes of Meeting: East Midlands and The Humber Advisory Board

16 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

- Carol Gray

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Anne Martin
- Paul Stone
- Paul West
- Andy Child

Guests

- None.

Apologies

- Inderjit Sandhu

DfE senior civil servants

- ESFA representative
Charlotte Marr

Representations received

Two – Whether to approve the physical expansion of St Mary's Catholic High School, Derbyshire, to increase capacity.

These representations were shared in advance of the meeting with all attendees (except those who had declared a conflict of interest) and were considered alongside their corresponding item.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Whether to approve Selston CofE Infant and Nursery School, Nottingham, to convert and join Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham MAT (SNMAT), Nottingham.

AB discussion:

Selston CofE Infant and Nursery School received an outstanding Ofsted judgement in July 2013.

The SNMAT is a largely Nottinghamshire based MAT of 17 schools (3 secondary and 14 primary).

The school has made a voluntary conversion application to join SNMAT

Other trusts were considered by the school but they believe that SNMAT is the best match for them as it fits with their current church status and their strong Christian ethos and values.

Selston CofE Infant and Nursery School has already established links with the trust and believes the school will benefit from strengthening their existing relationship with the other schools in the trust, access to bespoke improvement support and benefits that come from being part of a larger family of schools.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance at SNMAT and the impact on the trust's future financial health if this school joins were also considered.

The board were in agreement with this proposal.

RSC decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Converter Academy Order to be sent to the school's Chair of Governors. Trust and DCS to be informed of the decision. The supportive deployment of a School Resource Management Adviser (SRMA) was recommended.

Project: Whether to approve Huthwaite All Saints CofE (Aided) Infant & Preschool, Nottinghamshire, to convert and join Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham MAT (SNMAT).

AB discussion:

Huthwaite All Saints CofE (Aided) Infant & Preschool received a good Ofsted judgment from a short inspection in May 2017.

SNMAT is a largely Nottinghamshire based MAT of 17 schools (3 secondary and 14 primary).

The school has made a voluntary conversion application to join SNMAT.

Other trusts were considered by the school but they believe that SNMAT is the best fit for them as it fits with their current church status and strong Christian ethos and values.

Huthwaite All Saints CofE (Aided) Infant & Preschool has already established links with the trust and believes the school will benefit from strengthening their existing relationship with the other schools in the trust, access to bespoke improvement support and benefits that come from being part of a larger family of schools.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance at the SNMAT and the impact on the trust's future financial health if this school joins were also considered.

The board were in agreement with this proposal.

RSC decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Converter Academy Order to be sent to the school's Chair of Governors. Trust and DCS to be informed of the decision. The supportive deployment of a School Resource Management Adviser (SRMA) was recommended.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Orchard Community Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 1st April 2022

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: St George's CofE Controlled Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 1st April 2022

Further actions required: No action required.

Significant Change

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

Project: Whether to approve the age range change to facilitate the addition of 32 FTE nursery places for 3-year-olds at Greenhill Primary (Steel City Schools Partnership), Sheffield.

AB discussion:

Greenhill Primary has existing nursery provision currently run by an external provider – Greenhill Pre-School. The pre-school is based on the Greenhill site and is currently Ofsted

outstanding. The academy wishes to lower its age range to take over the running of the provision, with the agreement of the current provider.

If the planned changes are approved, they would take effect from 1st September 2022.

The changes have the support of Sheffield Local Authority (LA) and will provide nursery places to meet the demand in the local area.

There are no initial capital costs for the pre-school provision because it is currently operational and housed in a purpose-built setting, which is owned by the trust and located on the academy's site.

Steel City Schools Partnership already has 4 other nursery provisions, 3 of which are Ofsted Good.

If this proposal is not approved, there is a risk Greenhill Pre-School will have to close. This will result in the loss of a popular and outstanding school-based nursery provision with 32 FTE places. There is a sufficiency pressure on nursery provision in Sheffield, so the loss of these places is not desirable.

The trust has raised the proposals with local EYFS leads and no objections have been brought forward. A full consultation was also sought, with nobody being opposed.

The financial health of the pre-school, the strength of financial management and governance at the Steel City Schools Partnership and the impact on the trust's future financial health if this change takes place were also considered.

The board were in agreement with this proposal.

RSC decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the academy / trust of the decision.

Project: Whether to approve the creation of a new integrated resource (IR) unit to provide 12 places for pupils with EHCP plans at Greenhill Primary (Steel City Schools Partnership), Sheffield.

AB discussion:

Steel City Schools Partnership (SCSP) have worked with Sheffield Local Authority (LA) on the creation of a new Integrated Resource (IR) unit to provide 12 places for pupils from Sheffield with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) at Greenhill Primary. The unit will provide provision for a primary need of Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) / Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Sheffield LA are providing capital funding for the unit.

If the planned changes are approved, they would take effect from 1st September 2022.

The changes have the support of Sheffield LA and will provide much-needed SEND places to meet the demand in the city.

SCSP aims to be highly inclusive and has a higher proportion of children with SEND and EHCPs than the national average (25.8% compared to 18%). The trust has a strong track

record of supporting children with SEND within mainstream education, including running a successful IR unit at Fox Hill Primary.

The new provision would run as part of Greenhill Primary and be led by the trust's Inclusion Director, who has experience of developing and managing the IR unit at Fox Hill. In addition to leadership from the trust's Inclusion Director, the Greenhill provision would be staffed by a local provision lead, a SEND Teacher and at least one specialist Teaching Assistant.

A full consultation was carried out, with no objections.

If the proposal is not approved, this will place additional pressure on SEND sufficiency in Sheffield. There is a need for SEND places in the city and the LA's SEND strategy is focused on creating more IR provisions within mainstream schools, particularly in the primary phase.

The strength of financial management and governance at the Steel City Schools Partnership and the impact on the trust's future financial health if this change takes place were also considered.

The board were in agreement with this proposal.

RSC decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the academy / trust of the decision. The supportive deployment of a School Resource Management Adviser (SRMA) was recommended for 3 months after the IR has opened.

Project: Whether to approve the phased closure of the integrated resource provision at Birley Spa Primary Academy (L.E.A.D. Academy Trust), Sheffield.

AB discussion:

L.E.A.D. Academy Trust proposes to close a 12-place integrated resource (IR) unit within Birley Spa Primary Academy with effect from September 2022.

The trust wants to close the unit as they feel that the unit compromises the academy's ability to offer an optimum standard of education to all pupils.

Sheffield City Council have plans in place to increase SEN provision in other schools, which could help mitigate the impact of the closure.

The strength of financial management and governance at L.E.A.D. Academy Trust and the impact on the trust's future financial health if this change takes place were also considered.

The board did not support this proposal. There were concerns that the views of the families impacted by the proposed closure had not been fully heard. The board was also not satisfied that the reasons given for closing the unit were insurmountable nor sufficient to justify closing the unit.

RSC decision: Deferred.

Conflicts: Paul West. Paul did not receive any papers in relation to this project, nor was he present.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the academy / trust of the decision and to seek further clarity from the trust on their reasons for wanting to close the unit.

Project: Whether to approve a temporary expansion of physical capacity at Wingfield Academy (a New Collaborative Learning Trust academy), Rotherham.

AB discussion:

Wingfield Academy is seeking approval for a temporary expansion of its physical capacity, from its official capacity of 975 to 1050, with the addition of 3 temporary classrooms from September 2022.

The academy received a Good Ofsted judgement in 2017.

The academy has been at, or around, full capacity due to successful admissions appeals taking the academy over capacity. Wingfield Academy believe the proposed additional temporary classrooms are necessary to provide flexibility and to allow smaller class sizes when required.

A consultation was held for 4 weeks (31st January 2022 to 25th February 2022). Four responses were received from the parent/s of pupils who attend the academy. Three of these are in favour.

The planning area remains in a healthy level of surplus throughout the forecasted period. Adjacent secondary planning areas in Rotherham are also largely in surplus. The Local Authority are not supportive of a permanent expansion but do acknowledge the rationale behind a temporary expansion.

The financial health of the academy, the strength of financial management and governance at the New Collaborative Learning Trust and the impact on the trust's future financial health if this change takes place were also considered.

The board was not supportive of this proposal. It was agreed that the academy's capacity assessment suggest there is already sufficient capacity for the current number of students.

RSC decision: Declined.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the academy / trust of the decision. The supportive deployment of a School Resource Management Adviser (SRMA) was recommended.

Project: Whether to approve the closure of the sixth form at South Axholme Academy, North Lincolnshire.

AB discussion:

The South Axholme Academy sixth form opened in September 2015 with a capacity of 200. Since opening, the Number on Roll at the sixth form has declined and is currently under 19% of total capacity.

Approval of this significant change application would close the sixth form in September 2023. This would mean that the current Y12 year group (2021/22) will complete their post-

16 studies in 2022/23. The trust has confirmed that the academy would not admit any pupils into Y12 in September 2022, to ensure the sixth form closes with all pupils completing their studies by September 2023.

South Axholme Academy has conducted research and determined that because other 16-19 providers in the local area offer a wider range of courses and students want to experience something beyond their local area, pupils are favouring alternative post-16 provision.

Isle Education Trust has confirmed that all pupils, staff and students have been made aware of the proposal to close the sixth form and a six week consultation was opened on 15 November 2021. All comments raised at the consultation were considered as part of the proposal.

The academy has supported current Y11 pupils, offering organised visits to other post-16 providers in the area and providing additional career support. North Lincolnshire LA have confirmed their support for the proposal to close the sixth form.

The financial health of the academy, the strength of financial management and governance at Isle Education Trust and the impact on the trust's future financial health if this change takes place were also considered.

The board were in agreement with this proposal.

RSC decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the academy / trust of the decision.

Project: Whether to approve the proposal to lower the age range from 4-11 to 3-11 at Richard Hill Church of England Primary School (The Vines Academy Trust), Leicestershire.

AB discussion:

The Vines Academy Trust proposes to lower the age range at Richard Hill Church of England Primary School to create a pre-school with effect from September 2022.

The trust believes that lowering the academy's age range will have a positive impact on the academy's academic performance and on the children by providing an early start for pupils in a pre-school setting, under the supervision of a qualified teacher.

There are currently no pre-schools or nurseries within the academy's catchment area, meaning local pupils have to travel for pre-school places. The trust confirmed that the academy's admission arrangements for places will not change.

Leicestershire County Council and Diocese of Leicester are supportive of the application.

A consultation ran from the 11 November 2021 to the 17 December 2021; all stakeholder responses were in favour of this proposal.

The financial health of the academy, the strength of financial management and governance at The Vines Academy Trust and the impact on the trust's future financial health if this change takes place were also considered.

The board were in agreement with this proposal.

RSC decision: Approved.

Conflicts: Inderjit Sandhu. Inderjit was not sent the papers in advance of the meeting. She was not in attendance for the meeting in its entirety.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the academy / trust of the decision. The supportive deployment of a School Resource Management Adviser (SRMA) was recommended.

Sponsored Route

Project: Discuss sponsor options for Newman School, Rotherham.

AB discussion:

Newman School was inspected by Ofsted on 3rd & 4th November 2021 and judged inadequate with safeguarding concerns. The school was issued with an Academy Order on 28 January 2022.

All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Most pupils have complex special educational needs.

4 sponsor options were brought to the board for consideration.

The board requested further information on the 4 sponsor options and deferred the proposal to April Advisory Board.

RSC decision: Deferred.

Conflicts: Andy Child

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school of the decision.

Decisions escalated to the Minister

List of decisions that have been escalated to the Minister.

Project: Whether to approve the physical expansion of The Robert Smyth Academy (Tudor Grange Academies Trust), Leicestershire, to increase capacity and to seek advice re post-16 increase to enable the RSC to make a recommendation.

AB advised on:

Tudor Grange Academies Trust are seeking approval to increase the overall physical capacity at The Robert Smyth Academy to accommodate the proposed increase in PAN for Year 7 places to 210 and sixth form places to 340 with effect from August 2023.

Leicestershire County Council (LA) fully supports the expansion proposals and has confirmed the additional places are required.

Consultation regarding the proposed changes at The Robert Smyth Academy were carried out between 1 October 2021 to 12 November 2021. The results show 96% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal to increase Year 7 places, 4% of respondents were neutral and there were no objections. In relation to the proposal to increase Year 12 places, 98% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, 2% were natural and there were no objections.

The financial health of the academy, the strength of financial management and governance at Tudor Grange Academies Trust and the impact on the trust's future financial health if this change took place were also considered.

The board were in agreement with this proposal.

RSC decision: Approved pre-16 expansion subject to the related planning permissions being granted. Escalation to the Minister with regards to post-16 following recommendation from the NSC.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform academy / trust that this proposal will be escalated to the Minister for decision.

Project: Whether to approve the physical expansion of St Mary's Catholic High School, Derbyshire, to increase capacity.

AB advised on:

St Mary's Catholic High School received an outstanding Ofsted judgement in October 2012.

St Mary's Catholic High School is proposing the creation of a new block to create additional places in in Years 7 to 11 and Sixth Form.

The project will deliver up to 14 additional places per year group in Years 7 to 11, increasing the Pupil Admission Number (PAN) from 195 to 209, with an additional increase to the Sixth Form by 100 places in total.

The academy applied to expand its capacity and buildings in 2021. The RSC declined the application based on surplus places in the planning area and uncertainty around a planned nearby housing development.

The financial health of the academy, the strength of financial management and governance at St Mary's Catholic High School Academy Trust and the impact on the trust's future financial health if this change takes place were also considered.

RSC decision: RSC decision escalated to the minister.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform academy / trust that this proposal will be escalated to the Minister for decision.