

Notes of Meeting: East Midlands and The Humber Advisory Board

6th July 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

- Paul Stone.
- Inderjit Sandhu.
- Paul West.
- Andy Child.

Guests

- Newly appointed Yorkshire and the Humber Advisory Board members.
- Newly appointed East Midlands Advisory Board members.

Apologies

- Peter Bell.
- Anne Martin.

DfE senior civil servants

- Kelly Hughes.
- ESFA representatives.

Representations received

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

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Whether to approve Etwall Primary School, Derbyshire, to convert and join Central Co-operative Learning Trust.

AB discussion:

Etwall Primary School is an average-sized primary school which was judged good by Ofsted in 2012. The school shares a similar ethos with Central Co-operative Learning Trust. Despite all existing schools in the trust being in the West Midlands region, Etwall Primary School is geographically close (20 minutes away) from the nearest school within Central Co-operative Learning Trust.

Etwall Primary School met with several local trusts with varying degrees of size and phase. Through this process, the governing body decided that their preference was to join a smaller, growing trust focussed on primary expertise and passed a resolution to join Central Co-operative Learning Trust.

The board was in agreement with this proposal.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Central Co-operative Learning Trust and the impact on the trust's future financial health if this school joins were also considered.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and trust of the decision following similar discussion at the West Midlands Advisory Board on the 21 July 2022. Academy Order to be issued to the school's Chair of Governors and the Director of Children's Services for Derbyshire County Council.

Project: Whether to approve The Old Leake Primary and Nursery School, Lincolnshire, to convert and join Voyage Education Partnership.

AB discussion:

The Old Leake Primary and Nursery School is in Boston, Lincolnshire and was judged Ofsted good in 2018.

The Old Leake Primary and Nursery School considered the multi-academy trusts that have a footprint in the Boston area and identified Voyage Education Partnership as their preferred trust due to its values, ethos and vision being aligned to the school's, and the trust's expertise in primary education. The governing body passed a resolution for the school to join Voyage Education Partnership.

The board was in agreement with this proposal.

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

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Jenn Plews (newly appointed Y&H Advisory Board member). Jenn was not in receipt of associated project papers and wasn't present for this part of the meeting.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and trust of the decision. Academy Order to be issued to the school's Chair of Governors and the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire County Council.

Project: Whether to approve Birdwell Primary and Pre School, Barnsley, to convert and join HCAT.

AB discussion:

Birdwell Primary School received a requires improvement Ofsted judgment in 2019 and faced further challenges during the pandemic.

The local authority put in place a rapid-improvement committee to support the school and approached HCAT to provide further support.

Birdwell Primary School and HCAT have established a close-working relationship over the last few months. Progress has been made by the trust in helping stabilise the school from a vulnerable position. Both the HCAT and Birdwell Primary feel the match is a good fit and are looking forward to continuing to work together in the best interests of the school.

A resolution was passed unanimously by the governing body on 5th May 2022. A consultation was undertaken by the school's rapid-improvement committee, and parental feedback was largely positive with only minor concerns and requested clarifications reported.

The board was in agreement with this proposal.

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

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: Tom Banham (newly appointed Yorkshire and the Humber Advisory Board member). Tom was not in receipt of associated project papers, nor was he present for this part of the meeting.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and trust of the decision. Academy Order to be issued to the school's Chair of Governors and the Director of Children's Services for Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. The supportive deployment of a school resource management advisor was recommended.

Project: Whether to approve Travis St Lawrence CofE Primary School, Doncaster, to convert and join The Diocese of Sheffield Academies Trust.

AB discussion:

Travis St Lawrence CofE Primary School is a Church of England voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Sheffield and provides education for children aged 3-11 years. In November 2016 the school was judged by Ofsted to be good and prior to that, in June 2014, it had been judged as requires improvement.

As a Church of England school, the school is keen to join a trust with the same vision, values and ethos as its own. Geographical location was also an important factor in the school's decision-making, and they are keen to ensure meaningful collaborations are forged for staff at all levels. The governing body passed a resolution for the school to join The Diocese of Sheffield Academies Trust.

The board was in agreement with this proposal. The board also advised that the trust should review and develop their school improvement capacity.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at The Diocese of Sheffield Academies Trust and the impact on the trust's future financial health if this school joins were also considered.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and trust of the decision. Academy Order to be issued to the school's Chair of Governors and the Director of Children's Services for Doncaster Council.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Blidworth Oaks Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 1st August 2022.

Further actions required: No action required.

Significant Change

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

Project: Whether to approve the physical expansion of King Ecgbert School (Mercia Learning Trust), Sheffield, to increase capacity of mainstream provision from 1197 to 1600 and SEND provision from 20 to 30 places.

AB discussion:

King Ecgbert School is a large secondary school with a sixth form provision based in Sheffield. The school received an outstanding Ofsted judgement in May 2013.

Mercia Learning Trust is proposing to increase its capacity from 1197 to 1600 from September 2023, an increase of 403 permanent places. This will be accommodated by the creation of a new single-story block on the current school site. The capacity increase will be phased until 2028, by increasing the school's year 7 PAN from 193 to 240.

In addition, the trust is proposing to increase capacity of its Integrated Resource (IR) unit from 20 pupils to 30, from September 2022/23, by increasing year 7 PAN from 4 to 6.

The proposal has been developed in conjunction with Sheffield local authority (the LA) and is in a direct response to local demand/need for secondary school places in the area, as well as meeting the city-wide need to expand post-16 provision for SEND students. All capital costs associated with the new building will be funded by the LA.

The board was in agreement with this proposal.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Mercia Learning Trust and the impact on the trust's future financial health if this school expands were also considered.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and trust of the decision. The supportive deployment of a school resource management advisor was recommended.

Project: Whether to approve the physical expansion of Silverdale School (Chorus Education Trust), Sheffield, to increase capacity from 1300 to 1680 and to add 30 SEND post-16 places.

AB discussion:

Silverdale School is a secondary school with a sixth form provision based in Sheffield. The school joined Chorus Education Trust as an academy converter in January 2013 and was judged outstanding by Ofsted in October 2014.

The trust is proposing to increase the capacity of Silverdale School from 1300 to 1680 pupils, which will be accommodated by the creation of three-story block on the current school site. The capacity increase will be phased over a five-year period by increasing the school's year 7 PAN from 180 to 240.

In addition, the trust, in collaboration with the LA, is proposing to create a post-16 SEND provision to accommodate 30 SEND students.

This is being developed in conjunction with Sheffield LA and is a direct response to local demand/need for secondary school places in the Southwest of Sheffield, as well as meeting the city-wide need to expand post -16 provision for SEND students. All capital costs associated with creating the new building will be funded by the local authority.

The board was in agreement with this the proposal to approve the capacity increase. The board, however, deferred the proposal to add 30 SEND post-16 places due to insufficient information.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Chorus Education Trust and the impact on the trust's future financial health if this school expands were also considered.

RSC decision: Approve (subject to planning permission) mainstream expansion / defer creation of SEND provision.

Conflicts: Andy Child. Andy was not in receipt of associated project papers, nor was he in attendance for this part of the meeting.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and trust of the decision (including confirming the process for AB to reconsider the deferred element of the proposal)

Project: Whether to approve an increase in capacity at Aston Academy (Aston Community Education Trust), Rotherham, from 1650 to 1800 places.

AB discussion:

This project seeks retrospective approval to expand the capacity of the academy to address the deficit capacity and future demand for places in the area.

Aston Academy received a good Ofsted judgment following an inspection in February 2014.

Funding to create an additional 150 permanent places at Aston Academy was agreed by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) in December 2018. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council fully funded the expansion which will replace temporary classrooms at the academy and create the additional capacity required.

The increase in capacity is required to meet the rising projected demand for places aligned to the Waverley housing development (3,000 to 3,500 new dwellings).

The board was in agreement with this proposal.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Aston Community Academy Trust and the impact on the trust's future financial health if this school expands were also considered.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school and trust of the decision made. The supportive deployment of a school resource management advisor was recommended, and an external review of the governance.

Project: Whether to approve the physical expansion of Foxfields Academy (Community Inclusive Trust), Leicestershire, to increase capacity from 50 to 80, through the addition of 5 classrooms.

AB discussion:

The proposal is to increase the number of places from 50 to 80 at Foxfields Academy, a special school within Community Inclusive Trust, located in the Leicestershire district of Blaby.

The additional capacity will be achieved by building a new five-classroom block on the existing site and the building work is expected to be completed by summer 2023. A four-week consultation exercise took place between March and April 2022. 10 responses were received, and all were in favour of the proposal.

Leicestershire County Council has confirmed there is a need for additional places in Blaby due to regional demographic pressures arising from birth rates and housing developments. Other factors in favour of the expansion include site limitations elsewhere, the distance that pupils would have to travel and parental preference. The local authority's view is that Foxfields Academy is the most appropriate school in this area of Leicestershire to expand to increase special educational needs provision.

The board agreed to defer a decision as additional information was required.

RSC decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school, trust, and Director of Children's Services for Leicestershire County Council of the decision.

Trust Change

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

Project: Whether to approve the transfer of Leverton Church of England Academy (Single Academy Trust), Nottinghamshire, to the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham Multi-Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

Leverton Church of England Academy opened as a single-academy trust in April 2012. Ofsted judged the school to be good in February 2016 and again in October 2019.

The board of trustees has decided it is in the best interests of the academy to join a multi-academy trust to access a wider network of support, expertise and challenge that will enable the academy to continue to move forwards and provide high quality education for the children and the community.

Leverton Church of England Academy has established a relationship with Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham Multi-Academy Trust over the past 6 months. The trust has worked with the board of trustees of the academy to explore the benefits of joining a trust.

Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham Multi-Academy Trust was one of two options considered by the board and, following due diligence, the board passed a resolution to join Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham Multi-Academy Trust. Staff and parents have been consulted and no concerns were raised.

The board was in agreement with this proposal – with the recommendation that the Delivery Officer feeds back that the trust's school improvement plan needs defining further.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham Multi Academy Trust and the impact on the trust's future financial health if this school joins were also considered.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and trust of the decision.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

Project: Whether to approve St Peter and St Paul Church of England Academy to use three additional classrooms already on site as teaching space and thereby increase the capacity from 420 to 525. If approved, this would enable the school to increase its published admission number (PAN) from 60 to 75.

Decision type: Significant Change.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and trust of the decision.

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 age-range change and additional SEND provision at Rise Academy (The Constellation Trust), Kingston-Upon-Hull.

Type of decision: Significant Change.

Reason why it was taken off agenda: Discussions ongoing with Hull City Council and The Constellation Trust on whether they want to progress the proposal.

Project: Whether to approve the temporary closure of the sixth form at Kirkby College (single-academy trust), Nottinghamshire.

Type of decision: Significant Change.

Reason why it was taken off agenda: Additional information is required before the project can be presented to the board.