

Notes of Meeting: South East Advisory Board

Thursday 20 October 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 Director (RD) chair

- Dame Kate Dethridge

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Sarah Bennett
- Dame Yasmin Bevan
- Sarah Brown
- Sir Andrew Carter
- Stuart Gardner
- Claire Lowe
- Sue Samson MBE

DfE senior civil servants

- Paul Schofield – Deputy Director, South East Regions Group

Representations received

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

General Discussion Points

- It was agreed there were no conflicts of interest for the AB members.
- AB members had no amendments to the meeting note of September 2022.
- The AB Lead informed AB member of the items which were taken off the agenda since publication. These items are indicated in this meeting note.

Medway, Kent and Surrey

Converter Academy Order

Project: Discussion to consider John Mayne CofE Primary School, **South Kent**, to convert and join Tenterden Schools Trust.

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the performance of the schools currently within Tenterden Schools Trust.
- AB members discussed the governance structure of Tenterden Schools Trust.
- AB members discussed the need for a clearer school improvement strategy for the school.
- AB members were concerned about the finances of the trust but noted the school joining the trust seemed logical.

RD decision: Approve with conditions. Conditions: To provide further information on the trust's capacity to secure school improvements with a demonstration of a school improvement model and to ensure the trust has someone with accountancy skills on the trust board.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school and trust of the RD decision.

Significant Change

Project: Discussion to consider the de-amalgamation of Eastchurch CoE Primary School (a split-site school), **South Kent**, reducing size by 1FE and establishing a new 1FE school on their second site, to commence from 1 April 2023.

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the performance of both the split-site schools.
- AB members discussed the pupil places in the local area.
- AB members discussed the trust's financial position and the SRMA report from 2020.
- AB members were in agreement that de-amalgamation is a key part of the wider plan to improve outcomes at Eastchurch CofE Primary.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school and trust of the RD decision.

Trust Change

Project: Discussion to consider the transfer of Joydens Wood Infant School (SAT) and Joydens Wood Junior School (SAT), **North Kent**, to Nexus Education Schools Trust.

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the governance structure at Nexus Education Schools Trust.
- AB members were in agreement for this project to be approved.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school and trust of the RD decision.

Trust Change

Project: Discussion to consider the following **Kent** trusts: The Skinners' Kent Academy, The Marsh Academy (SAT), The Skinners' School (SAT), The Skinners' Academy (SAT) to merge and create a new trust called Skinners' Academies Trust.

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the potential governance structure and financial security of the new trust.
- AB members discussed the need for educational support model for The Marsh Academy.
- AB members discussed the potential growth of the new trust if it were to be formed.
- AB members discussed what assurances The Skinners Company have given the schools.
- AB members reflected on whether the MAT and SATs could have an external review of governance and/or obtain support in forming a larger MAT.

RD decision: Defer

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school and trust of the RD decision.

Coastal

Sponsored Route

Project: Discussion to consider Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust (DCAT) as the sponsor match for Ninfield CofE Primary School, **East Sussex**.

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed what strategy was in place regarding school improvement for the school.
- AB members discussed the speed of growth of DCAT and capacity to take on this school.
- AB members agreed a condition that the trust undertake a SRMA visit.

RD decision: Approve with conditions.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school and trust of the RD decision. Condition: DCAT to undertake SRMA visit.

Sponsored Route

Project: Discussion to consider the sponsor match for The Flagship School, **East Sussex**.

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed both The Beckmead Trust (TBT) and Torfield and Saxon Mount Academy Trust as potential sponsors for The Flagship School.
- AB members considered the approval for TBT as the sponsor for The Flagship School.
- AB members discussed the governance structure at TBT, indicating they would like further assurances.
- AB members discussed the current school improvement support from TBT but would like to see a detailed school improvement plan for the school.

RD decision: Approve with conditions.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school and trust of the RD decision. Conditional to the The Beckmead Trust (TBT) having an External Review of Governance.

Trust Change

Project: Discussion to consider the merger of Everychild Trust and Partners in Learning Academy Trust, **West Sussex**.

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the governance structure and the growth trajectory of the new trust if it were to merge.
- AB members commented on the importance of a school improvement strategy to support the schools currently within the trusts.
- AB members discussed both trust's finances and projected financial position if merged.

RD decision: Approve with conditions.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the trusts of the RD decision. Conditions: new trust to undertake SRMA visit and an External Review of Governance after formation.

Decision escalated – Revocation of Academy Order

Project: Potential revocation of directive Academy Order for Highfield Church of England Primary School, **Southampton**.

AB discussion:

- AB members were in agreement on a submission going to the minister to consider revocation of directive academy order.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Submission to be presented to the minister.

West

Decision escalated - Significant Change

Project: Discussion about adding a sixth form to Bohunt School, **Wokingham**, to commence from 1 September 2023.

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the governance structure at Bohunt Education Trust (BET).
- AB members considered the need for the sixth form and support of Wokingham Borough Council.
- AB members discussed the finances of BET and the possible funding implications of the project.
- AB members discussed the curriculum of the proposed sixth form and what this would provide.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Submission to be presented to the minister.

Significant Change

Project: Discussion to consider change in age range for Stephenson Academy, **Milton Keynes**, from 11-19 to 9-16 (post-16 provision change is retrospective), to commence from 1 September 2023.

AB discussion:

- AB members were in agreement for this project to be approved.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school and trust of the RD decision.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

- Ashford Hill Primary School, **Hampshire**, to join The Thames Learning Trust.
- King's Academy Easthampsread Park, **Bracknell Forest**, to join King's Group Academies
- Milton Keynes Primary Pupil Referral Unit, **Milton Keynes**, to join Stephenson (MK) Trust.
- Thames Ditton Junior School, **Surrey**, to join Hinchley Wood Learning Partnership.
- The Mead Infant and Nursery School, **Surrey**, to join Bourne Education Trust.
- Woodlands Park Primary School, **Windsor and Maidenhead**, to join The Slough and East.

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: Test Valley School, Hampshire, to convert and join HISP Multi Academy Trust.

Type of decision: Converter Academy Order.

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: HISP MAT withdrew from sponsoring Test Valley School.

Project: Discussion to consider a sponsor match for Fernhill School, Hampshire.

Type of decision: Sponsored Route.

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Additional time needed to confirm sponsor options and finalise paperwork.

Project: Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust (ODBST) as sponsor for Westcott CofE School, Buckinghamshire.

Type of decision: Sponsored Route.

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: ODBST withdrew from sponsoring Westcott CofE School.

Project: Great Learners Trust as the sponsor match for Iver Village Infant School, Buckinghamshire.

Type of decision: Sponsored Route.

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Great Learners Trust withdrew from sponsoring Iver Infant Village School.