



Notes of Meeting: South East Advisory Board

Date of meeting – 27 July 2023

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
- Paul James
- Claire Lowe
- Sue Samson MBE

Apologies

- Stuart Gardner, AB Member
- Paul Schofield, Deputy Director South East Regions Group
- Helen Brayley-Morris, Deputy Director South East Regions Group

Representations received

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

General Discussion Points

- Conflicts of interest were confirmed for Sarah Bennett, Paul James, Sir Andrew Carter, Claire Lowe, and Sue Samson. These are indicated against the projects to which they relate. These members were not present for the items when discussed and were not sent the papers for these items.

West Sub-Region

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss the application from Lavendon School, Milton Keynes, to join Inspiring Futures through Learning (IFtL)

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the increasing pupil numbers at Lavendon School.
- AB members discussed the governance structure at Inspiring Futures through Learning.
- AB members considered the rationale, agreeing that the support of a wider network of staff will enhance the expertise and strengthen governance.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Sarah Bennett. The member did not receive these papers and left the virtual meeting when the case was discussed.

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

Sponsor Application

Project: To discuss sponsor status for 5 Dimensions Trust, Milton Keynes

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the governance structure and finances of 5 Dimensions Trust.
- AB members discussed the trust's strategic plan for growth, and the central support team they have in place to assist with this.
- AB members discussed the school improvement offer provided by the trust.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Sarah Bennett. The member did not receive these papers and left the virtual meeting when the case was discussed.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, local authority of the RD decision.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss the application to change The Forest School, Wokingham, from a single sex school to a co-educational school

AB discussion:

- AB members queried whether The Forest School could be supported by another school who has undertaken the same transition into a co-educational school.
- AB members discussed the pupil numbers within the school and the pupil place demand in Wokingham.
- AB members noted the potential disruption to the school however the RD felt it is fundamental to address the pressure on secondary school places and surplus capacity at the school.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, local authority of the RD decision.

Sponsored Route:

Project: To discuss whether The Park Federation should become the sponsor for Hannah Ball School, Buckinghamshire

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the trust's governance structure, highlighting the rotation of the boards can create less accountability.
- AB members discussed the need for an external review of governance.
- AB members discussed the trusts finances and the expenditure.
- AB members discussed the school improvement plan provided by the trust for the school.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, local authority of the RD decision.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the voluntary transfer of Bernwode Schools Trust's two schools, The Cooper School and Glory Farm Primary School to Acer Trust, Oxfordshire

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the secondary and primary educational expertise at both trusts and the mutual benefits of the merger to each individual trust.
- AB members discussed the governance structure and current skill set of both trusts.
- AB members discussed Acer Trust's school improvement capacity at both secondary and primary phase.

RD decision: Approve with conditions:

- Composition of the new Trust Board to include trustees with school improvement expertise and experience at both secondary and primary level.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the trusts of the RD decision.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the transfer from The Heights Primary School (SAT), Reading, to join Bellevue Place Education Trust

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the trust's governance structure and the performance of some of the schools within Bellevue Place Education Trust (BPET).
- AB members discussed the need for primary and secondary educational expertise on the trust board.
- AB members discussed The Heights's request for planning permission to increase the school's PAN to factor in the surplus places in the area.
- AB members queried whether a school improvement strategy would be beneficial for the SAT.
- The RD wanted further assurances on BPET's 2023 results and agreed to defer the decision pending the trust relationship manager discussion with the trust.

RD decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the trusts of the RD decision. Delivery Officer and Trust Relationship Manager to meet with BPET to discuss AB's reflections.

Kent, Medway and Surrey Sub-Region

Sponsor Application

Project: To discuss sponsor status for EKC Schools Trust, Kent

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the finances and the governance structure of EKC Schools Trust.
- AB members discussed the EKC Group and their support to the trust.
- AB members recommended the trust produce a school improvement strategy for school's joining the trust, however this was not set as a condition to the approval.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Sponsored Route:

AB discussion:

The Advisory Board discussed issues relating to a trust change project. The decision(s) taken on this project will be published at a later date, after there has been a public announcement.

Sponsored Route:

Project: To discuss sponsor options for the transfer of Wyke Primary Academy, Surrey

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the strengths and challenges of different sponsor options.
- AB members discussed the finances of the trusts considered.
- AB members discussed and considered the school's phase and location, alongside the capacity, expertise, and geographical proximity of the trust options.

RD decision: Approve South Farnham Education Trust as the preferred sponsor.

Conflicts: Sir Andrew Carter. The member did not receive these papers and left the virtual meeting when the case was discussed.

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

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the application for Bright Futures Learning Trust to merge with The Swan Trust, Surrey

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the finances of the trusts and the proposed governance structure of the newly formed trust.
- AB members discussed the need for primary expertise on The Swan Trust board.
- AB members discussed the performance of the schools currently within The Swan Trust.
- AB members wanted further assurances that the ESFA were confident in their future financial plan.

RD decision: Approve with conditions:

- The Swan Trust to provide a clearer governance structure.
- The Swan Trust to obtain primary expertise on their trust board.
- ESFA to review the trust's financial planning ahead of the merger.

Conflicts: Claire Lowe. The member did not receive these papers and left the virtual meeting when the case was discussed.

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

Significant Change

Project: To discuss the significant change application from St John's Baptist Catholic Comprehensive School, Surrey, to create a new purpose build SEN provision unit and associate classroom space

AB discussion:

- AB members were confident in the trust's capacity to complete this project.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform school, trust, diocese, and local authority of the RD decision.

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss the applications from Walsh Junior School and Walsh Memorial CofE Controlled Infant School, Surrey, to join The Good Shepherd Trust

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the capacity of The Good Shepherd Trust (GST).
- AB members discussed the improvement of the schools currently within GST.
- AB members discussed the need for a School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) to be deployed to the schools.
- AB members discussed the need for a school improvement plan from the trust for both schools.
- RD requested a meeting be arranged with GST and Diocese.

RD decision: Approve with conditions:

- GST to deploy an SRMA.
- GST to provide a clear and detailed school improvement plan for both schools.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, diocese, and local authority of the RD decision.

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss the application from St Giles Infant School, Surrey, to join Enlighten Learning Trust

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the reasons for low pupil numbers at the school.
- AB members discussed Enlighten Learning Trust's finances.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, diocese, and local authority of the RD decision.

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss the application from Riverview CofE Primary and Nursery School, Surrey, to join Enlighten Learning Trust

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the re-tendering of the onsite family centre at the school.
- AB members discussed the trust's growth and capacity.
- AB members discussed the need for a clearer strategic school improvement plan for the school from the trust.
- RD noted the trust has generally good performance overall but before taking a decision requested further assurance from the trust on its capacity to take on two schools concurrently and a detailed school improvement plan for Riverview.

RD decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, diocese, and local authority of the RD decision.

Coastal Sub-Region

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the application for Glyne Gap School (SAT), East Sussex, to join Torfield and Saxon Mount Academy Trust

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the governance structure of Torfield and Saxon Mount Academy Trust, due to the trust transitioning into a revised structure.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the trusts of the RD decision.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the application for Lanesend School (SAT), Isle of Wight, to join Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust

AB discussion:

- AB members were in support of this project and had no queries to raise with the RD.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the trusts of the RD decision.

Sponsored Route:

Project: To discuss sponsor options for Summerlea Community Primary School, West Sussex

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed sponsor options for Summerlea Community Primary School.
- AB members were made aware of the close existing links between Summerlea and various schools within Schoolsworks, in addition to the trust's track record of school improvement.

RD decision: Approve Schoolsworks Academy Trust as the preferred sponsor.

Conflicts: None.

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

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss the applications from West Sussex Alternative Provision College and Chalkhill Education Centre, West Sussex, to join The Beckmead Trust

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the trust's growth and the need to ensure this growth is planned and managed in an achievable way.
- AB members considered that The Beckmead Trust was a good fit in light of their existing AP/SEND expertise.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss the application from Bordon Infant School, Hampshire, to join University of Chichester (Multi) Academy Trust

AB discussion:

- AB members were in support of this project and had no queries to raise with the RD.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Sue Samson MBE. The member did not receive these papers and left the virtual meeting when the case was discussed.

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

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Prestwood Infant School, Buckinghamshire, Great Learners Trust

AB discussion:

- Proposed school opening date – 01/08/2023.
- No issues were raised.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Prestwood Junior School, Buckinghamshire, Great Learners Trust

AB discussion:

- Proposed school opening date – 01/08/2023.
- No issues were raised.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Further actions required: No action required.

Project: West Blatchington Primary and Nursery School, Brighton and Hove, The Pioneer Academy

AB discussion:

- Proposed school opening date – 01/08/2023.
- No issues were raised.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Further actions required: No action required.

© Crown copyright 2023