



Notes of Meeting: South East Advisory Board

Thursday 16 November 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
- Sarah Brown
- Sir Andrew Carter
- Stuart Gardner
- Paul James
- Claire Lowe
- Sue Samson MBE

Apologies

- Dame Yasmin Bevan – AB Member

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

- Conflicts of interest were confirmed for Paul James and Sir Andrew Carter. These are indicated against the projects to which they relate. These members were not present for the item when discussed and were not sent the papers for their conflicting

item.

West Sub-Region

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss the application for St Francis Church of England Primary School, Oxfordshire, to convert and join Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust.

AB discussion:

- The AB discussed the decline in school roll and therefore whether Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST) have fully considered the potential financial complications.
- AB members discussed the finances of ODST.
- The RD requested that ODST have a School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) as a condition.

RD decision: Approve with conditions:

- ODST to commission a School Resource Manager Adviser (SRMA) visit to the school in Spring 2024.

Conflicts: Paul James. CEO of River Learning Trust. This member was not present for the item when discussed and was not sent the papers for this item.

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

Kent, Medway and Surrey Sub-Region

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss the application for Newington Community Primary School, Kent, to convert and join Coastal Academies Trust.

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the finances of Coastal Academies Trust.
- AB members discussed the trust's governance and the structure of the trust board and members. AB members discussed the school improvement plan and in future would like to see a more detailed plan to assist in any considerations for future growth.
- The RD requested evidence the trust have been open to external challenge in the past.

RD decision: Approve with conditions:

- Trust to bring the number of members into line with DfE preferences as set out in the governance handbook.

Conflicts: None.

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

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss the application for Puttenham CofE Infant School, Surrey, to convert and join the Good Shepherd Trust.

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the governance structure and the growth of Good Shepherd Trust.
- AB members commented that Puttenham CofE Infant School would add capacity to the trust.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Converter Academy Orders

Project: To discuss the application for Epsom Downs Community School and Early Years Centre, Surrey, to convert and join the Greensand Multi Academy Trust.

Project: To discuss the application for Kingswood Primary School, Surrey, to convert and join the Greensand Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- Epsom Downs Community School and Early Years Centre and Kingswood Primary School were considered together.
- AB members recommended that Greensand MAT increase its number of members to be in line with the governance handbook recommendation.

RD decision (Epsom Downs): Approve.

RD decision (Kingswood Primary): Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the application from The Bishop Wand Church of England School (SAT), Surrey to become a Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- AB members recommended that the Multi-Academy Trust need to appoint primary and secondary experience on the trust board.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the application for Inspira Academy Trust, Kent, to join Turner Schools.

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed Turner Schools' school improvement strategy.
- AB members discussed Turner Schools' growth plans.
- AB members discussed the composition of Turner Schools' trust board.
- AB members discussed the finances of the Inspira Academy Trust academies.

RD decision: Approve with conditions:

- A SRMA visit to be commissioned at the academies during their first year of operation in Turner Schools; and
- Primary expertise to be recruited to the Turner Schools trust board.

Conflicts: None.

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

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the transfer of Chantry Community Academy, Warren Wood Primary Academy and Hilltop Primary Academy, Medway to Beyond Schools Trust from Skills for Life Trust.

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the need to ensure the Beyond Schools Trust (BST) has the capacity necessary for the level of growth involved.
- AB members discussed the feeder links of the three Skills for Life primary academies.
- To support the scale of change for the trust, the RD suggested BST are supported by a trust which has experienced similar growth.

RD decision: Approve with conditions:

- Skills for Life to accept deployment of a SRMA before the three academies transfer to Beyond Schools Trust.

Conflicts: None.

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

Trust Change

Project: To discuss trust options for Walderslade Girls' School and Greenacre Academy, Medway.

AB discussion:

- The AB were presented with three trust options to sponsor Walderslade Girls' School and Greenacre Academy.
- While acknowledging separate decisions need to be made for each academy, AB members felt the schools would benefit from being transferred to the same trust as they share the same site and sixth form.
- AB members discussed the capacity and finances of the proposed sponsor options.
- AB members commented that all potential sponsors presented good school improvement strategies.
- AB members were in support of these two schools transferring to BST, along with the three primary schools presented in the previous project.

RD decision: Approve Beyond Schools Trust, with conditions:

- Commission a SRMA visit to the two academies; and
- ,
- Further growth for BST, beyond these two secondaries and the three primaries referred to above, to be paused until the RD is assured that Walderslade Girls' School and Greenacre have improved sufficiently.

Conflicts: None.

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

Coastal Sub-Region

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss the application for Fishbourne CofE Primary School, West Sussex, to join the Bishop Luffa Learning Partnership.

AB discussion:

- The AB discussed the financial modelling that the trust is conducting in line with their growth plan and the benefits that a planned School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) visit will bring to this.
- The AB considered the project and did not raise any concerns with the proposal.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Sponsor Route

Project: To discuss sponsor options for Aldworth School, Hampshire.

AB discussion:

- The AB considered the project and did not raise any concerns with the RD about the recommended trust.

RD decision: Approve South Farham Education Trust as the proposed sponsor.

Conflicts: Sir Andrew Carter. CEO of South Farham Education Trust. This member was not present for the item when discussed and was not sent the papers for this item.

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

Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

Project: Glebe Primary School, West Sussex, United Learning Trust.

Decision type: Significant change to increase age range.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: None.

Project: Inkpen Primary School, West Berkshire.

Decision type: Revocation application.

RD decision: Decline.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: None.

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

Project: Ewhurst CofE Aided Infant School, Surrey, The Good Shepherd Trust.

Type of decision: Converter Academy Order.

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Due diligence not yet completed by the trust.

Project: St Pauls CofE Aided Primary School, Surrey, The Good Shepherd Trust.

Type of decision: Converter Academy Order.

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Due diligence not yet completed by the trust.