



Notes of Meeting: East Midlands Advisory Board

13 December 2023.

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

- Carol Gray, East Midlands Regional Director.

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Inderjit Sandhu.
- Paul West.
- Sian Hampton.
- Chris Wheatley.
- Sarah Armitage.
- Mark Thomas.
- Paul Heery.
- Julian Scholefield.

Guests

- None.

Apologies

- None.

DfE senior civil servants

- Kelly Hughes, Deputy Director, East Midlands Region.
- ESFA representative.

Representations received

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

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: To discuss The Lanes Primary School, Nottinghamshire, converting to join The White Hills Park Trust.

AB discussion:

The Lanes Primary School is a larger-than-average-sized primary school in the district of Broxtowe. The school seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join The White Hills Park Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. The school received a good Ofsted judgment in February 2022.

The school believes that they will benefit from being part of a strong trust and especially from the opportunities for continuing professional development for staff that this will bring.

The Lanes Primary School's nearest primary school, John Clifford Primary School, is already part of the trust and they are collaborating to improve outcomes for children.

The White Hills Park Trust feel the school has strong leadership and good pupil achievement and has the capacity to contribute to school improvement across the trust. The school has been sharing continuing professional development with the trust for the last two years.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at The White Hills Park Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Paul Heery, CEO of The White Hills Park Trust. Paul was not present for the discussion of this project, nor was he in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school, trust, and Nottinghamshire County Council of the decision. An external review of governance was recommended.

Project: To discuss Arno Vale Junior School, Nottinghamshire, converting to join The White Hills Park Trust.

AB discussion:

Arno Vale Junior School is an average-sized junior school in the district of Gedling. The school seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join The White Hills Park Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. The school received a good Ofsted judgment in June 2022.

Arno Vale Junior School believes that they will benefit from being part of a strong trust and especially from the opportunities for continuing professional development for staff that this

will bring. The school is keen to share its primary teaching expertise and good practice with a group of schools, working within a structured partnership with other schools to improve outcomes for children.

The White Hills Park Trust is supporting a programme of teaching and learning improvement and helping the school to develop an effective approach to curriculum, teaching, and learning.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at The White Hills Park Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Paul Heery, CEO of The White Hills Park Trust. Paul was not present for the discussion of this project, nor was he in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school, trust, and Nottinghamshire County Council of the decision. An external review of governance was recommended.

Project: To discuss Arnold Mill Primary and Nursery School, Nottinghamshire, converting to join The White Hills Park Trust.

AB discussion:

Arnold Mill Primary and Nursery School is an average-sized junior school in the district of Gedling. The school seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join The White Hills Park Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. The school received a good Ofsted judgment in March 2020.

Arnold Mill Primary and Nursery School believes that they will benefit from being part of a strong trust and especially from the opportunities for continuing professional development for staff that this will bring.

Governors at the school hope to benefit from The White Hills Park Trust's mixture of expertise at primary, secondary and special.

Arnold Mill Primary School has identified key areas for improvement and has effective plans in place. The trust is already supporting leaders in the implementation of these plans and providing continuing professional development.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at The White Hills Park Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Paul Heery, CEO of The White Hills Park Trust. Paul was not present for the discussion of this project, nor was he in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school, trust, and Nottinghamshire County Council of the decision. An external review of governance was recommended.

Project: To discuss Glebe Junior School, Derbyshire, converting to join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

Glebe Junior School is a community school located in the market town of South Normanton, Alfreton, Derbyshire. It received a good Ofsted judgment in July 2022.

The school seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Embark Multi Academy Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body.

The school will add capacity to Embark Multi Academy Trust's primary arm. The school would join the Chesterfield and North Derbyshire regional hub which includes good primary school partners for network and support.

Embark Multi Academy Trust is the school's preferred choice due to the package of support and the plan for the future outlined by the trust.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Embark Multi Academy Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Sarah Armitage, Chair of Trustees at Embark Multi Academy Trust and Chris Wheatley, CEO of The Flying High Trust. Sarah and Chris were not present for the discussion of this project, nor were they in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school, trust, and Derbyshire County Council of the decision.

Project: To discuss The Brigg Infant School, Derbyshire, converting to join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

The Brigg Infant School is a community school located in the market town of South Normanton, Alfreton, Derbyshire. The school received an Ofsted good judgement in July 2019.

The school seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Embark Multi Academy Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body.

The Brigg Infant School has experienced leadership who will add capacity across the trust and in particular, to the Chesterfield hub. Embark Multi Academy Trust judge that the leadership of SEND at the school is a real strength.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Embark Multi Academy Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Sarah Armitage, Chair of Trustees at Embark Multi Academy Trust and Chris Wheatley. This project was discussed alongside agenda item 2B for which Chris Wheatley is conflicted against. Sarah and Chris were not present for the discussion of this project, nor were they in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school, trust, and Derbyshire County Council of the decision.

Project: To discuss Woodhouse Eaves St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Leicestershire, converting to join Rise Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

Woodhouse Eaves St Paul's Church of England Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Rise Multi Academy Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. The school received an outstanding Ofsted judgment in September 2023.

Woodhouse Eaves St Paul's Church of England Primary School is a voluntary controlled school which serves the village of Woodhouse Eaves in the Charnwood district of Leicestershire. Rise Multi Academy Trust has been providing a wide range of support services to the school since July 2023 including HR support, as well as providing the full school improvement core offer.

The transfer is supported by the Leicester Diocesan Board of Education which has provided consent for Woodhouse Eaves St Paul's Church of England Primary School to join Rise Multi Academy Trust.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Rise Multi Academy Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Paul Heery, Member at Rise Multi Academy Trust. Paul was not present for the discussion of this project, nor was he in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school, trust, and Leicestershire County Council of the decision.

Sponsored Route

Points discussed in relation to a school's sponsor status.

Project: To discuss Embark Multi Academy Trust as the sponsor match for Draycott Community Primary School, Derbyshire.

AB discussion:

Draycott Community Primary School is a 3-11 age range, mixed primary school in Derbyshire. Two consecutive Ofsted inspections (May 2018 and February 2022) have occurred at Draycott Community Primary School resulting in requires improvement

judgements. The school is therefore in scope for intervention by the department under The Coasting Schools (England) Regulations 2022.

An Academy Order was issued to the school in March 2023.

There is a strong strategic rationale for Draycott Community Primary School to join Embark Multi Academy Trust. The school will join an established hub in Erewash that is already developed with strong practice in supporting the same cohorts of pupils. Additionally, the trust can demonstrate development of ambitious curriculum delivery and is already working with the school on a long-term curriculum plan.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Embark Multi Academy Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Sarah Armitage, Chair of Trustees at Embark Multi Academy Trust and Chris Wheatley. This project was discussed alongside agenda item 2B for which Chris Wheatley is conflicted against. Sarah and Chris were not present for the discussion of this project, nor were they in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school, trust, and Derbyshire County Council of the decision.

Free School Presumption – Sponsor Approval

Points discussed in relation to a free school's sponsor status.

Project: To discuss and agree a sponsor match for Overstone Leys Primary School, West Northamptonshire.

AB discussion:

West Northamptonshire Council has identified the need to establish a new 2-form entry (420-place), mainstream, reception-Year 6 mixed primary school in Overstone Leys to open in September 2025.

The school is expected to initially open as a 1-form entry (210 place) school and then build up to its full capacity of 2-form entry in line with housing development growth and increased pupil demand.

The local authority opened the application window in June 2023 and closed it in August 2023. West Northamptonshire Council identified Northampton Free School Trust as their preferred sponsor.

Northampton Free School Trust is a single-academy trust operating in West Northamptonshire, Wootton/Hardingstone area.

The trust is keen to work within a 45-minute radius of its current school, in North/West Northamptonshire in the first instance, so it can maintain economies of scale and ensure resources are shared between the sites. The trust is also the sponsor of a pipeline secondary free school and has grown its central team and developed its leadership team to provide capacity for both projects.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Northampton Free School Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RD decision: Approve - Northampton Free School Trust.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the trust, and West Northamptonshire Council of the decision. The supportive deployment of a school resource management advisor was recommended.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Kingsway Primary School.

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 01 January 2024.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Newlands Community Primary School.

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 01 January 2024.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Monkhouse Primary Academy.

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 01 January 2024.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Significant Change

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

Project: To discuss the expansion of Springwell Alternative Academy Lincoln, a free school alternative provision academy in Lincolnshire, to increase the physical capacity from 63 to 119 places.

AB discussion:

Lincolnshire is experiencing an increase in demand for alternative provision places, and the local authority has been exploring options to increase provision in the county to meet its statutory duties.

Springwell Alternative Academy Lincoln is one of 4 alternative provision free schools across Lincolnshire opened by Wellspring in 2019 to replace an inadequate pupil referral unit. Since the opening of the free schools, 3 have had their first Ofsted inspection. The Lincoln and Grantham schools were found to be good and, most recently in September 2023, Spalding was graded outstanding.

Given the higher population in Lincoln, this is an area that sees a high pressure for alternative provision places and the location of the expanded capacity will be well placed.

A trust-led consultation asked whether those responding were supportive of the new site, the location of the school, the signing of a funding agreement with the DfE, and any other comments. The majority of responses to the consultation were in favour of the proposal.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Wellspring Academy Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school, trust and Lincolnshire County Council of the decision.

Trust Change

Points discussed in relation to academies moving to another trust.

Project: To discuss and agree the transfer of Pennine Way Junior Academy (single-academy trust), Derbyshire, to Embark Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

Pennine Way Junior School converted to become a standalone academy (single-academy trust) on 1 October 2011 and became Pennine Way Junior Academy. It is an Ofsted judged good (November 2019) academy located in Swadlincote, Derbyshire.

A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body.

Both trusts have worked together since 2019 and Pennine Way Junior School applied to transfer to Embark Multi Academy Trust in March 2023.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Embark Multi Academy Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Sarah Armitage, Chair of Trustees at Embark Multi Academy Trust and Chris Wheatley. This project was discussed alongside agenda item 2B for which Chris Wheatley is conflicted against. Sarah and Chris were not present for the discussion of this project, nor were they in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the trusts and Derbyshire County Council of the decision.

Project: To discuss and agree the transfer of Measham Church of England Primary Academy Trust (single-academy trust), Leicestershire, to Rise Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

Measham Church of England Primary School serves the large village of Measham, located 4.5 miles south of Ashby-de-la-Zouch in Northwest Leicestershire. The school seeks to voluntarily transfer to Rise Multi Academy Trust. The school received a good Ofsted inspection judgement in October 2018.

Rise Multi Academy Trust has been working with the school since July 2023 and now the school wishes to formalise their relationship. A resolution has been passed by the trust's board.

The transfer is supported by the Leicester Diocesan Board of Education which has provided consent for Measham to join Rise Multi Academy Trust.

The school's Board wish to benefit from the educational, operational, and financial advantages of being part of a strong multi-academy trust and are keen for staff to benefit from more opportunities for professional development and support to further improve the school.

Rise Multi Academy Trust has been providing a wide range of support services to Measham including HR support, as well as Rise's full school improvement core offer since July 2023.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Rise Multi Academy Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Paul Heery, Member at Rise Multi Academy Trust. Paul was not present for the discussion of this project, nor was he in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the trusts and Leicestershire County Council of the decision.

Project: To discuss and agree the transfer of Frisby Church of England Primary School (single-academy trust), Leicestershire, to Rise Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

Frisby Church of England Primary School serves the village of Frisby-on-the-Wreake, located 3.5 miles west of Melton Mowbray in North East Leicestershire. The school seeks to voluntarily transfer to Rise Multi Academy Trust. The school received a good Ofsted inspection judgement in September 2021.

Rise Multi Academy Trust has been working with the school since early 2023 and now the school wishes to formalise their relationship. A resolution has been passed by the trust's board.

The transfer is supported by the Leicester Diocesan Board of Education which has provided consent for the school to join Rise Multi Academy Trust.

Frisby Church of England Primary School feels that the pandemic highlighted some of the challenges being a single-academy trust brings and believes that Rise Multi Academy trust will provide the educational, financial and operational support that the school needs.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Rise Multi Academy Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Paul Heery, Member at Rise Multi Academy Trust. Paul was not present for the discussion of this project, nor was he in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the trusts and Leicestershire County Council of the decision.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

Project: To discuss an extension to the admission age-range from 3-11 to 2-11 at Kings Heath Primary Academy, West Northamptonshire.

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

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: To discuss Pinewood Infant and Nursery School, Nottinghamshire, converting to join The White Hills Park Trust.

Type of decision: Academy Converter Orders.

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: At the request of the Chair of Governors, the application to join The White Hills Park Trust has been paused.

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