



Notes of Meeting: South East Advisory Board

Date of meeting – 16 May 2024

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

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

- A temperature check was completed for the region.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss the proposal for North West Kent Alternative Provision Service, Kent, Alternative Learning Trust (ALT), to make the following change: Expansion onto an additional or satellite site

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the sponsor proposal for the free school 'Nore Academy', Kent.

AB discussion:

- These items were discussed together, given ALT's involvement in both projects.
- Officials set how sponsor options for 'Nore Academy' had been considered.
- The views of Kent County Council were discussed.
- The board discussed the positive impact Alternative Learning Trust have had in contributing to the work to strengthen secondary provision on the Isle of Sheppey
- Board members considered the leadership capacity of ALT and noted the trust's intention to evolve trust board arrangements as it grows.
- The board discussed site capacity for both the SEMH and AP provisions.

RD decisions: Approve significant change and approve Alternative Learning Trust as sponsor for Nore.

Conflicts: None.

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

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the proposal for Temple Grove Academy Trust, Kent, to move from Temple Grove Academy Trust to Skinners' Academies Trust

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the process of completing stakeholder engagement.
- Board members discussed the progress of Skinners Academies Trust.
- The extent of primary expertise on the trust board was discussed.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss the application from Ewell Grove Primary School, Surrey, to convert and become an academy and join Lumen Learning Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the performance of Lumen Learning Trust and Ewell Grove.
- Ewell Grove's pupil outcomes and progress scores and the value of obtaining support were discussed.
- The trust's governance structure was discussed by the board.
- The board discussed finances and the benefits of assigning a School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA).
The Regional Delivery team intend to meet with the trust to discuss the matters raised by the board.

RD decision: Approve with conditions:

- SRMA to be commissioned.
- External Governance review to be conducted.

Conflicts: None.

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

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss the application from St Paul's CofE (Aided) Primary School, Surrey, to convert and become an academy and join The Good Shepherd Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the trust's school improvement capacity and approach.
- The board discussed the roles on the trust board.
- Trust performance was discussed.
- The board agreed that feedback should be provided to the trust on capacity.

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 The Hawthorns Primary School, Wokingham, to convert and become an academy and join The Circle Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the quality of schools joining the trust.
- The board discussed the role of one of the trustees and requested clarification on their role.

RD decision: Approve with condition:

- To determine and clarify role of discussed trustee.

Conflicts: None.

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

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss the application from Stephen Freeman Community Primary School, Oxfordshire, to convert and become an academy and join Ridgeway Education Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the growth and the finances of the trust and the measures the trust is taking to ensure it remains viable.
- The board discussed the performance of the schools already in the trust.
- School performance actions being undertaken was discussed at the trust.
- It was agreed that the regional team would speak to the trust about its pace of growth.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Paul James. CEO River Learning Trust. Paul regularly works with Ridgeway Education Trust. Paul was not provided papers for this item and left the room during the discussion.

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

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss the application from Tickford Park Primary School, Milton Keynes, to convert and become an academy and join The Grand Union Partnership

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the school finances and whether assigning a School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) would be beneficial.
- Staffing costs and finances were discussed by the board.
- The financial trajectory of the trust was discussed.
- The board recommended feedback to the trust on views on the trust's finances.

RD decision: Approve with condition:

- SRMA to be appointed.

Conflicts: None.

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

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss the application from St Mary's Wavendon CofE Primary, Milton Keynes, to convert and become an academy and join Inspiring Futures Through Learning.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the risks associated with this conversion proposal.
- School performance was discussed by the board.
- Trust performance and school improvement was discussed.
- The board discussed the support which will be required for the school.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Sarah Bennett. CEO Inspiring Futures Through Learning. Papers were not provided, and Sarah left the room during the discussion.

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

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss the application to revoke the academy order issued to Compton and Up Marden Church of England Primary School, West Sussex.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the timescale of the Academy Order in relation to the introduction of the consecutive Requires Improvement (2RI) intervention process.
- The school was judged Ofsted Good in April 2024 and the board discussed wider ongoing discussions about a potential new MAT in the area, which Compton and Up Marden would be able to choose whether to join in the future as a voluntary converter.

RD decision: Decision escalated to ministers.

Conflicts: Sue Samson. Governor on the Interim Executive Board. Papers were not provided, and Sue left the room during the discussion.

Further actions required: Ministerial submission to be sent.

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss the proposal for University of Chichester MAT to sponsor Riders Infant School, Hampshire.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the process for shortlisting proposed sponsors.
- The track record of University of Chichester MAT was discussed by the board.
- The board discussed the trust's governance.

RD decision: Approve with condition:

- One of the trust's employees to step down as a trustee.

Conflicts: Sue Samson. Formerly CEO of University of Chichester MAT. Claire Lowe, CEO, Inspire Learning Partnership, which is named as one of the trusts in the paper. Papers were not provided for Sue and Claire, and both were not present during the discussion.

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

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss the application from St Margaret's Church of England Primary, West Sussex, to convert and become an academy and join Diocese of Chichester Academies Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the geography of the school and trust.
- The board discussed the benefits of this proposal, performance outcomes and the trust's rate of growth.
- Board members discussed whether a School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) should be appointed.
- The board recommended further discussions with the Diocese of Chichester Academies Trust on its growth strategy.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

Project: Floreat Montague Park Primary, Wokingham, GLF Schools.

Decision type: Fast track sig change: to lower the age range from 3-11 to 2-11 to offer 2-year-olds places.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: None.

Project: William Morris Primary School, Oxfordshire, GLF Schools.

Decision type: Lower the age range from 3-11 to 2-11 to allow the nursery to offer places to 2-year-olds.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: None.

Project: High Cliff Academy, East Sussex, Step Academy Trust.

Decision type: Tier 1 significant change: to raise the lower age range from 3, to 4 years.
Proposal to close nursery provision.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: None.

Project: Ropemakers Academy, East Sussex, The Beckmead Trust.

Decision type: Tier 1 significant change: to open a satellite provision.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: None.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open on 1 June 2024

- **Project:** Aldworth School, **Hampshire**, joining South Farnham Educational Trust.
- **Project:** Billingshurst Primary School, **West Sussex**, joining Sussex Learning Trust.
- **Project:** Fishbourne CofE Primary School, **West Sussex**, joining Bishop Luffa Learning Partnership.
- **Project:** Horley Infant School, **Surrey**, joining Greensand Multi Academy Trust.
- **Project:** Uplands Primary School and Nursery, **Berkshire**, joining The Keys Academy Trust.
- **Project:** Yattendon School, **Surrey**, joining Greensand Multi Academy Trust.