

Notes of meeting: South East Advisory Board

17 December 2024

Attendance

AB members who sent their apologies for the meeting but sent in their comments on agenda items, are listed under the apologies section. These members' views are reflected in the discussions below, unless the AB member(s) 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

Guests

- None

Apologies

- Sarah Bennett

DfE senior civil servants

- Paul Schofield, Deputy Director South East Regions Group

General discussion points

- A temperature check was completed for the region.

Representations received:

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

Kent, Medway and Surrey sub-region

Converter academy orders

Project: To discuss Polesden Lacey Infant School, Surrey, to convert and join LEO Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the local trusts that were interested in taking on this school and the positive impact that this could have potentially generated.
- The performance of LEO Academy trust was discussed, focusing on the demographics of the schools within the trust.
- Finance – the school finances were discussed and considered to be a risk.
- The expertise of the trust board was discussed.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Sir Andrew Carter did not receive any papers and did not participate in discussions or provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest as Chief Executive Officer, South Farnham Educational Trust, who had previously spoken to the school about the possibility of the school joining SFET.

Further actions required:

- Feedback decision to the school/trust and local authority.

West sub-region

Establishing a new academy through the free school presumption route

Project: To discuss a proposal for a sponsor for Warfield All Saints Special Free School, Bracknell Forest.

AB discussion:

- The board queried the possible overlap between roles at the trust and one individual undertaking multiple roles.
- The skills and expertise on the trust board was discussed.
- The board would like to see more Legal and HR expertise on the trust board.
- Education provision in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 was discussed.

Decision: N/A. Subject to ministerial decision.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: For ministerial decision.

- Feedback decision to the local authority.

Trust Changes

Project: To discuss a proposal for Meadowbrook College, Oxfordshire, to transfer to River Learning Trust (SAT to MAT)

AB discussion:

- The board were impressed by the preparation that River Learning Trust were doing in upskilling for Alternative Provision.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: Paul James did not receive any papers and did not participate in discussions or provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest (he is Chief Executive Officer of River Learning Trust).

Further actions required:

- Feedback decision to the school/trust and local authority.

Project: To discuss a proposal for Gillotts School, Oxfordshire, to transfer to River Learning Trust (SAT to MAT)

AB discussion:

- The location of the school was discussed, specifically the potential for isolation in terms of nearby support.
- The board discussed the benefits of Gillotts School joining River Learning Trust.
- The school was considered to be a capacity giver.
- The strength and history of the trust in improving secondary schools was discussed.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Paul James did not receive any papers and did not participate in discussions or provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest (he is Chief Executive Officer of River Learning Trust).

Further actions required:

- Feedback decision to the school/trust and local authority.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

List of decisions taken outside of AB meetings.

Project: To discuss Sir Geoffrey Leigh Academy, Leigh Academies Trust, North Kent, application to increase physical capacity.

Decision Type: Significant Change.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss Cropredy Church of England Primary School, Eynsham Partnership Academy, Oxfordshire, application to expand age range to include a nursery.

Decision Type: Significant Change.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss Ark Alexandra, Ark Schools, East Sussex, application to close the sixth form.

Decision Type: Significant Change.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss West Witney Primary School & Nursery, Oxfordshire, to convert and join Eynsham Partnership Academy (SAT to MAT).

Decision Type: Transfer

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss Owlsmoor Primary School, Bracknell Forest to convert and join The Circle Trust.

Decision Type: Converter Academy Orders.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss Furzefield Primary School, Surrey, to convert and join LEO Academy Trust (SAT to MAT).

Decision Type: Transfer

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss Horsell Church of England Primary School, Surrey, to convert and join LEO Academy Trust (SAT to MAT).

Decision Type: Transfer

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback decision to the school/trust detailing further information required.

Project: To discuss the dAO revocation request from Rowhill School, Hampshire.

Decision Type: dAO revocation.

Decision: Decline.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback decision to the school/trust detailing further information required.

Project: To discuss the dAO revocation request from Smannell and Enham Church of England Aided Primary School, Hampshire.

Decision Type: dAO revocation.

Decision: Decline.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback decision to the school/trust detailing further information required.

Project: To discuss the admissions variation application from the Arnewood School, Hampshire.

Decision Type: Significant Change – Admissions variation.

Decision: Decline.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback decision to the school/trust detailing further information required.

Project: To discuss the application from Corvus Learning Trust to open a specialist resource provision at Edgbarrow School, Bracknell Forest.

Decision Type: Significant Change – Adding a SEN unit or resourced provision.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback decision to the school/trust detailing further information required.

Project: To discuss the application from Fir Tree Junior School, Oxfordshire, to change the age range to 2-11, to convert to a primary school and open a new nursery provision.

Decision Type: Significant Change - change of age range (including adding or removing a nursery or sixth form provision).

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback decision to the school/trust detailing further information required.

Project: To discuss the application from St Nicholas Infants School, Oxfordshire, to change the age range to 2-11, convert to a primary school and transfer to another site.

Decision Type: Significant Change - change of age range (including adding or removing a nursery or sixth form provision).

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to feedback decision to the school/trust detailing further information required.

Academy opening approved in principle

List of academies approved to open on 1st January 2025.

Project: Oak Tree Primary School, Durrington Multi Academy Trust, **West Sussex.**

Points raised in discussion: None.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: None.

Project: Parkwood Primary School, The Primary First Trust, **Medway**.

Points raised in discussion: None.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: None.

Project: St Catherine's Catholic Primary School, Littlehampton, Bosco Catholic Education Trust, **West Sussex**.

Points raised in discussion: None.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: None.

Project: St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Bicester, Bosco Catholic Education Trust, **Oxfordshire**.

Points raised in discussion: None.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: None.

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