

Notes of Meeting: South East Advisory Board

Thursday 27 April 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
- Stuart Gardner

DfE senior civil servants

- Paul Schofield – Deputy Director, South East Regions Group

Apologies

- Helen Brayley-Morris - Deputy Director, South East Regions Group

Representations received

- No representations were received for items discussed at this meeting.

General Discussion Points

- Conflict of interest were noted for Paul James, Sarah Bennett, Sue Samson, Stuart Gardner, Dame Yasmin Bevan and Sir Andrew Carter. These are indicated against

the projects to which they relate. These members were not present for the items when discussed.

- AB members confirmed they were happy with the minutes of March Advisory Board.

Items for discussion in the meeting

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss and consider the application from All Saints CofE (Aided) Primary School, **Oxfordshire**, to convert and join Ridgeway Education Trust.

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the governance structure at Ridgeway Education Trust.
- AB members discussed the need for a scheme of delegation for the trust.
- AB members considered the trust's growth plans and capacity for taking on All Saints CofE Primary along with other potential primary schools in the region.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Paul James.

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

Significant Change

Project: To discuss and consider the applications from The Circle Trust to decommission the Resource Base Provision at Westcott Infant School and Westende Junior School, **Wokingham**.

AB discussion:

- AB members sought, and received, clarity that the provision would be phased out over time so that no child would be displaced as a result of the proposal.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Converter Academy Orders

Project: To discuss and consider the applications from both Carisbrooke College and Medina College, **Isle of Wight**, to join HISP Multi Academy Trust.

- AB members were reassured of the steps taken thus far in the partnering of the schools which currently form the Isle of Wight Federation (IWEF).
- AB members discussed the trust's capacity for taking on these two schools and becoming a sponsor for Test Valley School (subsequent AB item).
- RD recommended that, given the challenge of bringing these schools into the trust, the CEO of HISP should receive support through mentoring from another trust leader.
- RD stated that, in the short to medium term while the schools become established in the trust, HISP should take a cautious approach to further growth in close collaboration with her team.

RD decision: Approve with conditions (these also apply to the decision on Test Valley below):

1. Test Valley School (see below) is transferred first, before Carisbrooke and Medina.
2. HISP CEO to work with a MAT CEO mentor with experience of trust growth.

Conflicts: Sarah Bennett.

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

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss and consider sponsor options for Test Valley School, **Hampshire**.

AB discussion:

- AB members were presented with HISP Multi Academy Trust as the preferred sponsor for Test Valley School.
- AB members discussed this item with the preceding item, therefore comments made were in reference to both items.
- RD stated that HISP should proceed with Test Valley School to join them before taking on Carisbrooke College and Medina College.

RD decision: Approve HISP Multi Academy Trust as the sponsor match.

Conflicts: Sarah Bennett.

Further actions required: Inform school and trust of RD decision.

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss and consider sponsor options for Woodlea Primary School, **Hampshire**.

AB discussion:

- AB members were presented with a preferred sponsor for Woodlea Primary School.
- AB members discussed the school improvement plans and requested to see a more detailed school improvement strategy.

RD decision: Defer.

Conflicts: Sue Samson.

Further actions required: Further work to come back to board.

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss and consider a sponsor match for Rusper Primary School, **West Sussex**.

AB discussion:

- AB members were presented with sponsor options for the school.
- AB members discussed the educational expertise of the sponsor options.
- AB members discussed the local area and current primary provision.
- AB members discussed Bohunt Education Trust as a sponsor match for this school, noting their geographic proximity and the educational capacity that the trust is growing at primary level.

RD decision: Approve Bohunt Education Trust as the sponsor match.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform school and trust of RD decision.

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss and consider a sponsor match for Hollington Primary Academy, **East Sussex**.

AB discussion:

- AB members were presented with The Pioneer Academy as the preferred sponsor for Hollington Primary Academy.
- AB members discussed the distance between school and trust, and the trust's future growth plans.
- AB members discussed the governance structure and the finances of the trust.
- AB members noted the strengths of The Pioneer Academy and their school improvement record.

RD decision: Approve The Pioneer Academy as the sponsor match.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform school and trust of RD decision.

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss and consider a sponsor match for Mayfield School, **Portsmouth**.

AB discussion:

- AB members were presented with sponsor options for consideration.
- AB members considered The Salterns Academy Trust to be the preferred option in part due to their collaborative work in the Portsmouth area.
- AB members discussed the skill set of the board of trustees and recommended additional financial expertise.

RD decision: Approve The Salterns Academy Trust as the sponsor match.

Conflicts: Sue Samson, Dame Yasmin Bevan, Stuart Gardner.

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

Significant Change

Project: To discuss and consider the application from Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust (DCAT), in response to the decision made by the LA, to close the resource provision at St Columba CE Primary School, **Hampshire**.

AB discussion:

- AB members had no queries on this project.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: Inform school and trust of the RD decision.

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss and consider a preferred new sponsor for Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey, Kent.

AB discussion:

- AB members were presented with information submitted by sponsors that had expressed an interest.
- AB members discussed the proximity of Leigh Academies Trust (LAT's) existing academies to Sheppey, the trust's track record and finances.
- AB members were informed that LAT would now complete detailed due diligence and, if the trust remains content to proceed, would submit a detailed proposal for consideration by the RD.

RD decision: Approve Leigh Academies Trust as preferred sponsor.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the trusts of RD decision.

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss and consider the application from The Churchill School, **Kent**, to join EKC Schools Trust Limited.

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the governance structure at EKC Schools Trust.
- AB members noted the informal collaboration between the trust's schools and The Churchill School to date.
- AB members discussed the trust's current school improvement track record.
- AB members discussed the distance between Churchill Primary School and the trust headquarters.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform school and trust of RD decision.

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss and consider the applications from Burpham Foundation Primary School, Glebelands School, Tillingbourne Junior School and Moss Lane School, **Surrey**, to join Learning Partners Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- AB members commented on the wider benefits of this collaboration and the geographical location.
- AB members discussed what funding options could be available to Learning Partners Academy Trust.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform school and trust of RD decision.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss and consider expanding the pupil numbers from 16 to 24 (8 places) in the special provision unit at Dovers Green School, **Surrey**.

AB discussion:

- AB members discussed the governance structure at Greensand Multi Academy Trust.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform school and trust of RD decision.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

Project: Decision to approve application to increase capacity at Princes Risborough School, **Buckinghamshire**, from 1030 to 1100.

Decision type: Significant Change

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: N/A. Decision taken by RD.

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

Project: Decision whether to increase the age range of Rush Common School, **Oxfordshire**, from 4-11 to 2-11, by merging the school with Rush Common Pre-School.

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: N/A. Decision taken by RD.

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

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open in May 2023.

- Ninfield Church of England Primary School, **East Sussex**, to join Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust.