



Notes of Meeting: East of England and North East London Headteacher Board

Date of meeting – 24 June 2021

Attendance

Attendance data is published annually on the GOV.UK website.

HTB 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 Schools Commissioner (RSC) chair

- Sue Baldwin (RSC)

Headteacher Board (HTB) members

- Tom Canning (HTB)
- Caroline Derbyshire (HTB)
- Diane Rochford (HTB)
- Al Kingsley (HTB)
- Karen Kerridge (HTB)
- Duncan Ramsey (HTB)
- Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne (HTB)
- Brian Conway (HTB)

DfE senior civil servants

- ESFA representative

Apologies

- Alan Parnum (Deputy Director)

Representations received

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

General Discussion Points

- The Note of Meeting for the May HTB meeting were discussed and agreed.
- The RSC and Board took time for reflections on arrangements in schools for the new academic year, summer schools, the impact of the Delta variant and the launch of new Teaching School Hubs.

Converter Academy Order

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Canon Barnett Primary School, **Aldgate, Tower Hamlets** – to convert and join Mulberry Schools Trust.

HTB discussion:

- The HTB heard about the background of this voluntary conversion application including that this would be the first primary school within the trust but that both the school and trust have been working together to develop a cross-phase partnership.
- The Board also heard that the school would have construction work on the playground site, but discussions were ongoing to ensure that there will not be a decrease in the overall size of the playing area.
- The HTB and RSC expressed no concerns and agreed that the shared ethos, strong trust leadership and additional capacity would bring mutual benefits.
- The HTB fully supported the RSC's decision to approve the application.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: RSC office to send out Academy order to governing body, Director of Children's Services and Director of Education. Project Lead to inform trust of RSC's decision.

Sponsor Application

Points discussed in relation to applications for sponsor application.

Project: Canary Wharf College Trust, **Tower Hamlets**, to become a sponsor.

HTB discussion:

- The HTB heard about the background of this application to become a sponsor including the link to an application for a free school presumption, the development of the trust since a previous application and wider growth ambitions.
- The Board learned that the trust does not currently operate a top slicing model, as is usual practice, and that its relatively high percentage of income per school is due to the secondary school still growing to full capacity.
- The HTB raised questions around the trust's operational capacity and risk management and while commending the trust's plans to be open to all faiths, noted that this would need to be clearly and explicitly articulated to ensure equality and inclusivity were fully reflected in the language used and experience of schools that might wish to join the trust.
- Ultimately, the HTB and RSC believed that the trust's strong expertise in developing new schools, good links with other schools in the area and stable finances were reasons to agree to this application.
- The HTB fully supported the RSC's decision to approve the application.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Trust to be informed of RSC's decision and office to speak to trust about future plans.

Trust Change

Points discussed in relation to academies moving to a new trust.

Project: Barclay Primary School, Leyton, Sybourn Primary School, Walthamstow, Thomas Gamuel Primary School, Walthamstow, Warwick Academy, Ruskin Academy, Olympic Primary, Ruskin Infant School, Wellingborough, Waltham Forest to transfer from Lion Academy Trust, Leyton, to Lion Education Trust, Leyton, Waltham Forest.

HTB discussion:

- The HTB heard the background of this voluntary transfer application, including that the historic reasons for opening a separate trust was to take on a free school with financial risks involved in the transfer.
- The HTB also heard the full plans were to move schools from Lion Academy Trust (LAT) to Lion Education Trust (LET), to rename LET to LAT and, to preserve the sponsor status within the trust.
- The Board noted that the trusts were already operating as one in many ways, including governance and finances, and have wanted to bring this together for a while but have previously been prevented by a complex lease agreement.
- The Board was content with this approach and had no objections. The RSC approved this application.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Trust to be informed of RSC's decision.

Significant Changes

Points discussed in relation to significant changes applications.

Project: Cambridge Primary Education Trust to expand the age range from 5-7 to 5-11 in Histon and Impington Infant School and expand the age range from 7-11 to 5-11 in Histon and Impington Junior School, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire.

HTB discussion:

- The Board considered the background to Cambridge Primary Education Trust's proposal to expand age ranges in both schools.
- The HTB acknowledged that this was part of the LA and trust's long-term sufficiency strategy to meet the demand for primary school places within the community and surrounding places, the application fully supported by stakeholders and the trust's strong governance, capacity and school improvement offer.
- The HTB expressed no concerns and supported with the RSC's decision to approve the proposal.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Trust to be informed of RSC's decision.

Project: The Sigma Trust to physically expand the premises of Colne Community School & College by two forms of entry, Tendring, Essex.

HTB discussion:

- The Board considered the background to The Sigma Trust's proposal to expand the school by increasing the capacity from 8 forms of entry to 10 forms of entry.
- The HTB acknowledged that this change was requested by the LA to meet the need for secondary school places in the local area and will be fully funded by the LA.
- The HTB expressed concerns that this school was currently Ofsted 'inadequate' based on safeguarding and behaviour issues and questioned whether there was sufficient evidence to maintain confidence on improvements made. The Board heard that the RSC office had spoken with the LA's Director of Education and had agreed that good work had been done by the trust since the school joined but with the pause on Ofsted inspections that it was difficult to evidence improvement.
- The RSC recommended proceeding with this application subject to conditions including that the trust bring in an external NLE to provide independent challenge and support and provide her team with more information on curriculum. The Board was content with this approach and had no further objections, the RSC approved this application.

RSC decision: Approve with conditions.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Trust to be informed of RSC's decision and set conditions.

Project: Sapientia Education Trust to add a nursery provision in Rockland St Mary Primary School, Norwich, Norfolk.

HTB discussion:

- The Board considered the background to Sapientia Education Trust's proposal to change the age range from 4-11 to 2-11 years old to transfer an existing nursery, which is on the school's site, to the trust.
- The HTB expressed no concerns and supported with the RSC's decision to approve the proposal.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Trust to be informed of RSC's decision.

Project: Southend High School for Boys Academy Trust to expand the existing school buildings in Southend High School for Boys, Southend-on-Sea, to provide an Autism Resource Base for up to 15 pupils.

HTB discussion:

- The Board considered the background to Southend High School for Boys Academy Trust's proposal to provide an Autism Resource Base for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) with the intention to deliver this provision at KS3 and KS4 level.
- The HTB acknowledged that the LA supports this application and consider this application to be integral to their plans to meet the need for the provision of secondary aged pupils with ASC in the area as it is currently lacking.
- The HTB also heard that the trust has been in receipt of financial support from the ESFA for several years.
- The RSC and HTB expressed concerns about the implications for the school's existing offer and the trust's financial risks as a result of the application for a Resource Base.
- The RSC decided to defer this project in order to gather further information. The HTB fully endorsed the RSC's decision.

RSC decision: Defer.

Conflicts: Karen Kerridge did not receive the papers and was not part of this discussion.

Further actions required: Trust to be informed of RSC's decision. Further conversations between the RSC team and the trust are due to take place regarding the areas for development identified within the proposal.

Project: All Saints Schools Trust to change the age range and add a nursery provision in Occold Primary School, Eye, Suffolk.

HTB discussion:

- The Board considered the background to All Saints Schools Trust's proposal to lower the age range from 4-11 to 3-11 years old to add an existing nearby nursery provision.
- The HTB acknowledged that the school and nursery already have strong ties as often use the same space.
- The HTB expressed concerns with the provisions being in a small space while also being landlocked between two roads and questioned sustainability and financial impact as there is another nursery provision in the area.
- The Board heard that the trust were aware of the possibility that this will not be sustainable in the long term but had reserves to mitigate risks in the short term.
- The RSC decided to approve this application and the HTB supported this decision.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Trust to be informed of RSC's decision. ESFA and RSC office to continue discussions and monitor viability.

Project: Unity Schools Partnership to change the age range of the nursery provision from 3-11 to 2-11 in Clements Primary Academy, Haverhill, Suffolk.

HTB discussion:

- The Board considered the background to Unity Schools Partnership's proposal to change the age range from 3-11 to 2-11 in Clements Primary School with the intention of making this provision more attractive to local families.
- The HTB expressed no concerns and supported with the RSC's decision to approve the proposal.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Diane Rochford and Tom Canning did not receive the papers and were not part of this discussion.

Further actions required: Trust to be informed of RSC's decision.

Project: Abbots Hall Primary Academy Trust to change the age range from 4-11 to 2-11 in Abbots Hall Primary School, **Thurrock**.

HTB discussion:

- The Board considered the background to Abbots Hall Primary Academy Trust's proposal to change the age range from 4-11 to 2-11 in Abbots Hall Primary School to accommodate a nursery provision to meet the demand in the local area.
- The HTB expressed no concerns and supported with the RSC's decision to approve the proposal.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Trust to be informed of RSC's decision.

Project: Hampton Academies Trust to change the age range from 4-11 to 3-11 and add a nursery provision in Hampton Lakes Primary School, **Peterborough**.

HTB discussion:

- The Board considered the background to Hampton Academies Trust's proposal to change the age range from 4-11 to 3-11 in Hampton Lakes Primary School to accommodate a nursery provision to meet the demand in the local area.
- The HTB expressed no concerns and supported with the RSC's decision to approve the proposal.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Al Kingsley did not receive the papers and was not part of this discussion.

Further actions required: Trust to be informed of RSC's decision.

Decisions taken between HTB meetings

Project: Arbor Academy Trust to increase age range from 3-11 to 2-11 to accommodate nursery provision in both Northwold Primary School, **Hackney** and Woodford Green Primary School, **Waltham Forest**.

Update:

- The trust sent in a retrospective significant change application to change the age range of from 3-11 to 2-11 in Northwold Primary School and Woodford Green Primary School as they have added a nursery provision at both schools.
- The RSC heard that both schools are already running the extended pre-school provision and that the change was in line with the Arbor Academy Trust's intention that all of its primary schools cover a 2-11 age range. As a result of the change, the trust will be able to offer additional nursery places at both schools: an additional 12 morning places and 12 afternoon places in each nursery.
- The RSC also heard that the respective local authorities (Hackney and Waltham Forest) were supportive of this change.
- The RSC also noted that there were no responses received to each school's consultations and there was no local opposition or heightened communications locally, suggesting that there were no real objections to the proposal to extend the age range at both schools.
- ESFA have commented that the trust's financial position was stable, and that they had expressed no concerns. It was also noted that funding had already been secured for the additional capital and revenue costs at both applicant schools.
- Following receipt of the background to the project, assurances on finances and positive consultation outcomes the RSC decided to approve this project.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Trust to be informed of RSC's decision.

Project: Lion Academy Trust to increase age range from 4-11 to 2-11 to accommodate a nursery provision at Sybourn Primary School, **Waltham Forest, London**.

Update:

- The RSC heard that back in September 2018 the trust sent a fast-track significant change application to increase the lower age limit to include 2-year-olds so that the existing children's centre and the main Sybourn primary school site could be under one registration. This was supported by the LA. The significant change was not actioned at the time, so the trust have asked for it to be actioned now.
- The RSC also heard that, as this was retrospective change and the school have been providing places for a number of years, the LA and trust felt that consultation was not appropriate. There were no objections when consultation took place previously.
- Following receipt of the background to the project, the RSC decided to approve this project.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Trust to be informed of RSC's decision.