



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

**Date of meeting – 15 July 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
- Alan Parnum (Deputy Director)

### **Apologies**

- None

## Representations received

- Representations were received for the significant change project - Eastern Learning Alliance to increase the age range from 11-16 to 11-19 and add a sixth form provision in Chesterton Community College, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire.
- These representations were shared in advance of the meeting with all attendees and considered alongside their corresponding item.

## General Discussion Points

- The Note of Meeting for the June HTB meeting were discussed and agreed.
- The RSC and Board took time for reflections on the forthcoming Advisory Board elections, taking time to recharge in August, focus on trust improvement offer and NLE placements, attendance and persistent absence in the new academic year.

## Converter Academy Order

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

**Project:** Brancaster Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School and Docking Primary School, **King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Norfolk** – to convert and join Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust.

### HTB discussion:

- The HTB heard about the background of this voluntary conversion application including that these schools were part of the same federation with a single governing body and shared headteacher and that the LA had put an interim executive board in January 2019.
- The Board also heard that the schools chose the trust due to being diocesan schools, geographical proximity and would benefit from a trust-wide improvement package. The trust also conducted thorough due diligence checks and are confident they have the capacity to take on these schools and know the areas of focus to provide support and challenge.
- The HTB and RSC expressed no concerns and 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.

**Project:** Kersey Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, **Babergh, Suffolk**  
– to convert and join The Tilian Partnership.

**HTB discussion:**

- The HTB heard about the background of this voluntary conversion application, including that this is a small rural school which went from Ofsted Outstanding to RI in February 2019 and recently secured a LA interim executive board (IEB) placement.
- The Board also heard that the school governors and IEB considered other options but decided that Tilian was the most suitable option due to sharing similar ethos and the trust having the expertise with small schools. The trust was currently supporting the school.
- The HTB and RSC expressed no concerns and agreed that the trust would be best placed to provide focused support and challenge with having clearer understanding of what small schools need.
- The HTB fully supported that 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.

## Significant Changes

Points discussed in relation to significant changes applications.

**Project:** Eastern Learning Alliance to increase the age range from 11-16 to 11-19 and add a sixth form provision in Chesterton Community College, **Cambridge, Cambridgeshire**.

### HTB discussion:

- The Board considered the background to Eastern Learning Alliance's proposal to extend the age range of Chesterton from 11-16 to 11-18 and add a sixth form.
- The HTB acknowledged that this application was only for discussion and recommendation rather than decision as this would be subject to ministerial approval.
- The HTB heard the trust's ambitions to extend educational experience in the area with a particular focus on supporting disadvantaged pupils along with their intention to work collaboratively with Castle Special School to offer space for their post-16 SEN pupils on the Chesterton site.
- The HTB heard of outcome of the consultation which included some opposition to the trust's proposal from local trusts and the LA, the latter having sent in representation to the RSC office. This centred on sufficient capacity by current providers to meet the growing post-16 demand within the area as well as expecting the site to be used for 11-16 pupils only.
- The Board and RSC queried the impact of this proposal on current local providers, the quality of the curriculum offer and whether the trust had fully explored utilising current Post 16 provision at another school within the trust.
- The RSC decided that the proposal needed further information provided by the trust before it was ready to be considered further. The HTB fully agreed with this approach.

**RSC decision:** N/A – not ready to go yet to ministers for decision.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** RSC office to seek further information from the CEO of trust.

**Project:**

1. The Cam Academy Trust to increase the age range from 11-16 to 11-19 and add sixth form provision in Cambourne Village College, **South Cambridgeshire**
2. The Cam Academy Trust to increase the 11-16 capacity of Cambourne Village College, **South Cambridgeshire** from 1250 to 1650.

**HTB discussion:**

- The Board considered the background to The Cam Academy Trust's proposal to increase the capacity of Cambourne Village College from 1250 to 1650 and also to extend the age range from 11-16 to 11-18 and open a new sixth form provision.
- The HTB acknowledged that the Sixth Form application was only for discussion and recommendation rather than decision as this would need to be sent on to ministers for their approval.
- The HTB heard, regarding the physical expansion, that the trust were approached by the LA to meet local demand due to the growth of the local housing development. The Board and RSC shared confidence that the trust had the expertise and capacity to bring on these changes in the school.
- The HTB also heard, regarding the increase of age range and plans to open a sixth form, that this was in response to basic need priority and to meet projected growth in the county in the coming years.
- The Board questioned whether the curriculum offer was fully considered and learned that the trust had plans to develop their curriculum plans depending on the demand of the pupils.
- The RSC and HTB shared assurance that the trust had the leadership and expertise, as well as existing provisions to work collaboratively, to enable the success of this new sixth form provision.
- The RSC approved for these proposals to be sent forward to ministers for decision with feedback over the curriculum offer and geographical location of the school.

**RSC decision:** Project 1 – N/A, Sixth Form application ready to go to ministers for decision. Project 2 approved by the RSC.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Trust to be informed of RSC's decisions. Put forward the sixth form application to ministers with feedback on the curriculum offer and geographical placement of the school.

**Project:** Academies Enterprise Trust to increase the number of school places from 125 to 170 in The Pioneer School, **Basildon, Essex** and from 227 to 270 in Columbus School and College, **Chelmsford, Essex**.

**HTB discussion:**

- The Board considered the background to Academies Enterprise Trust's proposal to increase the number of places within both schools.
- The HTB acknowledged that this would meet the local demand for places for pupils with learning difficulties and that the consultation did not raise any concerns.
- 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:** Ormiston Academies Trust to increase the PAN from 180 to 210 and expand the building in Ormiston Rivers Academy, **Maldon, Essex**.

**HTB discussion:**

- The Board considered the background to Ormiston Academies Trust's proposal to increase the PAN numbers and expand the building of Ormiston Rivers Academy.
- The HTB acknowledged that the building expansion would be funded by the LA, the trust undertook a wide-scale consultation and promptly followed up any concerns, and that this proposal would meet an increase in demand for school places in the 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:** LDBS Academies Trust to change the age from 4-11 to 3-11 to add a pre-school provision in St Michael's Church of England Primary School, **Haringey**.

**HTB discussion:**

- The Board considered the background to LDBS Academies Trust's proposal to open a nursery provision, changing the age range from 4-11 to 3-11.
- The HTB acknowledged that this was following parental demand, no physical expansion or additional staff were required due to existing capacity and that the trust had the expertise and leadership to take on this new provision.
- 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. Speak with NWLSC RSC to provide support to this trust.

**Project:** Academy Transformation Trust to retrospectively remove the sixth form provisions in Iceni Academy, **King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Norfolk** and The Nicholas Hamond Academy, **Breckland, Norfolk**.

**HTB discussion:**

- The Board considered the background to Academy Transformation Trust's proposal to retrospectively close the sixth form provisions in Iceni and The Nicholas Hamond academies.
- The HTB heard that the original reason for closing these provisions was due to a lack of local demand and financially unviable. The HTB also heard of the trust's intention to reopen The Nicholas Hamond sixth form in September 2023 as recent local demographic figures show an increase in secondary school children over the next five years.
- The RSC expressed concerns that these applications were retrospectively requested and did not consider it appropriate for the Nicholas Hamond sixth form to be reopened following its previous closure.
- The RSC recommended moving forward with the Iceni request, however, more justification and discussion over strategy is needed with the trust to ascertain whether reopening of Nicholas Hamond will be long-term and necessary.

**RSC decision:** Decline for Nicholas Hamond. Approve for Iceni.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Trust to be informed of RSC's decisions. RSC office to have further discussions with the trust over Nicholas Hamond.

**Project:** The Active Learning Trust Limited to increase the number of school places from 900 to 1050 in Chantry Academy, **Ipswich, Suffolk**.

**HTB discussion:**

- The Board considered the background to The Active Learning Trust's proposal to increase the number of school places in Chantry Academy.
- The HTB acknowledged that this was due to local demand arising from significant housing developments and that this expansion will be funded by the LA.
- 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:** Asset Education to lower the age range from 3-11 to 2-11 in The Beeches Community Primary School, **Ipswich, Suffolk**, and increase the number of school places from 315 to 420 in Edgar Sewter Community Primary School, **East Suffolk, Suffolk**.

**HTB discussion:**

- The Board considered the background to Asset Education's proposal to lower the age range in The Beeches and increase the number of school places in Edgar Sewter.
- The RSC decided to approve by exception following no objections from the HTB.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

**Project:** Orwell Multi Academy Trust to increase the number of school places from 210 to 315 in Brooklands Primary School, **Babergh, Suffolk**.

**HTB discussion:**

- The Board considered the background to Orwell Multi Academy Trust's proposal to increase the number of school places in Brooklands Primary School.
- The RSC decided to approve by exception following no objections from the HTB.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne did not receive the papers and was not part of this discussion.

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



## Sponsor Application

Points discussed in relation to applications for sponsor application.

**Project:** Whether to approve The Emmanuel School Trust, **Waltham Forest**, to become a sponsor.

### **HTB discussion:**

- The HTB heard about the background of this application to become a sponsor including that this is linked to their application for a free school presumption and that a previous sponsor application was rejected due to lack of trust capacity.
- The Board raised questions about the evidence of impact with delivering school improvement to their other schools, especially as the 2019 results were well below average. The HTB also expressed further assurances were needed to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is included as part of their curriculum strategy.
- The RSC asserted that performance results were needed to give a full picture of progress of existing schools and suggested that the trust be linked up with a strong sponsor.

**RSC decision:** Decline.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Trust to be informed of RSC's decision. RSC office to link trust with a strong sponsor and pick up on development of curriculum.

## Trust Change

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

**Project:** Notley Green Primary School, Shalford Primary School, John Ray Junior School, **Braintree, Essex**, Cann Hall Primary School, **Tendring, Essex** to transfer from CHANGE Schools Partnership (EENEL RSC led) to The Compass Partnership of Schools (SESL RSC led).

### HTB discussion:

- The HTB heard the background of this voluntary transfer application, including that this was following the upcoming departure of the current CEO of CHANGE Schools Partnership and the decision of the trust board to join another trust.
- The Board acknowledged that other trusts were considered but the CHANGE Schools trust board decided on Compass due to the existing collaborative relationship, experience with schools in disadvantaged communities, and the strong school improvement offer.
- The HTB commented on the level of top slice applied by The Compass Partnership of Schools to academies within the MAT and wondered how this might impact on the improvement plans of the transferring schools. RSC EENEL agreed to speak with RSC SESL on this point.
- Overall, the RSC believed that this was a good match and decided to approve this application. The HTB fully supported the RSC's decision.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** Caroline Derbyshire did not receive the papers and was not part of this discussion.

**Further actions required:** Trust to be informed of RSC's decision. Will pick up with SESL lead on The Compass Partnership of Schools' top-slicing policy.

**Project:** University Technical College Norfolk, **Norwich, Norfolk** to transfer from Norfolk UTC (SAT) to Community Schools Trust (MAT).

**HTB discussion:**

- The HTB heard the background of this voluntary transfer application including that this SAT had ambitions to go from 'Good' to 'Outstanding' and were looking to join a suitable MAT.
- The Board acknowledged that other trusts were considered but Community Schools Trust was chosen due to its strong leadership team and their clear intention to bring a high excellence model and resources to the area.
- The HTB noted that the main risk was the geographical proximity of the trust and school but believed that the trust's commitment, and the fact that virtual working has been shown as effective, would be able to mitigate this.
- The Board and RSC questioned the expectations on how the Norfolk hub would take shape and how long this would take but were assured that this would be discussed in more detail with the trust.
- The RSC and HTB agreed that this would be a mutually beneficial match and the RSC decided to approve this application.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Trust to be informed of RSC's decision. RSC office to speak about expectations and timings of developing a Norfolk based hub.

## **Decisions taken between HTB meetings**

**Project:** OWN Trust to increase the number of school places from 480 to 630 and physically expand the building in Woodston Primary School, **Peterborough**.

**Update:**

- The trust sent in a retrospective significant change application to increase the capacity from 480 to 630 places and develop an expanded premises at the school.
- The RSC heard that this change was requested by the LA in 2017 as they identified a local basic need in the area and work on the expansion began before the school converted.
- The RSC also heard that there were no objections when consultation took place previously.
- ESFA have commented that the trust's financial position was stable, and that they had expressed no concerns.
- 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.

**Project:** Bellevue Place Education Trust to change the age from 4-11 to 3-11 to add a nursery school provision in Halley House School, **Hackney**.

**Update:**

- The trust sent in an application to open a nursery provision at the school from September 2021, therefore changing the age range from 4-11 years old, to 3-11 years old.
- The RSC heard that this change was in response to market research into parental demand for nursery provision in the local area.
- The RSC also heard that in the consultation the majority of responses were in favour and any queries were promptly followed up by the school. The LA is also supportive of this change.
- ESFA have commented that the trust's financial position was stable, and that they had expressed no concerns.
- The RSC acknowledged about the potential risk on trust capacity and limited immediate demand for places but noted that no other providers or the LA have made a case to oppose the opening of this new provision.
- 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.