



Department  
for Education

## Notes of Meeting: East of England and North East London Advisory Board

**Date of meeting – 24 February 2022**

### 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 Schools Commissioner (RSC) chair

- Sue Baldwin (RSC)

### Advisory Board (AB) members

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

### Apologies

- None

### DfE senior civil servants

- ESFA representative
- Alan Parnum (Deputy Director)

## **Representations received**

Representations were received for item 2.1, East London Science School, Newham, to transfer from East London Science School Trust (SAT), Newham, to Harris Federation (MAT), Croydon.

These representations were shared in advance of the meeting with all attendees and considered alongside their corresponding item.

## **General Discussion Points**

### **AB member reflections**

- The Note of Meeting for the January AB meeting were discussed and agreed.
- The board heard about forthcoming structural changes to the Department and that an AB announcement would be coming soon. The Board have been asked to extend their term until September.
- The RSC and Board took time for reflection on the 'Living with Covid' guidance released today.

## Trust Change

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

**Project:** East London Science School, **Newham**, to transfer from East London Science School Trust (SAT), **Newham**, to Harris Federation (MAT), **Croydon**.

### **AB discussion:**

- The AB heard about the background of this transfer. Currently a SAT based in Newham, opened in 2013, with a published inadequate judgment in December 2021.
- A TWN was issued in December, informing the Chair of Governors on the aim to move the school into a strong MAT to deliver rapid improvement. The DfE wanted to identify a trust who could maintain the scientific ethos and understand the challenges of the local context in Newham.
- A review of potential sponsor options was conducted, and it was concluded that the Harris Federation were the most suitable option due to the fact that they have the capacity and track record to drive fast school improvement and have SEND expertise. They also do not have any openers/transfers currently, so ELSS will be their key focus. They have also identified a Head Teacher with experience in the local authority who has a good understanding of the community and have experience with new builds and working across temporary sites.
- Both the RSC and AB were confident that the trust would be able to make sustainable and significant improvement and agreed Harris to be the right choice for Newham due to their strong drive to improve pupil outcomes. Board members noted that having a big partner like Harris will be beneficial to the other smaller Trusts in the area. The Board were also pleased to hear Harris' plan to engage with the local community.

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Project Lead to inform trusts of the RSC's decision.

## Trust Change

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

**Project:** Boudica Schools Trust (MAT), Norwich, Norfolk, to merge with The Yare Education Trust (MAT), Norwich, Norfolk.

### **AB discussion:**

- The RSC and AB members heard the background to this trust merger and how the two boards had agreed to voluntarily merge the two trusts, where Yare will close and merge with Boudica, joining under a new trust name which is in the process of being decided.
- The trust has already trialled collaboration through a shared central education team and have collaboratively provided school improvement support to other schools in Norfolk.
- Hemlington, a Yare school, received an RI judgement in October 2021. The trust believes this was because the school improvement efforts have yet to become embedded, and they have a detailed action plan.
- The RSC clarified she had a significant discussion with the CEO and is assured that this will be an effective move forward.
- AB members said this will create some difference in the landscape in the East and by creating another trust of this size could provide stronger leadership and greater capacity for school improvement for the area.
- A question was raised about their financial model and if it will change going forward. RSC noted that the trust will be completing a governance review, and we suggest they invite an SRMA to help them with their financial planning going forward to reimagine their model, as a voluntary suggestion. The ESFA representative confirmed they have been talking to both trusts, and if the proposal is approved, they have SRMA support lined up to go into both trusts ahead of the merger.

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne did not receive papers and was not involved in the discussion.

**Further actions required:** Project Lead to liaise with ESFS to provide a joint response to the trust when the decision is notified.

## Trust Change

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

**Project:** Breckland School, West Suffolk, Suffolk, to transfer from Sabres Educational Trust (SAT), West Suffolk, to Unity Schools Partnership (MAT), West Suffolk, Suffolk.

### **AB discussion:**

- The RSC and AB members heard the background to this trust merger. A Free school opened in September 2012. It was previously run by Sabres education trust. The school was judged inadequate in 2015, before moving to RI and then Good.
- The SAT wants to benefit from the support of a more established MAT. A number of the board members want to leave, and they believed USP would be a good fit. USP are also closely located to the school in West Suffolk, securing links for transitions and the trust's hub model.
- The application was declined 12 months ago around concerns about USP's capacity to take on other schools. Recent Ofsted monitoring inspections have provided evidence that leaders are taking effective action with stable leadership and effective safeguarding. Felixstowe Academy has now been judged RI and moved out of special measures.
- The new Head Teacher has benefitted from the formal SLA to access USP's central services – HR, governance, finance and education support from the Trust and its team.
- AB members acknowledged the evidence that the trust have capacity to support this school and are encouraged by the improvements at Felixstowe and the expansion of the central team. They've shown they can support the school through the SLA, and the trust has responded to Board feedback from when this project was first presented.

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** Tom Canning and Diane Rochford did not receive papers and was not involved in the discussion.

**Further actions required:** Project Lead to inform Trust of decision.

## Significant Change

Points discussed in relation to significant changes applications.

**Project:** Connected Learning Trust to increase the age range from 5-11 years old to 2-11 years old in Silver End Academy, Braintree, Essex, to add a nursery provision.

**AB discussion:**

- The DfE are working with the trust to strengthen their board, encouraging consideration of succession planning.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## Significant Change

Points discussed in relation to significant changes applications.

**Project:** Hornchurch Academy Trust to increase the age range from 4-7 years old to 2-7 years old in Scargill Infant School, Havering, to add a nursery provision.

**AB discussion:**

- The Board heard how the LA have been working alongside existing providers and have completed a full consultation with local nurseries.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## Decisions taken between AB meetings

List of decisions taken by RSC outside of AB meetings.

**Project:** Norlington School and Sixth Form to retrospectively increase the number of school places by 30.

### **Update:**

- Norlington School and Sixth Form is the only boys single sex school in Waltham Forest and received an Ofsted 'Good' judgement in Sept 18 through a short inspection. The school pupil admission numbers (PAN), originally 120, increased to 132 to accommodate local need for school places. The school has taken on two bulge classes over the past 2 years to meet local need and remains oversubscribed.
- As part of the Local Authority secondary places expansion programme, Norlington was asked to make the increase permanent. This would take the PAN to 162 students on a permanent basis.
- The school has built six new classrooms, games rooms, toilets and extended physical education facilities, including a gym due to purchasing ½ acre of land adjacent to the school 6 years ago. The project was funded entirely through Waltham Forest Borough place capacity growth fund.
- The RSC decided to approve this application but asked that the letter agreeing this should make reference to the SRMA that has been agreed.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

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