



Department  
for Education

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

**Date of meeting – 20 May 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)

## Representations received

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

## General Discussion Points

- The Note of Meeting for the April HTB meeting were discussed and agreed.
- The RSC and Board took time for reflections on future ways of working and the RSC's plans to host roundtable meetings with trusts on collaborative working and sharing best practice.

## Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

**Project:** Edwards Hall Primary School, **Leigh-on-Sea, Southend** – to convert and join Learning in Harmony Multi Academy Trust.

### HTB discussion:

- The HTB heard about the background of this voluntary conversion application including that this is a larger than average primary school and the strong existing working relationship between the trust and the school.
- The Board also noted that the shared ethos, the trust's approach to collaborative decision making, long standing presence in the area and experienced leadership team were all reasons that the school chose to join Learning in Harmony.
- The ESFA colleagues has not observed any financial or governance concerns in the school or trust and given the strong educational track record of the trust, the Board and RSC were confident that the trust would be able to drive up educational standards.
- Based on the reasons above the RSC fully approved the application and the HTB supported this decision.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** Diane Rochford did not receive the papers and was not part of this discussion.

**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:** Bedfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, **Woodbridge**, and Elmsett Church of England VC Primary School, **Ipswich, Suffolk** – to convert and join St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust.

**HTB discussion:**

- The HTB heard about the background of this voluntary conversion application including that both schools were under capacity of pupil roll and have strong rural and religious values.
- The Board noted that the schools recognised the benefits to joining an established diocesan multi-academy trust including having a shared ethos, increasing viability and allowing for shared accountability which should all provide support to the schools.
- The HTB expressed concerns on the trust's financial position and queried on whether there was evidence of school improvement within the trust's current sponsored academies improving since joining.
- The Board heard that the trust's finances will be subject to an SRMA visit from the ESFA, there was evidence of the sponsored academies improving as the RSC office have received a detailed action plan on school improvement and the trust were having collaborative strategic conversations.
- Based on these assurances the RSC decided to approve the application and the HTB supported this decision.

**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:** Whitehouse Community Primary School, **Ipswich, Suffolk** – to convert and join The Children’s Endeavour Trust.

**HTB discussion:**

- The HTB heard about the background of this voluntary conversion application including that the school’s leadership team has brought an upward trend in the school and believes that joining a strong multi-academy trust would be the best solution to keep improving educational standards.
- The Board noted that the trust would enable more formal collaborative relationships particularly as their current schools are in close geographical proximity to Whitehouse and would allow for the enhancement of a school hub in Ipswich.
- No concerns were expressed, and the RSC decided to approve the application with full support from the HTB.

**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 application(s).

**Project:** The Boxing Academy Trust to extend the age range to accommodate year 8 and year 9 pupils in The Boxing Academy AP Free School, **Hackney**.

**HTB discussion:**

- The Board discussed the background to The Boxing Academy Trust’s proposal to extend the age range by up to two years to accommodate years 8 and 9 to the existing KS4 provision.
- The HTB acknowledged that this was an Ofsted ‘outstanding’ standalone AP provision based in Hackney and this application came from recommendations from commissioners in the area and surrounding boroughs.
- The Board also heard that the finances were finely balanced, and the provision had plans to move to permanent premises in September 2023 which would allow for greater capacity.
- The HTB expressed no concerns and supported 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 Yare Education Trust to change the lower age limit from three to four years old, removing the nursery provision, and reducing the PAN in North Walsham Infant School and Nursery, **North Walsham, Norfolk**.

**HTB discussion:**

- The Board discussed the background to The Yare Education Trust's proposal to change the lower age limit from three to four years old, resulting in the closure of the nursery provision, and the reduction of PAN in North Walsham Infant School.
- The HTB acknowledged that the school shares its catchment with five other nursery settings which would be able to meet the required local need and that the ESFA confirmed that the PAN reduction had been approved prior to this meeting.
- The HTB expressed no concerns and supported 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:** KWEST Multi Academy Trust to add a Specialist Resource Base SEN unit in Greyfriars Academy, **King's Lynn, Norfolk**.

**HTB discussion:**

- The Board discussed the background to KWEST Multi Academy Trust's proposal to add a Specialist Resource Base SEN unit for 16 children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) in Greyfriars Academy.
- The HTB acknowledged that the school is in process of being transferred to another trust and both trusts supported this application. The Board also noted that the LA was fully supportive and were funding this as there was a demand of special school places for children with ASD in the area.
- The HTB expressed no concerns and supported 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.

**Project:** Beacon Multi Academy Trust Limited to extend the age range to accommodate year 8 and year 9 pupils in Beacon Business Innovation Hub, **Ilford, Redbridge**.

**HTB discussion:**

- The Board discussed the background to Beacon Multi Academy Trust's proposal to increase its age range from 14-19 to 12-19 to accommodate year 8 and 9 pupils in Beacon Business Innovation Hub.
- The HTB noted that the LA and local headteachers fully supported this application due to need of places in alternative provision in the area and would be funded by the trust.
- The HTB expressed no concerns and supported the RSC's decision to approve the proposal.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** Diane Rochford was NLE in 2018. Received papers and was part of discussion.

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

**Project:** Unity Schools Partnership to add a SEN unit in Woodhall Primary School, **Sudbury, Suffolk**.

**HTB discussion:**

- The Board considered the background to Unity Schools Partnership's proposal to create a communication and interaction SEN unit in Woodhall Primary School.
- The HTB acknowledged that this was part of the LA's SEND Sufficiency planning to meet the need for specialist SEND places.
- The HTB expressed no concerns and supported 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:** Hartismere Family of Schools Trust to take over the council run nursery on the site of Wood Loke Primary School, **Lowestoft, Suffolk**.

**HTB discussion:**

- The Board considered the background to Hartismere Family of Schools Trust's proposal to lower the age range in Woods Loke from 3-11 to 2-11 in order to take on a vacant nursery building located on the school's grounds.
- The HTB expressed no concerns and supported the RSC's decision to approve the proposal.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## Trust Changes

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

**Project:** The Deanes, **Benfleet**, Hadleigh Junior School, **Benfleet**, and Westborough Academy, **Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex**, to transfer from The Challenger Multi Academy Trust to South East Essex Academy Trust.

### HTB discussion:

- The HTB heard the background of the voluntary transfer application, including Challenger's trust board's plans to wind up the trust and having identified SEEAT as the best option due to their strong track record, strategic school improvement strategy and geographical proximity to the academies.
- The HTB expressed concerns that the transfer is dependent on the Treasury agreeing to Challenger's approach to settle their outstanding financial debts. The HTB heard that the risk assessment of the Treasury rejecting the trust's proposal to settle their debts was low.
- The HTB also asserted the need for an external review of leadership and governance to identify the impact of the change of CEO at SEEAT at the same time that these schools transfer into the trust.
- The RSC asserted that in order for this transfer to go through the incoming trust would need to adhere to conditions she established. This included the trust setting up an external governance review, bringing in a mentor for the new CEO and keeping the RSC team informed of the school improvement plans for each incoming school.
- The Board was content with this approach and had no objections. The RSC approved this application.

**RSC decision:** Approve with conditions - (1) the trust commissions an external governance review by Friday 22 July, (2) the trust identifies a mentor with trust leadership expertise for the incoming CEO by the start of the autumn term and (3) the trust updates the RSC on school improvement plans for the schools joining SEEAT by the start of the 2021/22 academic year.

**Conflicts:** Karen Kerridge received the papers but was not part of this discussion.

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



**Project:** St Mary's Church of England Junior School, **Norwich, Norfolk**, to transfer from St Mary's Church of England Junior School Trust to The Diocese of Norwich St Benet's Multi-Academy Trust (SAT to a MAT).

**HTB discussion:**

- The HTB heard the background of the voluntary transfer application, including that the two trusts have an existing working partnership and saw mutual benefits of joining together.
- There were initially concerns expressed about St Benet's capacity with a few inadequate academies recently joining the trust. The HTB heard assurances that the trust have brought in an experienced school improvement lead who has worked with these academies to make changes required to make sustained improvements in performance.
- The Board also acknowledged that the trust already have provided support to St Mary's and intended on using external sources to deliver the relevant school improvement needs.
- No further concerns were expressed and the HTB supported the RSC's decision to approve the transfer.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** Brian Conway did not receive the papers and was not part of this discussion.

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

**Project:** The Clara Grant Primary School, **Bow, Tower Hamlets**, to transfer from The Tower Trust to Boleyn Trust.

**HTB discussion:**

- The HTB heard the background of the voluntary transfer application, including that this was arising from the decision of the Tower trust to dissolve following the upcoming retirement of the CEO.
- The Board noted that Boleyn was a strong trust which had the capacity and capability to take on this school. There were initial concerns with the school being under a PFI contract which may cause delays, but the HTB received assurances that this would be resolved ahead of completion.
- No further concerns were expressed and the HTB supported the RSC's decision to approve the transfer.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** Tom Canning did not receive the papers and was not part of this discussion.

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

**Project:** Stepney Green Mathematics and Computing College, **Stepney, Tower Hamlets**, to transfer from The Tower Trust to Mulberry Schools Trust.

**HTB discussion:**

- The HTB heard the background of the voluntary transfer application, including that this was also arising from the decision of the Tower trust to dissolve following the upcoming retirement of the CEO.
- The Board noted that Mulberry had a well-recognised track record of producing high quality educational opportunities and would be best placed to fit the needs of this school. There were also initial concerns with this school being under a PFI contract which may cause delays, but the HTB received assurances that this would be resolved ahead of completion.
- No further concerns were expressed and the HTB fully endorsed the RSC's decision to approve the transfer.

**RSC decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None

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

### **List of projects listed on the published draft agenda, but were removed before the meeting**

List of projects that were on the published draft agenda but not discussed at the HTB meeting.

**Project:** Wac Arts College, Camden, and Ian Mikardo School, **Tower Hamlets**, to transfer from The T4 Trust (NWLSC RSC led) to Lime Trust (EENEL RSC led).

**Type of decision:** Trust Change

**Reason for why it was taken off agenda:** More information is needed before presenting the proposed transfer to the Headteacher Board.