



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

Date of meeting – 20 January 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)

Apologies

- Brian Conway (AB)

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

AB member reflections

- The Note of Meeting for the December AB meeting were discussed and agreed.
- The RSC and Board took time for reflections on the lifting of Plan B measures, the removal of mandatory wearing of face masks in schools, attendance levels and the impact of Covid on the quality of supply teaching, elected home education and limited resource for mental health intervention.

Converter Academy Order

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: William Read Primary School and Nursery, **Castle Point, Essex** – to convert and join Northwick Park Trust.

AB discussion:

- The AB heard about the background of this voluntary converter application including that the LA issued a Warning Notice in October 2019 due to previous concerns with the school's governance and appointed a strategic intervention board (SIB) to improve governance arrangements.
- The AB also heard that the school wish to join a multi-academy trust to ensure longer term viability as current school predictions show a fall in roll numbers over the next three years with no immediate signs of improving.
- Northwick Park Trust was chosen as the best fit for the school by the SIB due to existing working relationships between the trust and school, close geographical proximity and the trust's good track record of school improvement and outcomes in their current schools. The trust also has healthy reserves and are in a stable financial position.
- Based on the reasons above the RSC fully approved the application and the AB 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.

Trust Change

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

Project: The Everitt Academy, **East Suffolk**, to transfer from Catch22 Multi Academies Trust Limited (MAT), Islington, to SENDAT (MAT), **West Suffolk, Suffolk**.

AB discussion:

- The AB heard about the background of this transfer, including that Everitt Academy is a special school which was judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted in September 2019. Following the Ofsted judgement, the RSC issued a Termination Warning Notice in November 2019 to seek assurance that rapid and sustained improvement would be achieved.
- The school then had subsequent monitoring visits which outlined more issues and after several meetings with the trust the RSC decided to terminate the funding agreement and issue a Termination Notice in November 2021.
- A review of potential sponsor options was conducted, and it was concluded that SENDAT was the most suitable option due to the trust's experience, expertise and skills to improve standards for pupils with special educational needs, as well as the trust's direct approach and future plans to resolve identified issues.
- The RSC and AB were confident that the trust would be able to make sustainable and significant improvement, expressed no concerns and the RSC approved the application with full support from the AB.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: RSC office to inform trusts of the RSC's decision.

Significant Change

Points discussed in relation to significant changes applications.

Project: Astrum Multi Academy Trust to increase the number of school places from 148 to 169 at Newbridge School, **Redbridge**.

AB discussion:

- The AB heard about the request from Astrum Multi Academy Trust to increase the number of school places in Newbridge Special School. This is due to local demand for places in specialist education provision.
- The AB heard that there was an open and transparent consultation conducted by the trust which received nil responses and the LA is fully supportive of this change.
- The Board raised a question regarding staffing levels and capacity and whether this change will have an impact on the staffs' ability to deliver the best support consistently. The ESFA have had conversations with the trust and have been assured that the trust will make necessary adjustments and are receptive to receiving a visit from a School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA).
- The RSC and AB expressed no further concerns and the RSC decided to approve this application.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Trust to be informed of RSC's decision. ESFA colleagues to keep an eye on the trust's financial position, hold continued conversations and facilitate a SRMA visit.

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 AB meeting.

Project: Academies Enterprise Trust to change the age range from 11-18 to 11-16 in Maltings Academy, **Braintree**, so that the trust's sixth form provision in Braintree is centralised at New Rickstones Academy.

Type of decision: Significant Change.

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Further information is required before presenting the significant change application to the Advisory Board.