



Department
for Education

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

Date of meeting – 23 June 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

- Jonathan Duff (RSC)
-

Advisory Board (AB) members

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

DfE senior civil servants

- ESFA representative
- Alan Parnum (DfE Deputy Director)

Representations received

- Representations were received for item 2.5, significant change, whether Angel Road Junior School, **Norfolk**, should be allowed to move pupils from the Junior site to the Infant site (due to building issues), while omitting having to request a merger at this stage.

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 May AB meeting notes were discussed and agreed.
- The RSC gave an update on his recent visits, discussions on the Schools White Paper and confirmed the Department structural changes launching on 4th July.
- It was confirmed that following elections, the new board members will be publicly announced shortly and will commence their tenure in September.
- The board discussed issues around investment in school buildings and the tracking and monitoring of inadequate academies.

Converter Academy Order

Project: Whether Lyng Church of England Primary School, **Norfolk**, should be allowed to join the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust, **Norfolk**.

AB discussion:

- The board and RSC discussed the conversion of Lyng Church of England Primary School, to join the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust.
- The board heard that Lyng is a 'good' school and the latest inspection report stated that the leadership team has maintained the good quality of education since the last inspection and that there is a culture of high expectations across the school.
- The school would now like to join with their local diocesan MAT in order to work collaboratively with the other diocesan schools in their rural area and to ensure that the ethos and values of the school can be secured.
- The trust has conducted due diligence and would welcome this small school, which links to their values.
- Lyng is a smaller than average primary school in a rural location and would benefit from joining a MAT to access the shared Diocese of Norwich central services that offer economies of scale.
- DNEAT will be able to offer the school access to its school improvement team's assistance and Lyng will add capacity to the trust with its history of good school results.
- The board noted that while there were some minor concerns, being a diocesan school, there was no viable alternative.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: none

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform trust of the RSCs decision.

Converter Academy Order

Project: Whether Thorndon CEVC Primary, **Suffolk**, should be allowed to join All Saints Schools Trust, **Suffolk**.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Thorndon is a small rural primary school which was rated 'requires improvement' in 2019.
- The trust is a good fit in terms of its shared ethos and the move is fully supported by the diocese.
- The board agreed the move to a trust would support the school to improve, that the trust specialises in supporting small rural primary schools, and can bring stability, leadership, professional development, curriculum design, subject leader networks and school to school support to Thorndon. It is located so closely to other ASST schools that this is all deliverable locally.

RSC decision: Agree

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform the trust and school of the decision.

Converter Academy Order

Project: Whether St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, **Essex**, should be allowed to convert and join Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Trust **Essex**, part of the diocese of **Brentwood**.

AB discussion:

- The board heard St John Fisher would like to join Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Academy Multi Academy Trust in order to stabilise their leadership, work collaboratively with diocesan academies and to build school improvement capacity.
- The trust and diocese have been providing informal support already and now want to make this arrangement official.
- The Trust has provided evidence in the form of a school improvement plan to address school performance. The Diocese of Brentwood are also providing additional leadership support as needed.
- The Trust and Diocese have also stated that they plan to update the governance arrangements and the board confirmed they would like to see a review of the governance structure as a condition of agreeing the project.
- Board members raised concerns regarding the lack of alternative options and confirmed that this is a current issue with faith schools nationally.

RSC decision: Agreed with conditions

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform the trust of the decision. A trust, governance review and SRMA visit to be completed.

Converter Academy Order

Project: Whether Nene Gate School, **Peterborough**, should convert to become an academy and join Meridian Academy Trust, **Cambridgeshire**.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Nene Gate is a school for pupils with special educational needs.
- The school and trust have a longstanding relationship and have been working collaboratively to improve the lives of young people locally.
- The board heard that if approved, Nene Gate will be a partner school for The Harbour School and Martin Bacon Academy, and they will form a hub of support for Meridian mainstream schools.
- Board members were fully supportive of this conversion.

RSC decision: Agreed

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform the trust of the decision

Significant Change

Project: Whether Angel Road Junior School, **Norfolk**, should be allowed to move pupils from the Junior site to the Infant site (due to building issues), while omitting having to request a merger at this stage

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the trust wants to move the pupils from Angel Road Junior School to the Angel Road Infant School site, as the Junior School site is not currently safe to occupy.
- Based on expert reports, investigations and recent incidents, the trust has closed the site as it can no longer guarantee the safety of pupils, staff & visitors.
- The trust and school delivered an open consultation with stakeholders from Tuesday 3rd May to Friday 27th May 2022. A consultation page was created on the school's website. All stakeholders were informed of this website; however, no responses were received to the consultation. Norfolk County Council sent a letter of support for the proposal.
- The board agreed that whilst this is not the ideal solution, the children were at the heart of the decision and this needs to happen to enable the children to be able to attend school in September with DfE continuing to look at other options going forward.

RSC decision: Agreed

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform the trust of the decision

Significant Change

Project: Whether Saxmundham Primary School, **Suffolk**, should be allowed to lower their nursery age range from 4 to 3 years old.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the school wants to add a nursery to ensure the follow through of pupils into the school.
- Space has been identified within the school building which could be used as the nursery. There is also space for expansion within the school should the nursery grow.
- No objections were made, and all board members were fully supportive of this change.

RSC decision: Agreed

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform the trust of the decision

Significant Change

Project: Whether Heybridge Co-operative Academy, **Essex**, should move to a new build on another site, which **Essex** County Council (ECC) has proposed to provide and fund, as part of their SEND capital programme, to develop and enhance the PRU Estate across **Essex**.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Heybridge Co-operative Academy is an Alternative Provision academy operating in Essex who wish to move their secondary AP pupils from The Street (Maldon) to Church Street (Witham) by September 2024 and increase the building's physical capacity to accommodate up to 140 pupils.
- The current school site at HCA was constructed over 100 years ago, and was not intended to be used as an AP. The site therefore lacks many of the facilities now expected for AP provisions.
- Essex Council have agreed to pay for the construction and lead on delivering the build and have secured the required capital funding.
- The board agreed that the move would help learning and provide some economies of scale.

RSC decision: Agreed

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform the trust of the decision

Significant Change

Project: Riverside Bridge School (special provision), **Barking and Dagenham**, to provide an additional 90 places on-site in a phased change, starting from September 2022.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Riverside Bridge, a SEND specialist school, would like to expand by 90 places over the next 3 years, starting from September 2022.
- This application is fully supported by the LA who have identified a need for the additional places and will be meeting the capital costs and the home to school travel for pupils.
- The board agreed that due to the identified need and the funding in place this project should be agreed.

RSC decision: Agreed

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform the trust of the decision