



Notes of Meeting: East of England Advisory Board

Date of meeting – 22 September 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 has declared a conflict of interest.

Regional Director (RD) chair

- Jonathan Duff (RD)

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Lawrence Chapman (AB)
- Brian Conway (AB)
- Tim Coulson (AB)
- Mark Farmer (AB)
- Claire Flintoff (AB)
- Al Kingsley (AB)
- Sarah Skinner (AB)
- Josephine Valentine (AB)

DfE senior civil servants

- ESFA representative
- Ashish Vadher, Deputy Director (DD)

Representations received

- No representations were received for this meeting.

General discussion points

AB member feedback

- The July AB meeting notes were discussed and agreed.
- Attendees were given an update on the recent Ministerial changes, an update on provisional data publication and potential usage and recent Priority Education Investment Area Partnership Board meetings.
- AB members provided feedback on issues within the sector.
- As part of their introduction to their role, AB members were given a high-level presentation on the key contextual information for the East of England regional area.

Converter academy order

Project: Whether Millfield Primary School, **Norfolk**, should join Enrich Learning Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Millfield is a larger-than-average Primary School, which includes an Autism Spectrum Disorder Specialist Resource Base (SRB).
- Millfield is already collaborating with Enrich Learning on SEND provision and Millfield's Governing body voted unanimously to support the school joining Enrich Learning trust.
- RD agreed this was a good match but would like confirmation of the governance structure and assurance that the vacancy will be filled.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school/trust of the RD's decision and discuss governance structure and vacancy.

Sponsored

Project: Whether to approve the preferred sponsor for Wenlock CofE Junior School, Luton

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Wenlock CoE Junior School, Luton, is converting under a directive academy order following an inadequate Ofsted judgement (November 2021).
- The board discussed sponsorship capacity at the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust (DSAMAT).
- Board members also discussed more broadly the need for greater capacity amongst Church of England dioceses to meet demand across the eastern region.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

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

Trust change

Project: Whether Clarion Academy Trust and The Corvus Learning Trust, **Norfolk**, should merge to form a new trust.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the trusts have already been working together and entered into a strategic partnership in September 2021 when the Clarion CEO also became CEO of Corvus. The intention was that the two trusts would merge if the relationship worked well.
- The merger aims to increase capacity for school improvement and provide financial savings through economies of scale.
- Members and trustees of both existing trusts would form the new board with the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) at Corvus becoming the full time CFO across the merged trust.
- ESFA assured AB members that the trust's financial position would be kept under review and SRMA support had been offered

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Trust to be informed of RD's decision and condition. ESFA to commission SRMA support in consultation with the trust.

Significant change

Project: Whether Stalham High School, Synergy Multi Academy Trust, **Norfolk**, should establish a Specialist Resource Base for 20 pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Synergy MAT is proposing to open a twenty-place Autism Specialist Resource Base (SRB) at Stalham Academy from January 2023.
- The proposal is to locate the SRB in a building on land adjacent to the school with the LA covering capital and refurbishment costs.
- The board noted that there is a high demand for this provision in the area and it fits well into the current SRB set-up in Norfolk.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform the trust of the RD's decision.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

Project: Whether the Hewett Academy, Norfolk, can close its Sixth Form

Update:

- The RD considered a retrospective request to request official approval for closing The Hewett Academy's Sixth Form.
- The school has a high profile among the local community, and part of the original school buildings are locally listed.
- We have received confirmation from the Schools Rebuilding Programme team that the school will be re-built under the third phase of the programme.
- Inspiration Trust is retrospectively requesting this change as the reduced number of students on roll at the Hewett Academy, and those subsequently staying on for KS5 studies, made it no longer financially viable to staff a sixth form.
- There is little demand for the Hewett's sixth form spaces in the local area (with a local college and other sixth forms within a couple of miles), so continuing to offer places was adding an additional financial pressure on the school and the trust.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform the trust of the RD's decision.

Project: Whether Weasenham Church of England Primary Academy, **Norfolk**, should lower its age range from 4 to 2 to add a nursery to the school.

Update:

- Weasenham Primary Academy currently has a nursery on site which is run by a committee. The committee is struggling to recruit replacement members and has approached the trust about taking on the pre-school.
- Weasenham is a very small primary school with only 2 classes. Taking on the pre-school will ensure the feed into school and continuation of standards of the pupils. It will also ensure that local families have access to nursery provision.
- A consultation was run between 27 May and 1 July 2022. There was only one response, which was from the headteacher of a federated schools and was positive about the change.
- The nearest primary school with a nursery to Weasenham is 4 miles away.
- The LA has expressed support for the change provided it is financially viable.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform the trust of the RD's decision.

Project: Retrospective significant change application from Thomas Deacon Education Trust (TDET) to change the age range at Gladstone Primary Academy (GPA), **Peterborough**, from 4-11 to 2-11 to include pre-school provision.

Update:

- The change will allow for a EYFS unit to be established at GPA, comprising the nursery and reception. This will lead to an easier transition to reception and allow the academy to work with families whilst pupils are in nursery, which will contribute to improving outcomes.
- TDET has already been running the nursery on the GPA site since January 2019, with no reported issues.
- The ESFA have judged that, as long as the nursery remains financially viable, it is unlikely that the change will have a negative impact on overall Trust finances.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform the trust of the RD's decision.