



Notes of Meeting: East of England Advisory Board

Date of meeting – 15 December 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 Director (RD) chair

- Jonathan Duff (RD)

Advisory Board (AB) members

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

DfE senior civil servants

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

Representations received

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

Converter Academy Order

Project: Whether Husborne Crawley Lower School, **Central Bedfordshire**, should join Kingsbridge Education Trust, **Milton Keynes**.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Husborne Crawley Lower School proposed to join the Kingsbridge Education Trust based on aligned values, convenient geographical location, and to share resources and strategies to improve its provision of education.
- The board heard that Kingsbridge Education Trust plans to expand within Central Bedfordshire, with Husborne Crawley as one of its potential schools to convert.
- The board highlighted that financial burdens of the school may be offset by the Trust.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school of the Regional Director's decision and request a further assessment of the financial forecast on transfer and the Trust should submit plans detailing how it intends to deal with any deficit.

Trust Change

Project: Whether Vandyke Upper School and Gilbert Inglefield Academy, **Central Bedfordshire**, should establish a Multi-Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board heard Vandyke Upper School and Gilbert Inglefield Academy propose to establish a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) due to close geographical proximity, sharing of staff, services, and financial resources.
- The board heard that Gilbert Inglefield would benefit from joining Vandyke Upper School to improve its performance.
- The board discussed issues around financial forecast, strategy, and the MAT's potential to expand.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the Trust of the Regional Director's decision and ask the Trust to submit details of its school improvement model and strategy, a 3-year MAT budget plan, and a trust growth plan. In addition, the trust should confirm there are no paid employees on the board of trustees and accept a School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) visit.

Converter Academy Orders

Project: Whether Little Thetford Church of England Primary School, **Cambridgeshire**, should join the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust (DEMAT), **Cambridgeshire**.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Little Thetford Church of England Primary School proposed to join the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust (DEMAT) to share centralised resources, infrastructure, and work collaboratively due to the Trust's experience in working with similar minded schools.
- Little Thetford is a small rural school and intends to access DEMAT's large structure of curriculum model, financial security, and other resources to develop the quality of education for pupils.
- The board felt that this converter project would be a positive development for DEMAT.
- The board members asked that for any future DEMAT growth proposals they would need to see further information about the Trust's finances to fully understand capacity for sustainable growth.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the Trust of the Regional Director's decision and to work with the Diocese on options for their schools to join MATs and to invite Diocese Directors of Education to a future Advisory Board meeting to discuss how they are doing that.

Significant Change

Project: Whether Watton Junior School in Corvus Education Trust, **Norfolk**, can add a Specialist Resource Base (SRB).

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Watton Junior School in Corvus Education Trust wishes to add a specialist resource base as part of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) strategy, to support more vulnerable learners.
- The board heard that this project intended to ensure that the individual needs of pupils are met locally, in order for them to progress effectively.
- The board members discussed issues around the Corvus Education Trust governance, financial reporting, and capacity and wanted further details.

RD decision: Deferred

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to ask the Trust to provide assurance about these points and RD to consider outside of the meeting and report decision to a future AB.

Significant Change

Project: Whether Acle Academy and Alderman Peel High School in The Wensum Trust, **Norfolk**, should have a Specialist Resource Base.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Acle Academy and Alderman Peel High School in The Wensum Trust applied to have a specialist resource base to provide support in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) for more vulnerable learners, particularly to allow pupils with autism to study in mainstream placements.
- Norfolk County Council has committed funding for this project.
- The board raised no significant concerns and have agreed to approve this project.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: For Delivery Officer to inform the school of the Regional Director's decision.

Significant Change

Project: Whether Cromer Academy, The Hewett Academy and The Thetford Academy in Inspiration Trust, **Norfolk**, should expand its Specialist Resource Base (SRB).

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Cromer Academy, The Hewett Academy and The Thetford Academy of Inspiration Trust wish to expand their SRBs to provide additional Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) support to more of their most vulnerable pupils.
- The board members discussed the excess physical capacity at the Hewett Academy and were assured of Inspiration Trust's strong capacity to make these changes a success.
- The board acknowledged the strength of this proposal and therefore approved.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school of the Regional Director's decision.

Trust Change

Project: Whether Queensway Infant Academy and Nursery, **Norfolk**, should transfer from Eastern Multi-Academy Trust, **Norfolk**, to Inspiration Trust, **Norfolk**.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Queensway Infant Academy and Nursery proposes to transfer from Eastern Multi-Academy Trust to Inspiration Trust, as its junior school, Diamond Academy has already done so, and it is logical for the infant school to follow suit and avoid splitting into separate trusts.
- The board asked about the school's capacity to deal with the special resource base expansion, staff retention, and internal conflicts regarding this transfer, but were assured of the project plan.
- The RD and board appreciated EMAT's support and cooperation with this project.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school of the Regional Director's decision.

Significant Change

Project: Whether Aspire Learning Trust (Whittlesey), **Peterborough**, should expand Sir Harry Smith Community College, **Peterborough**, from 6FE to 8FE.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the Aspire Learning Trust (Whittlesey) proposed to expand Sir Harry Smith Community College to accommodate more pupils of secondary age.
- The board agreed that the expansion might help the school retain its post 16 students who may otherwise move to neighbouring regions. The Local Authority fully supports the expansion.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform trust of Regional Director's decision