



Notes of Meeting: East of England

Date of meeting – 26 January 2023

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)
- Lawrence Chapman (AB)
- Sarah Skinner (AB)

Apologies

- 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.

General Discussion Points

- The board discussed the potential effects of the teacher, railway, and civil service strikes on the 1st of February.
- The RD outlined the government white paper ambitions for schools.
- The RD updated on the roll out of TCAF (Trust Capacity Fund) applications.
- The board members enquired on government plans to improve declining schools, teacher supply and recruitment, and additional support.

Trust Change

Project: To consider trusts for Littleport & East Cambridge Academy, Cambridgeshire, to join.

AB discussion:

- The board considered the need to transfer Littleport & East Cambridge Academy (LECA) from The Active Learning Trust to another trust following Ofsted's judgement of the school as Inadequate.
- The board considered potential sponsor options using a range of information including geography, capacity, track record, strategic trust growth, and diversity of provision locally.

RD decision: Approved (Academy should transfer)

Conflicts: Tim Coulson

Further actions required: Regional Director to decide on the preferred sponsor option. Delivery officer to inform the school of the decision and name the preferred sponsor on the next Advisory Board agenda for further discussion.

Trust Change

Project: Whether Colchester Royal Grammar School, Essex, should transfer to a Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board heard the proposal to transfer CRGS to a multi-academy trust, following the school's Ofsted inadequate judgement and to strengthen governance.
- The board heard that the proposed MAT would have aligned ethos, strong governance, and financial capacity to support the school.

RD decision: Approved (Academy should transfer)

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school of the decision and name the preferred MAT on the next Advisory Board agenda for further discussion.

Significant Change

Project: Whether Tilbury Pioneer Academy, Essex, should be able to increase its Published Admissions Number (PAN) from 2 to 3 form of entry.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the proposal by Tilbury Pioneer Academy to increase its PAN from 2-3 FE, with the understanding that the Gateway Learning Community has been asked by Thurrock LA to take on the additional capacity. The LA have agreed to meet the capital costs involved in the expansion.
- The board were reassured that parents have been well-informed on the proposed changes.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school of the outcome.

Significant Change

Project: Whether White Bridge Primary School, Essex, should change its age-range from 4-11 to 3-11, to include a nursery provision.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that White Bridge Primary School proposed to increase its age-range, to include a nursery provision, and recognised the need for the nursery in the area.
- The board raised concerns over pupil outcomes at the school and more widely about the trust following a recent inadequate judgement at another of its schools.

RD decision: Deferred

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school of the outcome, monitor academic performance of the school, and revisit the school improvement plan to enable the case to be reconsidered for a 2024 opening. ESFA to offer SRMA expertise to assess the financial plan for the early years age group.

Free School Presumption Sponsor Approval

Project: To consider sponsorship of a new Communication and Autism Spectrum Disorder Primary School in Potters Bar, Hertfordshire.

AB discussion:

- The board considered the local authority's recommendation for sponsorship of the new free school.
- The board acknowledged the need for the new provision to be provided by the free school.
- The board requested additional information on the MAT governance structure and the trust's financial position, to aid consideration of strength and capacity in the trust.

RD decision: Deferred

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the local authority of the outcome.

Trust Change

Project: Whether to transfer Albany pupil referral unit (PRU), Suffolk, to Raedwald Trust, Suffolk.

AB discussion:

- The board heard the proposal to transfer Albany PRU to Raedwald Trust when the Believe Engage Succeed Trust (BEST) closes.
- The board felt confident that Raedwald Trust will be able to strengthen Albany PRU.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform Albany and trust of the outcome.

Trust Change

Project: Whether to transfer Riverwalk and Warren Special Schools, Suffolk, to Consortium MAT, Suffolk.

AB discussion:

- The board heard the proposal to transfer Riverwalk and Warren Special Schools, to the Consortium MAT when BEST closes.
- The board have suggested that if Consortium Trust were to apply for TCAF, they would like to see the development of SEND expertise.
- The board suggested that Consortium Trust may have greater resources to support the schools in curriculum and leadership.
- The board recommends the Consortium Trust to strengthen its board of trustees with specialist education experience and increase specialist training for teachers.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school and trust of the outcome. Delivery officers to monitor Consortium Trust's school improvement, finances, governance, and SEND provision.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

Project: Benyon Primary School, Catalyst Academies Trust, Thurrock, Significant Change.

Decision type: Significant Change – to expand the physical capacity from 1 form entry to 2 forms of entry, to amend its current catchment area and increase its PAN from 30 to 60

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school and trust of the outcome.

Project: Mountnessing CofE Primary School, Mid Essex Anglican Academy Trust, Essex, Significant Change.

Decision type: Significant Change - to physically expand the school to permanently increase the PAN from 105 to 210.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school and the Trust of the outcome.

Project: Forest Academy, Single Academy Trust, Suffolk, Retrospective Significant Change.

Decision type: Significant Change - To approve retrospectively plans to build an expansion in 2017 to increase their number of places from 315 to 420 and become a 2-form entry school.

RD decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school of the outcome.

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