

## Durham Diocesan MAT Stakeholder Consultation Meetings Briefing Note

### Overview

The purpose of academy consultation is to engage with the school's stakeholders on why their school is considering academy status, what academy status means for their school, and what will/will not change. It is an opportunity for stakeholders to ask questions, make comments on the proposal and share their views. Ultimately, academy conversion is the decision of the Governing Body and as such, consultation is not about seeking a mandate from stakeholders, rather identifying if there is significant objection to the Governing Body's proposal.

### Consultation Meetings

We recommend that the following meetings are arranged and attended by the Governing Body of the school. We will facilitate these meetings and representatives will be present on the day to support the school leadership team and Governing Body. Quite often, stakeholders will ask a number of questions about the Trust and senior representatives will be on hand to answer these.

NB a school may also choose to have a school council/pupil meeting to discuss the proposals in simple terms and to enable

### Trade Unions

#### 2.30pm

**Attendees:** All Trade Unions with members at the school will be invited. The number of attendees varies.

**School Representatives:** Headteacher

**Diocese Representatives:** DDE/Assistant DDE

**Arrangements:** An agenda will be distributed in advance. It would be preferable to hold this meeting in a smaller (meeting or class) room if possible.

### Common Questions

- There will be comments on the national position and political agenda.
- They may comment on the purpose of 'consultation'
- Will the academy contribute to facilities time?
- They may well ask if this is a 'forced' conversion.
- Why are the Governing Body going forward with this?
- What support do the Diocese currently give the school?
- Will there be any changes in terms and conditions for staff?
- Will there be different contracts for staff who begin employment after conversion i.e. two-tier workforce?
- How do staff feel about the proposed conversion?
- What is the proposed conversion date?
- Will you continue to honour national, regional and local agreements for support and teaching staff?
- Comment may be made that the school will be safer staying with the LA and this will be communicated to their members in the school.

**NB:** The Diocese reps will field any questions relating to the employment conditions of staff post-conversion and also re TUPE.

### Staff

#### 3.45 pm

**Attendees:** Trade union representatives as above plus members of staff

**School Representatives:** Headteacher

**DDAT Representatives:** DDE/Assistant DDE

**Arrangements:** As per usual staff meetings. Introductions made to DDE representatives. Introduction by Headteacher as to current position then open up for questions. Confirm Trade Union representatives have been asked to attend and we have met with them prior to staff meeting.

### **Common Questions**

- How will the academy conversion affect pensions / statutory entitlements / terms and conditions?
- What happens if staff don't want to work at an academy and don't wish to transfer?
- How will this affect my job e.g. CPD, PPA etc?
- Will continuous service be affected?
- Who will provide HR support when we are an academy?
- Will we still have access to Trade Union support?
- Will conversion have an effect on our pay arrangements?
- Will the Governing Body still make decisions?
- What happens if MAT fails?

### **Community / Parent and Carer Meeting**

**5.30pm**

**Attendees:** Likely to be parents and possibly members of the community.

**School Representatives:** Headteacher, Chair of Governors, additional Governors as required.

**Diocese Representatives:** DDE/Assistant DDE

**Arrangements:** Tea and coffee if possible. Approach based on how many attendees arrive. If a large number, would recommend arranging the room in a audience/speaker way with school representatives and DDE at the front. Headteacher to welcome attendees and give quick introduction as to why the school is considering joining the MAT. Diocese reps would then give a short introduction to the Trust vision and how joining will impact this school, then open for questions.

If there are between 8 and 15 attendees, a round circle discussion would be advised with a quick intro as above and then open up for comments and questions.

Less than 8 attendees, some informal discussions and just an opportunity for attendees to make their feelings known and ask questions as the above approaches may be too formal and intimidating for a smaller number.

### **Common Questions**

- Will there be any changes to school holidays / day / uniform / staff?
- What difference will being an academy make? Specifically, what will the MAT bring?
- Will the school be distracted by the conversion process / business side of being an academy (post-conversion)?
- What happens if the Government changes its mind and decides schools should stay with LA?
- What happens if there is a change of Government and the school is then required to convert back to LA?
- Will admissions change?
- Will there be more exclusions (as seen in some academies)?
- Will support for SEN pupils change?
- What evidence is there that shows being an academy will be positive for the school?
- What happens if we want the school to stay as it is?
- What changes will there be for children / parents / community / staff?
- Will the school be better off financially as an academy?

- What will be the impact on teachers? Will there be unrealistic expectations on teaching staff and workloads?