

## **Dales Academies Trust (DAT): Stakeholder consultation**

### **Parents, Carers and Community Members**

Below are the specific queries raised at all other parent/carers and community consultation meetings. Where questions were identical or similar we have combined the questions to provide one answer.

#### **South Otterington, - Parents Questions, 6.7.17**

**Question:** If any funding is left from the set up/conversion grants how will this be spent?

**Answer:** This will be determined by the Headteachers and CEO. It could be off set against year 1 costs for set up and therefore reduces the percentage top slice or it could be re-distributed to the schools or used for school improvement activities across the Trust.

**Question:** Why risk academy status now. As an outstanding school can't we wait 2 or 3 years?

**Answer:** We could wait however, we feel now is the right time. If we wait we won't have the opportunities we do now to help inform the setup, propose Trustees etc. It could also be that the Trust would not be open to taking new schools in 2 or 3 years if it has reached capacity and we do not want to be in a position where there is limited or no choice.

**Question:** What have we learnt from other CofE MAT's?

**Answer:** Currently we are in a relatively unique position of having two diocese represented within the MAT. We are working alongside Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust (BDAT) who are an established and growing MAT. BDAT are providing leadership, financial and procurement expertise to help inform our emerging plans.

**Question:** What is the role of Swaledale Alliance?

**Answer:** The schools who are currently part of the Alliance will remain so even if they are academies. The Alliance is now very large and has a specific focus around school improvement which is invaluable to school leaders. It doesn't however deliver the volume of what we need when we need it and the structures are not as formal as what they would be in a MAT.

Question: Is more funding available to support the need for additional classroom space?

Answer: We will have access to capital funding within our annual grants and also as a Trust we will be able to bid for condition improvement funds which can support such things as improving building condition and possible expansion to support growth and/or lack of space. This is a competitive process.

Comment: Concerns were raised about the quality of communication regarding academisation and whether the process was thought through and robust.

Response: This is something governors have been researching and considering for some time and we wanted to be able to share some robust proposals as far as possible at this stage. We appreciate that we did not arrange a specific parents meeting for the school at the start of the process however, we responded quickly to requests by putting this meeting on this evening.

Question: Will the new CEO communicate with the schools?

Answer: Yes absolutely. Damian takes up post in September and will visit each of the schools and arrange to meet with parents too.

Question: I understand governors' roles in the decision making what do staff think?

Answer: (answer was provided by two staff members present) Once staff were aware of the detail behind the proposals and had clarity provided about their own personal terms and conditions they are very excited by the opportunities academy status can bring. The Church values and ethos are key, this proposal protects and strengthens that, plus also the opportunity to work with other colleagues is an exciting one.

Question: What services will stay with NYCC?

Answer: We are currently analysing what services all schools currently purchase from NYCC and it varies across the piece. In the main we envisage we will stick with many of their services particularly if it provides good quality and is best value. We may be able to buy collectively some of the services which may reduce costs and this is to be determined in the coming weeks. A recommendation has also been made to move payroll services from NYCC where we have had some quality issues within the schools.

Question: Why do the timescales seem to be so quick for the MAT set up?

Answer: It hasn't been quick and a lot of work and time has been incurred already. The 1<sup>st</sup> November is a realistic timeframe and one which we believe is achievable. Schools can join the MAT on a 1<sup>st</sup> of a month and whilst South Otterington is proposed to go in November should it take a month or two longer that is not a problem.

Question: Is there a difference in funding per pupil for academies?

Answer: No, per pupil funding is the same as it is now as a maintained school.

Question: Will we still get pupil premium funding?

Answer: Yes, pupil premium funding follows the child and is the same amount per pupil as is now.

Question: At what point can we not go back on our decision?

Answer: At the point the funding agreement and commercial transfer agreement are signed. If converting in November this would be the beginning of October.

Question: Will there be more money in the MAT? EG, if 12 schools save £30k on services does that come back in to the schools? Would an underperforming school get more?

Answer: We would hope to secure best value and efficiencies particularly in back office services so we can invest further in the classroom. If funding is saved this will mean more money in our budgets to spend on teaching and learning activities/resources. An underperforming school doesn't normally get any more money than another school and in some cases, pays more to central costs.

Question: Can the MAT divert money from our school to another within the MAT?

Answer: Ultimately yes it can but this would require agreement of others within the MAT if such a need arose.

Question: How were members of the Board chosen?

Answer: The Church agrees the model legal documentation at a national level and this includes the governance model. The Articles of Association state the number of

members and that they will be representative of the two diocese. All five individuals were nominated by Leeds and York Diocese respectively and agreed to fulfil the role as Members for DAT.

Question: Have we approached other local schools about possibly joining our MAT?

Answer: Yes, we have. Information has been circulated to schools (Church of England and non-faith based schools).

Question: Will there be more responsibility on the outstanding schools to support those who need help?

Answer: There will be a collective responsibility amongst the schools and that was one of the initial drivers for exploring academy status. The proposed MAT has 3 outstanding schools within it and 8 Good schools. We will determine needs and priorities across all of the schools and look at what support can be provided, by whom and when.

Question: Will staff be expected to move around?

Answer: No. Staff have contracts to work in a specific school and that will continue to be the case. Going forward we may decide to appoint to some roles jointly who may work across a group of schools but this would be made clear at a recruitment stage.

Question: Down the line if we needed to cost save could we find ourselves with no Headteacher but an Executive Head?

Answer: We would hope not particularly as you have a new Head starting in September.

Question: How many primaries in the MAT feed in to their local secondary schools?

Answer: We are unsure of the answer and will endeavour to capture the detail asked and share in due course.

Question: Will there be another meeting/update in September?

Answer: If parents will find that useful then governors would be happy to hold another meeting to provide an update.

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