



Stakeholder Consultation Response Summary

MARCH 2018





Alumnis Multi Academy Trust proposal - summary of consultation responses

The consultation programme on the Alumnis MAT proposal concluded on Friday 23 February 2018. Separate meetings were held for staff and parents of all schools involved. The meetings were led by the Head Teacher of each school and senior leaders from all schools attended. There was also a public meeting. Notes were taken at all the meetings. There was also an email address to which comments could be sent. There was a separate meeting for staff and their union representatives on contractual matters. These are covered in a separate note.

Speakers at the meetings raised a number of issues which were addressed by the leadership team, and very similar questions were brought up in the written submissions. The following is a summary of the main themes and the responses provided.

Implications for the distinctiveness of the two types of school of having a MAT with both Church and community schools

One of the founding principles of the MAT is that each school should retain its own distinctiveness within its local community and its character as a church or community school. Each school will have an Ethos Committee to ensure this is maintained but working within a framework of common principles. This has worked well within the South West Schools Federation which already has both community and church schools. The experience of the SWSF schools, and those within the wider North Devon Teaching School Alliance is that working together has already brought different strengths and perspectives that all the schools find valuable.

Implications of having a geographically dispersed group of schools

Joint working between schools is essential to improving standards, and is a challenge for schools in rural communities however this is organised. The experience of the SWSF schools, and the teaching school alliance, over the last five years has been that the benefits of working together strongly outweigh any problems caused by distance. However, in thinking about the MAT's future growth, we will look at the feasibility of developing more local geographical clusters, and of using technology-driven collaboration to facilitate joint working.

Implications for children with special needs

As part of a MAT, each school will have access to a greater diversity of skills and resources than any one school could provide alone. This will make us better able to support the learning of all pupils, including those with special needs.

Reasons for favouring a MAT over alternative structures such as a federation

A MAT structure provides greater opportunities for the way in which school to school support is delivered. For example it would not be possible for the current arrangements for supporting Clinton to continue under a federation, because Clinton is required to become an academy with an external sponsor. A MAT can become a sponsor whereas a federation could not.



Resource implications of the MAT for individual schools

Schools in a MAT are funded according to the same formula as other maintained schools, with a small addition to pay for services which would otherwise be covered paid for by the local authority. However there are opportunities available to MATs to bid for available funding that are not available to local authority schools. There should also be opportunities in a MAT to make efficiency savings by providing some facilities and services in common. The Board of the MAT will be responsible for deciding the allocation of funding to individual schools. The directors have the responsibility to ensure that each school is treated fairly on the basis of their individual school funding allocation.

Ownership of land and buildings

The land and buildings of the Church schools will continue to be owned by the existing trustees. The MAT will have no power to dispose of any such property without the agreement of the trustees.

Leadership and governance of individual schools

It is expected that a new headteacher will be appointed to St Helen's (as the current head will become Chief Executive of the MAT) and a new joint head of school appointed to Clinton and Dolton. The three SWSF schools are expected to retain their existing head teachers.

The MAT is keen to ensure that each community is strongly represented in the governance of its local school. It is therefore intended that larger schools will have their own Local Governing Board and smaller schools will have a joint LGB. The timescale for implementing these arrangements will depend on local recruitment and training needs.

Viability of individual schools

One of the founding principles of the MAT is that schools are central to their local communities, and a key objective is ensuring local schools are sustainable. This means they need to work within a formal collaborative structure which the MAT provides. For very small schools especially, the best guarantee of their viability is the quality of education they provide, so that local parents choose to send their children there. With its focus in improving the quality of teaching and learning across all the schools the MAT is confident about the future of all its schools.

Future growth of the MAT

One of the important roles for a new MAT is to provide school to school support not only within its initial grouping but more widely across its community. In some cases this will involve new schools joining the MAT. Which schools join, and when, is ultimately a matter for the directors. For example, they will want to consider the balance between the needs of schools requiring more support with the need to grow capability by including schools which are already doing well and the desirability of creating closer geographic clusters to make it easier for schools to work together. The MAT currently has an open mind for the future participation of secondary schools, special schools and free schools.