



'Enabling every child to fulfil his/her potential in a nurturing Christian environment.'

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION REPORT

5th May 2020



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The consultation process on academy status for Utkinton St Paul's CE Primary School commenced in November 2019, when the IEB made its intentions clear that they would seek to join a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) with the belief that this would provide the strongest basis for stability and progress in the longer term. All stakeholders were invited to a meeting with the IEB and North West Academies Trust (NWAT) to seek the views of parents/ carers, school staff and local Church representatives. Information about NWAT & academisation was provided at this meeting as well as FAQ's being distributed and published on the school website. The school community were given an opportunity to send in written questions and comments to the IEB throughout the period of consultation.

Following consultation, due diligence took place, and in the case of NWAT, it was concluded by them that this was not the right time for Utkinton St Paul's to join their MAT.

The IEB has made it clear from the outset that there were always two MATs that were being considered as potential partners. Therefore, the IEB decided at this time to approach Chester Diocesan Academies Trust (CDAT). CDAT is a multi-academy trust formed by the Diocese of Chester as an option to schools within the Diocese considering the Academy model.

CDAT was established by the Diocese of Chester as a MAT for Church of England schools in the Diocese. An eighth primary school joined the Trust recently (Little Bollington Church of England Primary in Cheshire East). The IEB is confident joining CDAT will strengthen capacity at Utkinton and provide a secure base from which the school will continue to improve and prosper.

As CDAT was included in the consultation on the original proposal, the IEB have decided to seek additional feedback only through an extended consultation based solely on the proposal to join CDAT.

This report has been prepared for the IEB of Utkinton St Paul's CofE Primary School to gather all feedback received during the extension period to that of the more substantial consultation that was previously completed. This extension was put in place to ensure that there was an opportunity for all stakeholders to ask any further questions about academy status and/or about CDAT.

The Headteacher and IEB of St Paul's CofE Primary School have led the process with representatives from the school providing clear information (Appendix A) detailing the implications of conversion through the production of a consultation Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document with attached questionnaire, and an online feedback form (Appendix B) which closed at midday on Monday 4th May 2020..



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There has been very little by way of response with three feedback forms received, with two questions/ comments:

Question / Comment 1: I would like an honest answer to the question: Why did NWAT decide not to proceed with Utkinton St Pauls joining their trust?

Question / Comment 2: Is it possible to clarify the reasons that the partnership with the NWAT is now not going ahead? The NWAT board showed such interest, taking the time out to visit the school for a meeting with staff, parents and taking the time to look through the school's finances. This partnership with this academy had a lot of potential for staff to progress and share training as we did during our partnership with Huxley Primary School. Will we share training, roles and subject leaderships with the other schools within CDAT? Will staff be expected to travel to other schools within the academy on a regular basis? I am looking forward to working for the Chester Diocesan Academies Trust (CDAT) and it is encouraging that they share the same ethos and values as Utkinton. With their support hopefully the school can move forward gaining popularity in the local area, stability and opening a much needed nursery facility. Thank You

The IEB respects the decision made by NWAT, and as detailed by the IEB chair in his letter to parents the IEB acknowledge the courteous and professional manner in which they have conducted the discussions. The IEB takes the view that the best interests of the school will be served by joining a larger organisation. Therefore, as detailed in the original consultation process by the IEB, it concluded that in the event of not (for whatever reason) joining the NWAT, the IEB would make an application to join CDAT (Chester Diocesan Academies Trust).

The point the IEB wishes to emphasise that it remains its intent and expectation that the school will be part of CDAT's Multi Academy Trust (MAT) this year, although because of COVID -19 the Department for Education has put on hold consideration of all new applications for the time being. The IEB will be working closely with CDAT meanwhile so that when the academy conversion process is completed the transition to the new structure will be as smooth and seamless as possible. The Trust Chief Executive now attends our IEB meetings.

CDAT Support for Staff: CDAT's schools have worked together this year to identify common needs – things like support for SEND, Early Years and science – and we have then built a CPD package for teaching assistants and teachers around these areas. We have a separate programme for school business managers, and support school leaders through cluster meetings and leadership training. Schools also get free access to the Diocese's CPD programme. We try to cover staff CPD needs as well as we can, but we still encourage schools



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to work in established clusters or to access external CPD if it is needed. Schools are also encouraged to work together to share ideas, use each other's strengths, presenting the opportunity for staff to move between schools should they want to, but only if they want to. Some will want to, some will not.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Although the response rate to this consultation has been very limited, no issues have been raised to indicate or suggest opposition to the proposal, or otherwise cause the IEB concern.

In conclusion, it is recommended that the school and CDAT build upon the support of parents/carers, staff and pupils shown throughout the consultation period by involving these groups of stakeholders in the development of the school as an academy.

CDAT and the IEB will continue to engage with staff and trade union representatives throughout the academy conversion process, which they will now seek to progress as speedily as possible.