

## **Waterloo Primary School Academy Conversion Consultation Questions & Answers**

### **PARENT/CARER/COMMUNITY MEETING, 28TH JUNE 2023, 5.00PM**

COMMENT: From everything said today, it seems like a no brainer. It will strengthen communities and open up opportunities.

QUESTION: Are other schools likely to join in the future?

ANSWER: Community schools could be approached. All current schools have good/outstanding OFSTED ratings and are not being forced to join. The MAT will start with 6 schools for now, and they will be joining together. 10 schools is the viable amount, but this can depend on the size of schools, as some of them could be large schools. We all have a growth strategy when we join the MAT.

QUESTION: How big would the back office be?

ANSWER: The schools within the MAT will decide collectively what functions they would like to centralise which are likely to be back office functions and school improvement. They will then contribute an agreed 'top slice' portion of their budget towards centralised services (currently there is a top-slice by the Local Authority for core services instead). A 'scheme of delegation' will be developed by the schools within the MAT how the remainder of the budget will be managed. The principle of subsidiarity will apply meaning decision making will remain within individual schools as much as possible within a local governing body arrangement.

QUESTION: What if Chesterfield High School decides not to convert?

ANSWER: Chesterfield High School is very much a driving force for this to happen as they are a SAT that wants to grow.

### **PARENTS/ CARERS FEEDBACK RECEIVED THROUGH FEEDBACK FORM OR EMAIL**

COMMENT: Well presented, faith in Mrs Baldwin for the proposal

COMMENT: This will be an excellent move for the school, and its community

QUESTION: Will Waterloo primary school be able to leave the MAT of their volition, if circumstances change? What would an 'exit' procedure entail to join a new MAT? How 'tied in' would Waterloo become?

ANSWER: Once we have joined the MAT we cannot go back to the local authority. There are systems for academy re-brokering if things should go badly wrong, although we obviously hope and expect that these will never be needed. It is in our hands to make this new phase in the school's development work and we are putting our shoulders to the wheel to make this a success from day 1.

As Secretaries of State come and go, central government administrations change from left to right and local political leadership changes, there are no constants in education. There is an argument to say that removing some of the political waves and undercurrents could be an advantage to schools and many schools are currently seeing it this way.

QUESTION: How will individual school budgets be managed? Eg, will they be pooled and redistributed, or would Waterloo retain it's autonomy over it's budget? Will budgets be 'top-sliced' etc? What level of financial integration will be required?

ANSWER: The schools within the MAT will decide collectively what functions they would like to centralise which are likely be to be back-office functions and school improvement. They will then contribute an agreed 'top slice' portion of their budget towards centralised services (currently there is a top-slice by the Local Authority for core services instead). A 'scheme of delegation' will be developed by the schools within the MAT how the remainder of the budget will be managed. The principle of subsidiarity will apply meaning decision making will remain within individual schools as much as possible within a local governing body arrangement.

QUESTION: How would joining the MAT affect Waterloo's policies? Would Waterloo retain autonomy over behaviour, HR, SEN policies etc? Or would there be parity and consistency across the schools in the trust? If so, who leads on this policy making procedure?

ANSWER: Once the MAT is incorporated it will work collaboratively to harmonise policies across all of the schools.

QUESTION: In terms of staffing, will current staff's contracts or terms of employment change? Will the terms of the Burgundy Book be honoured in future? Will the staffing structure change?

ANSWER: There will be no changes to staff's contracts or terms and conditions. Staff will TUPE into the MAT on the basis of existing staffing structures.

QUESTION: What would the governance structure of the MAT look like? How would the governors and leaders of Waterloo fit into it? Who would be the CEO of this new MAT and how would they be held to account for decisions etc?

ANSWER: Where schools can be part of the setting up of the Trust, appointing of members and trustees and deciding the scheme of delegation, this is an ideal opportunity to shape the future for your own school but also in collaboration with like-minded colleagues. This is the model on which the 'Mersey View Learning Trust' (MVLTV) would be established and we are looking forward to working with all key stakeholders including our trades union colleagues to make sure we shape this new organisation in the best interests of children, families and staff. If this proposal progresses, the Local Governing Body of the school would remain unchanged. There will be Local Governing Bodies (LGB) for each school which converts to an academy and forms part of the new proposed MAT to be known as 'Mersey View Learning Trust'. Parent representatives will be on the academy LGB just as they are now on the Governing Body.

The LGB will have very similar powers delegated to it as the governing body does now – the main difference being that it will be the MAT delegating the powers to the LGB rather than the local authority, as is the case now. The role of the LGB will be clearly defined in the MAT's Scheme of Delegation which will be developed with input from all six schools looking to form the proposed MAT.

The appointed CEO will be the current headteacher at Chesterfield High which is converting from a single academy trust, to a multi academy trust. Other schools will then join the trust. The CEO will be paid from the top-sliced school budgets.

As CEO of the Trust, the current Headteacher at Chesterfield High School will be the Accounting Officer for the Trust and the strategic support for schools. The Board of Trustees will have responsibility for the effective running of the Trust and the individual academies within it. All schools within proposed

MAT will have a Local Governing Body (LGB). On the ground, the LGB includes people who know the school best. The LGB play a very important part to ensure that the school runs smoothly.

QUESTION: Can other schools apply to join the MAT at a later date?

ANSWER: It is called Mersey View for a reason and plans are that schools within it are within sight of the Mersey. It is a localised model, we may consider more local schools but most have already joined a MAT.

### **STAFF MEETING 28TH JUNE 2023, 4.00PM**

QUESTION: Chesterfield High School have applied for an Alternative Provision Free School. Will this affect the MAT?

ANSWER: No. They are already a Single Academy Trust (SAT), so this will not affect the MAT. The Department for Education have invited Year 5-8 ASD pupils who aren't coping in mainstream education for short stay.

QUESTION: Will holidays or term times change?

ANSWER: No. These will stay the same.

QUESTION: Are roles funded by the LA safe?

ANSWER: Group funding for SEND remains the responsibility of the LA, and safeguarding stays the same.

QUESTION: If we are government-controlled, could we be forced to take a school?

ANSWER: Due diligence takes place to make sure that we know what financial position they are in before they make a formal application.

### **STAFF FEEDBACK RECEIVED THROUGH FEEDBACK FORM OR EMAIL**

COMMENT: I think it will be a very positive move for all staff to be able to share/learn from others expertise

COMMENT: To ensure that the family wellbeing centre is pivotal to the support plans for schools for Early Help

COMMENT: I feel we have been well informed about the process so far

COMMENT: I think it will be really good for the school

COMMENT: Lots of Benefits

QUESTION: Would maternity pay stay the same?

ANSWER: This will remain the same as what is presently in place.

QUESTION: Are we as staff going to move about to other schools?

ANSWER: Staff will not be transferred to other schools within the proposed MAT. The current school will remain their place of work. There will however be opportunities for development across the schools in the proposed MAT. We would very much like to retain our staff.

QUESTION: Is the TUPE indefinite or only for months/years?

ANSWER: TUPE applies with any change that is in connection with the transfer. You can make changes down the line but not if the sole reason for the change is the transfer. TUPE is a never-ending position and cast in time that way. Changes to T&C would need to follow another consultation process and Unions would be involved. Chesterfield High School became an academy 12 years ago and have never changed their T&Cs and have never wanted to.

QUESTION: If MVLT doesn't work, can we go back to Sefton?

ANSWER: Once we have joined the MAT we cannot go back to the local authority. There are systems for academy re-brokering if things should go badly wrong, although we obviously hope and expect that these will never be needed. It is in our hands to make this new phase in the school's development work and we are putting our shoulders to the wheel to make this a success from day 1.

As Secretaries of State come and go, central government administrations change from left to right and local political leadership changes, there are no constants in education. There is an argument to say that removing some of the political waves and undercurrents could be an advantage to schools and many schools are currently seeing it this way.

QUESTION: Will the trust definitely not effect pensions? Is it classed as a break in service?

ANSWER: There is not a break in service.