

Appendix 1 Consultation with governors

The Governors have undertaken, over an extensive period of nearly 4 years, reflection and evaluation into the whole Academisation process, observing closely as the national agenda has evolved and considering carefully the best course of action for the children in Sutton Benger School.

Evidence of Sutton Benger School Full Governing Body discussions on Academisation:-

27 January 2015: A 'local' Academisation training session was attended by a Governor on in Salisbury.

12 March 2015: item 5 on FGB minutes "general questions in respect to the concept of Academies/ Alliances; school involved in this debate through local Cluster groups"

17 March 2016: item 4 on FGB minutes "The meeting discussed the subject of multi-academy trusts ('MAT's') providing some much need clarity (and the removal of a number of myths) on how an academies operate in this part of the country, how they buy services, and the potential effects the de-scoping of LA control will have on new establishments"

14 July 2017: the FGB minutes noted that the Headteacher at a local Primary School(a school within a DBAT Hub) had only positive comments to make with respect to the Diocese and the concrete support they have received from them over the last six months.

28 September 2017 the FGB minutes noted the following decision:- "there was unanimous approval from those eligible to vote. The governing body to a) issue an expression of interest letter to DBAT which communicates Sutton Benger Primary School's interest in joining DBAT following completion of parent consultations"

December 2017/January 2018: Two informal Parent's consultation meeting were held which had a positive response. Parent's main feedback comments and questions were;

Academies support network

Cross MAT employment and Governance

LA is dwindling – joining now while DBAT is developing

Good choice of MAT to keep our Christian values, ethos at the fore

Keeping our Christian values and ethos – sharing services between Hobbes Alliance

How big can an academy MAT get and what is the tipping point for when it stops benefiting individual schools?

DBAT are in better shape than 12 – 18 months ago – what safeguards have we got that it remains this way/improves?

22 March 2018: two senior Officers from DBAT attended the FGB meeting and outlined the 'stages' in the Academisation process:-

Stage 1 – school is invited by DBAT to join the Trust. School then make an expression of interest, to the Department for Education (DfE), about becoming an academy.

Stage 2 – Informal consultation and mutual due diligence. If school feels that becoming an academy within the Trust is the right thing, they then make a formal application to the DfE to become an academy.

Stage 3 – A DBAT Project Manager is appointed to start legal aspects around land and property transfers.

Stage 4 – Formal consultation begins. Transfer of properties and staff discussed and agreed.

Stage 5 – Full formal application is submitted to the DfE. Solicitors are appointed for higher level legal aspects. Formal TUPE takes place and all monies and land transfers are organised.

Stage 6 – Academy status is established. Paperwork is in place and signed off.

Stage 7 – Funding agreements are transferred to DBAT, not school. Notification is given to all parties.

Stage 8 – Day one of being an academy!

29 November 2018: The minutes dealing with the Academisation agenda item, noted :-

Feedback from Conversion Working Party - 13.11.18 it was confirmed that we have submitted the request for academisation application form and the DfE have confirmed it is now in the system. TUPE consultation would be run by Wiltshire Council. Final decision to be made at FGB.

This has involved a series of informal meetings with staff, parents and the wider community, including meeting regularly with a local cluster of schools in the Hobbes Alliance. Once the school had completed and submitted an expression of interest a Conversion Working Party (CWP) was formed in April 2018, facilitated externally by a DBAT consultant. The consultant shared best practices from other similar communities who had undergone this process of review and the CWP also looked at schools that had converted to DBAT and examined the record of the Trust. On the Governing body we have members who are currently involved in education at a variety of levels eg from class-based teachers to strategic leaders to a consultant in school leadership. These members were able to bring a rich resource of evidence to the Academisation discussions and knowledge of the practices of neighbouring MATs.

FGB Meeting 4 October 2018: a Governor commented that the robustness of the work SBPS is undertaking is way beyond what most schools do. We are not just jumping in. He believes that it is a testament to DBAT and all at SBPS that we are not just deciding on a whim and making a significant investment in our school's future.

We have engaged with the Diocese of Bristol Academy Trust over a period of time, and have seen the organisation's central team and offer grow, and we feel that DBAT are in an excellent position to support the school in its growth and improvement aims. As well as

looking for a high quality, child-centred and morally based Multi-Academy Trust with a strong school improvement track record to join, as a VA school, we need to ensure that the MAT Board and leadership team are aligned to our school's foundation governance structure, which DBAT is.

We have seen first-hand that DBAT brings its leaders and staff together, listening carefully to the views of all stakeholders and then making a decision. School leaders feel they have a voice in the organisation but understand that it is one organisation and that the DBAT central team are in charge and accountable for what happens in each school.