

The Federation of Boldmere Schools MAT Discussion Minutes Extraction to 31/8/18 (Many items had other discussions within these areas. Only those specifically mentioning the MAT are extracted here):

Non-Confidential Minutes of the Finance & Facilities and Premises, Health & Safety Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 9th October 2018 at 8:00 am at Boldmere Training Room

Item 5 – Matters Arising

Utility Providers: xxxx advised that an external company had been commissioned to identify an alternative tariff for the utility providers for both schools, and that this company had advised that they would be unable to compete with the current tariff, which was very good. If the MAT formation goes ahead they advised that they believed the tariffs available to the academy would be more competitive. The schools have therefore agreed to purchase another year with Corporate Procurement to stay on their more favourable rates.

Non-Confidential Minutes of the Finance & Facilities and Premises, Health & Safety Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 26th June 2018 at 8:00 am at Boldmere Training Room

Item 5 – Correspondence

xxxx (SFS Officer) clarified the following:

- Pension contributions will change if the schools academise, and then the schools will have a pension deficit to address. This will have various payment options for the schools to consider and is a debt that will sit on the balance sheet of the academy for all schools within the MAT.
- This is standard working practice.

Confidential Minutes of the Extraordinary Full Governing Board Meeting held on Monday 25th June 2018 at 4:00 pm in Boldmere Training Room:

Item 3 – Financial Scenarios Working Party Recommendations Review

Scenario 3 MAT Formation:

Consideration was given to the possible funding streams, possible retention/top slicing differences, and the possible altered roles within both schools, but overall governors agreed that this information should not be considered for the purposes of this discussion as there are too many unknowns.

Summary:

Having a potential in-year deficit within the 2018/19 budget will not prevent the schools from forming a Multi Academy Trust (MAT).

Decisions:

MAT formation – this cannot be considered presently as there are too many unknowns.

Non-Confidential Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting held on Tuesday 22nd May 2018 at 3:53 pm at Boldmere Training Room

Item2 – Declaration of Business Interests

Following advice from School & Governor Support (S&GS), governors who are also staff members advised of a potential conflict of interests if staffing structures within the schools were to change as a result of the schools forming a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). Discussion was had regarding the voting rights of these staff governors following this declaration and it was agreed that they should withdraw from the meeting prior to voting for governors to decide upon their voting entitlement.

Item 5 – MAT Proposals and Voting

Staff governors left the meeting at 3:25pm

The remaining governors discussed the potential conflict of interest of the staff governors, considering how a vote to include or exclude staff might be perceived by others, and if it might be fairer if only certain staff could vote. Ultimately governors all agreed that inclusivity has always been an important part of school life, and so all governors should be given the chance to have their voices heard. A governor therefore proposed that all

governors with voting rights (including staff governors) should have the chance to vote. This proposal was seconded by another governor, and subsequently agreed by all seven voting governors remaining in the meeting. Staff governors returned at 3:35pm

Staff governors were advised that their votes would be counted, and a governor then proposed that both schools proceed with the proposal to form a Multi Academy Trust, as discussed, with the four other schools. This proposal was seconded by another governor and all eleven voting governors present at the meeting voted on whether they wished the formation to proceed. Ten governors voted to proceed with the MAT, one governor voted that the schools remain as maintained schools under the local authority. As the majority of governors voted to proceed with the proposal of the formation it was therefore agreed that the schools join with the other schools involved, to move forward with the proposal of forming a MAT.

Confidential Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting held on Tuesday 22nd May 2018 at 3:53 pm at Boldmere Training Room

Item 10 – Committee Reports (Financial Scenarios Working Party): The committee considered the four proposals with the following decisions:

3. MAT Formation proposal – Following the discussions at the extraordinary meeting it was agreed that any potential savings or income generation anticipated as part of the formation of a proposed MAT would not be sufficient to decrease the predicted deficit, as the schools would incur many more charges that are not currently within the budget.

Governors asked, if these proposals were not approved would there be any alternatives, and would they impact upon educational standards? xxx advised that if these savings were not made then, in principle, it would probably mean that the schools would not be able to set balanced budgets. At present it is not possible to predict with any certainty what impact this would have upon the proposed MAT formation, or what the actual actions of the local authority would be.

In light of all of this information a governor proposed that a one page summary be produced for governors showing the proposed deficit, actions to be taken to resolve this and their impact. In order to ensure that governors have sufficient time to discuss this it was agreed that this should be presented to an extraordinary meeting on Monday 25th June at 4pm. To ensure an informed decision is made, the same governor asked that the following be considered prior to the meeting:

- Other MAT schools should be consulted to gauge whether they anticipate similar problems, and how their deficit budget proposals are looking, should this be the case.

Confidential Minutes of the Extraordinary Full Governing Board Meeting held on Tuesday 22nd May 2018 at 1:30 pm at Boldmere Training Room

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM 1 - MAT Formation Information

xxxx shared with governors the powerpoint presentation already presented to staff, advising that the Information contained within it has been obtained from various sources, including the Department for Education (DfE). The presentation included information on:

- Possible financial benefits.
- Benefits to our (and the other) schools, such as greater staff support, shared curriculum development, CPD and shared moderation.
- The benefit of sharing of a common ethos, values and vision with four other likeminded schools.
- The potential collective purchasing power helping to ensure that the best services can be obtained across all MAT schools, as the local authority (LA) resources are no longer available.

Governor Questions:

Will the North Schools Company be dissolved should the MAT be given approval?

The six schools of the proposed MAT would remove themselves from the directorship of the North Schools Company. Should the other schools wish to remain and run the company themselves they are able to do so.

Will all office resources be shared across all schools?

It is intended that all schools would continue running as they do presently, with a central capacity available to assist and streamline activities.

Would the central office consist of additional posts at an additional cost?

All schools would contribute to the central office costs through a top slice from the General Annual Grant (GAG), similar to the LA top slice currently already made.

Who would do the recruitment for the schools?

The Board will be advised of all vacancies, allowing for strategic decisions to be made regarding the placements of existing staff or advertisements for new appointments. All existing Staff contracts will be subject to TUPE conditions when transferring across to the MAT, and discussion was had regarding the terms and conditions of new and existing staff, and how existing staff might prefer mobility to be reflected in their contracts. It is believed that this approach should lead to better staff retention within the proposed trust and greater opportunities for promotion of existing staff. The pros and cons of this approach were discussed.

How will pupil interaction take place across the Trust?

It is hoped that links within the Trust will create more opportunities for pupil interaction, and several ways of doing this are being considered. Discussion was had regarding the links that were enjoyed for previous pupils, and it was agreed that it would be valuable for current pupils to experience this too.

Would Policies be shared across all schools?

It is probable that some policies, such as those where the LA has provided model policies, would be appropriate to be adopted by all schools. However, policies such as Behaviour would be more school specific and so would be likely to remain individual, although best practice would be shared to ensure a similar approach. Discussion was had regarding how much autonomy individual schools would be likely to operate under, and some of the potential difficulties might arise from this.

If one of the other schools had financial problems would this lead to redundancies within our schools?

The due diligence process that will take place if we choose to proceed with the proposed MAT is intended to ensure that all schools are viable, and so ensure that this should not be a problem.

If the school became a MAT would it prevent possible future improvements, such as another RBU?

No, as a MAT the schools would approach such a proposition direct with the LA and DfE, and different grants would be available to fund this.

From their experiences with other schools/MATs Governors were asked if they were aware of challenges that could be encountered, and the following responses were received:

- Due diligence is a very important part of the process and should be thoroughly undertaken and carefully considered.
- Autonomy vs centralisation can cause problems. Schools need to be clear from the outset about what can and can't be opted into and out of.
- Some economies of scale are available, but as 75-85% of costs within all schools are staff related these are limited in their value. However, it might take several years before any gains are seen.
- Trustees with the correct skill sets are very important. The board will need skills such as qualified accountant, lawyer and HR specialist. The Governance structure will be very important from an accountability perspective and it will be important to have complete confidence in board members. It is believed that there is currently enough experience within the existing governing boards to be able to fill these positions effectively.

- Culture changes within school can cause problems, with staff experiencing difficulties thinking and working in different ways due to new standardised procedures. The first six months can be very difficult.
- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) may be appointed by all schools within the MAT by a general consensus of opinion, and this person will be nominated as CEO on the application form to the DfE.
- If the schools wished to withdraw from the application before its inception this would be allowed, but should schools decide that they no longer wished to be part of the MAT once it has been formed, after this then they would need to give notice of 7 years to leave.
- It is possible for other schools to join the MAT once it has been set up, and they would likely do this as Associate MAT schools for two years, to allow all schools to determine whether this will work. However, to ensure that the MAT is well established this would not happen within the first few years.
- The Teaching School would continue to run with the 21 schools that are currently part of the group, and would not be affected by the Boldmere Schools forming a MAT.
- If the OFSTED ratings of the six schools were to change this would not prevent the MAT formation, as long as it was still in the best interests of all pupils. In order to ensure that the correct consultation and due diligence takes place the proposed start date for a MAT may be 1st April 2019.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM 2 – MAT Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback

Governors asked how teaching and support staff had responded to the MAT proposal and were advised of the following:

- School staff from both schools were invited to the in-school staff meeting, during which time xxx and xxx presented a power point (shown to governors) and answered questions.
- Papers explaining the concept of a MAT and proposed structures (available on TTG with the agenda) were circulated to all staff in paper format approximately 1-2 weeks prior to the in-school joint staff meeting on Wednesday 3rd May 2018.
- Staff were encouraged to ask questions during or before the meeting, and a governor collated as many as possible in a document that were answered and then shared with staff during the meeting (available on TTG with the agenda).
- Following the meeting, the powerpoint and a paper copy of the questions and answers were circulated to all staff for their information.
- Staff have been informed that they do not have a vote in the decision-making process, but their views will certainly be taken in to account as part of the statutory consultation process and that governors will decide on the final outcome, once all due diligence has been carried out.
- xxx shared the questions and answers with all other schools within the proposed MAT to ensure a coordinated response.

Governors queried some of the responses to the list of questions as they felt the answers seemed to predominantly refer to teaching staff, xxxx confirmed that the answers were applicable to all staff. Governors asked the staff governors if they believed that staff now felt that they had a voice in the process, and they confirmed that they believed this was the case. They advised that staff are still anxious about the changes to take place within the schools, and also the possibility that it might effect their job security.

It was agreed that parental/carer response would be sought should the FGB approve the proposal to form MAT and again this would be done as part of the formal statutory consultation process.

Confidential Minutes of the Financial Scenarios Working Party Meeting held on Thursday 26th April 2018 at 8:00 am at Boldmere Training Room

Confidential Item 3

Item 6 – Scenario 3 MAT Formation

xxx tabled a proposal document outlining the potential financial benefits resulting from the formation of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT), advising that there is limited information available at present.

Governors discussed the potential financial benefits identified, and they how these could be generated/applied to the Boldmere Schools and the other four schools within the proposed MAT. The possibility of further income generation by applying to become a Sponsor Academy was considered, although it was agreed that this was something for consideration once the MAT was established and would therefore not assist with the immediate budget deficit predictions.

Non-financial benefits were not discussed during this meeting, as they will be considered further during the extraordinary FGB on 22nd May. During this meeting xxx advised that he will be presenting a powerpoint presentation to governors, and that staff will view this presentation next week when staff briefings will take place. A governor asked if he could view this presentation prior to the staff meeting and xxx agreed to send it to the governor making the request. Discussion was had regarding MAT formations and the relative merits of centrally controlled versus autonomous models. xxx advised that there is already some collaborative working between the six schools (New Oscott Primary, Minworth Primary, Penns Primary, Holland House and the two Boldmere Schools) and there would be clearly defined principles and ground rules for all of the schools to adhere to should the proposed MAT formation continue.

It was agreed that the information provided was informative but that it could not be depended upon from a budgetary perspective, as the decision regarding MAT formation will be based mainly upon pupil, parent and staff outcomes. Financial considerations will be more important during the due diligence stage, should governors decide to pursue this action at the extraordinary meeting, and it was agreed that the experience of a governor working in a MAT organistaion would be invaluable during this stage

Confidential Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting held on Thursday 22nd March 2018 at 4:00 pm at Boldmere Training Room

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM 2:

Item 10 – Governor Visiting Summer Term

Extraordinary Meeting: As the Governing Board has not yet made a decision with regard to the prospect of the schools proposing to become part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) xxx proposed that during the afternoon of the 22nd May (at 1:30pm, prior to the scheduled FGB meeting at 4:00pm), an extraordinary governing board meeting is held to discuss and formalise its intentions with regard to the proposed formation of a MAT. It was agreed that it would be important for all governors to attend as this would be a very important decision making meeting. Governors requested that papers to help inform the decision-making process were available prior to the meeting, and requested that staff responses to the proposal would also be available. A governor seconded this proposal and all governors present agreed to this extraordinary meeting taking place.

Confidential Minutes of the Finance & Facilities and Premises, Health & Safety Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 6th February 2018 at 8:00 am at Boldmere Training Room

Confidential Item 1

Item 7 – Review of Latest Financial Information

xxx made the following suggestions for potential areas of savings:

- MAT formation might lead to healthier budgets.

Non-Confidential Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting held on Tuesday 9th January 2018 at 4:00 pm at Boldmere Training Room

Item12 – MAT Update

Discussion was had regarding the information obtained from the governor and SLT responses to the MAT proposals. Governors asked that this process now be undertaken amongst all staff to gauge their responses, and discussion was had regarding the items to be included within the grid to ensure that it is relevant to all staff.

Possible alternatives to a MAT structure were discussed and it was agreed that staff should be informed of all options by SLT members within the schools as this would help staff to complete their grids. Staff opinion to be gathered for feedback at next FGB meeting.

It was agreed that MAT Update should remain as a standing agenda item to ensure that full consideration be given to any future decisions, and that xxx should present a benefits and challenges of becoming a MAT to all governors.

MAT Response Request email – circulated 16/11/17

xxx email circulating MAT Information – 20/10/17

Confidential Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on Tuesday 16th Oct 2017 at 4:00 pm at Boldmere Junior School

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM 3

Item 10 – Governor Update

Multi Academy Trust (MAT) – xxx advised that he and several governors had recently attended a meeting regarding MAT conversion, where the CEO of a local MAT discussed the educational benefits for schools. Discussion was had surrounding the possible career progression prospects for staff that this might generate, and the potential for more effective utilisation of staffing contracts within all of the MAT schools. Discussion was had regarding the mechanism of staff deployment, the TUPE process that would be followed, and how effective management of this area could potentially lead to an extended curriculum being available to all pupils within the MAT.

One of the governors (who attended the meeting) explained the concept of MAT governance, confirming that the schools would need to decide if it would be beneficial to share the currently Federated accountability of both schools with other likeminded schools, which in theory would mean that the MAT is only as good as its weakest school. The potential negative financial impact that might result from this was considered, and potential savings that could be generated within a MAT were also discussed. Governors questioned whether these savings were not already potentially available within the Company Model, and xxx advised that as schools have the ability to opt out presently it is not always possible to achieve the expected savings that purchasing in bulk might generate. Within a MAT opting out would not be possible. Governance structures across a potential MAT were considered and it was agreed that xxx should share a proposed Federation Governance Structure with all governors via TTG.

Clerk to add Proposed Federation Governance Structure onto TTG

xxx advised that following on from the meeting both schools within the Federation have held a joint Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meeting, where SLT staff were asked to complete a grid that identifies the areas where accountability might change, and how they consider this should be managed. xxx asked that governors also complete this tool, returning responses to himself for collation and presentation at the next FGB.

**Clerk to make Grid available on TTG for governors
Governors to complete and return grid to xxx as soon as possible**

Non-Confidential Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting held on Monday 22nd May 2017 at 4:00 pm at Boldmere Training Room

Item 7 – Chairman’s Business

As part of discussions a governor requested that all governors continue to proactively investigate different MAT formations.

Confidential Minutes of the Budget Setting Working Party held on Thursday 18th May 2017 at 10:00 am at the offices of WAA Chosen

Confidential Item 1

Discussion was had regarding the aims of the day and the most effective approach to take to determine possible areas of budget savings. It was agreed that all ideas should be considered alongside potential MAT formation and promoting a supportive school environment.

Offering more places within school:

Considerations:

If the schools were to become MAT’s then we would be able to dictate our own class sizes.

Non-Confidential Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting held on Thursday 8th December 2016 at 4:00 pm at Boldmere Training Room

Item 5 – Correspondence

Circulated to all governors via email from the Clerk (unless otherwise specified):

- Governance in MATs DfE document (6/12/16), subsequent comment by a governor (8/12/16)

Item 10 – Academy Conversion (Multi-Academy Trust)

Following a recent meeting of HT’s and Governing Board Chairs of the Company Model schools, discussion was had regarding the topics raised and their relevance to the federation. At present five of the other schools within the company have expressed an interest in investigating the creation of a MAT alongside our schools. In order to determine the future course of the school, governors were asked to consider how the school should proceed.

Much discussion was had to determine whether becoming an academy would be of greater benefit to pupils greater than maintained school status, including:

- The practicalities of Academisation and the various approaches that the schools can take.
- The due diligence required to ensure that the collaborative were appropriate, and whether acting sooner would ensure a greater input in the overriding ethos for the MAT.
- Would the collaboration of schools within a MAT improve the outcome for more children as good practice would be shared, or would things be more bureaucratic and take longer to achieve?
- Could clear systems and structures be put in place to ensure that all schools maintain their own identities?
- Not all schools would share the same levels of autonomy, trustees would manage this to ensure that appropriate levels were in place.
- The federation would require a Vision Statement to ensure that our model and strategy for achieving it was well communicated. It was felt that this should be undertaken prior to ‘negotiations’ to provide a starting point.
- How and when would school staff be informed and be part of the decision making process.

In order to develop thinking further it was agreed that xxx should develop a powerpoint presentation to bring to an extraordinary meeting and enable the provision of further information and decision

making. All governors agreed that the school should proceed with this intention of potential MAT formation.

Governors unanimously agreed to proceed further with this intention

xxx to explore possible PP training opportunity during autumn term

Non-Confidential Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting held on Thursday 19th May 2016 at 4:00 pm at Boldmere Training Room

Item 6 – Chairman’s Business

Although schools will no longer be forced to become Academies within government imposed timescales, xxx advised that the conference had reinforced that the long-term model for school governance is still one of Academisation. Discussion was had regarding the most effective way for the school to proceed in light of this knowledge, and governors agreed that all aspects of Academisation should continue to be investigated to ensure that due diligence is being undertaken, and informed decisions will be made as and when the need arises. It was agreed that items requiring consideration would include:

- Quantification of the vision and values for the Federation,
- Potential benefits and pitfalls of working within a MAT,
- Identification of potential business models,
- Identification of potentially like-minded schools sharing the same vision and values,
- Identification of additional funding, and additional expenditure resulting from Academisation.

The next Company Model meeting has a single agenda item of Academisation and will include presentations from a local Head Teacher currently in the process of setting up a Multi Academy Trust (MAT), and a solicitor used by local standalone academy. Following this meeting xxx is hoping that the FGB SDP meeting on 10th June will allow governors and school leaders to decide upon the direction and objectives of the school, to provide a clear vision with parameters for the long-term goal. To facilitate this progression it was recommended that governors research trust types and processes to be followed prior to the meeting. The importance of staff input and consideration throughout this process was noted, and it was agreed that a question and answer session for staff and governors would be a useful place to start.

xxx to provide meeting dates for clerk to circulate to all governors.