

Epping Forest MAT

Parent Meeting Presentation

Date: 22nd February 2018

Welcome

6.00 pm Presentation

6.15 pm Q&A

Purpose of the meeting

The Governing Body is consulting on a proposal to form a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) and convert to academy status.

Consultation provides the opportunity for stakeholders to understand the rationale and drivers for change, the options available and provide feedback to governors.

Whilst governors believe that forming a MAT is the best option for the school, your views are very important and will help determine the way forward.

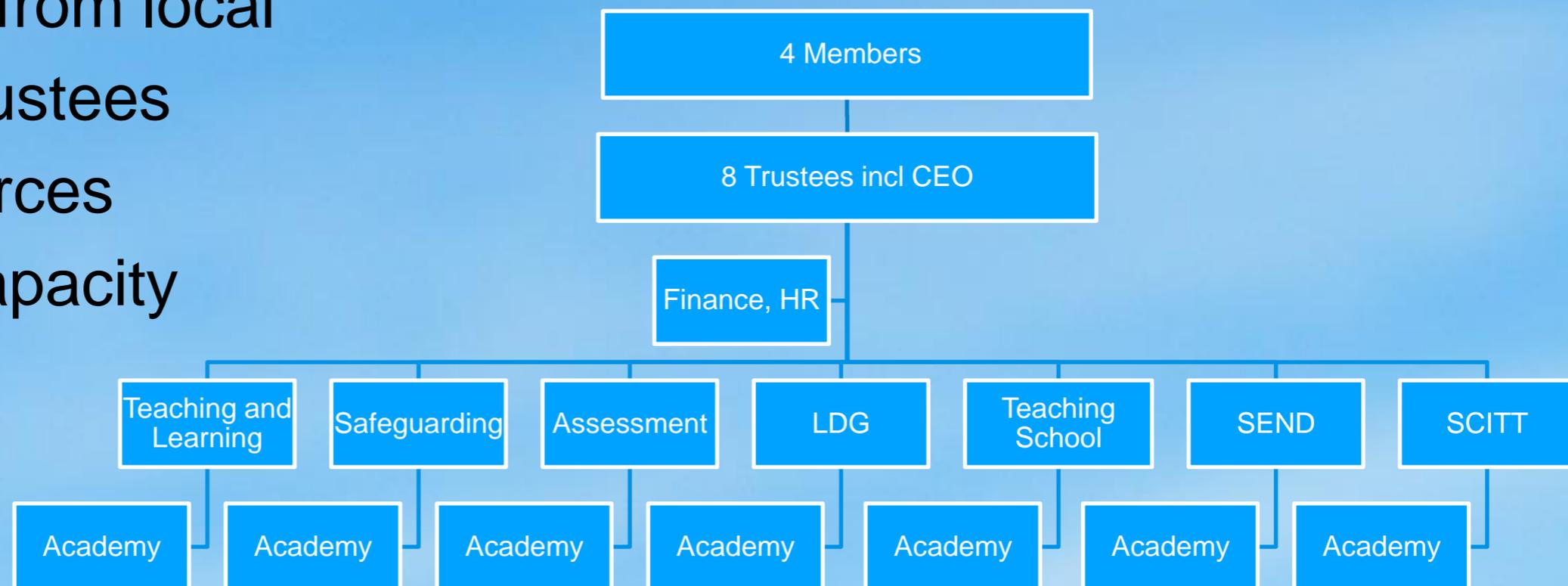
Why are schools becoming MATs?

- The National landscape is changing.
- Whilst the Department for Education (DfE) has changed its position on plans for the forced academisation of all schools, the underlying factors are unchanged:
 - Changes to school funding
 - School budgets being cut
 - Local authority structures changing
 - Local authority budgets reduced
 - Support for schools diminishing
 - Government wants schools to join Multi-Academy Trusts.

Schools needs to adapt and evolve to protect and enhance school improvement and learning opportunities for all pupils, in a changing environment.

What is a Multi-Academy Trust?

- A legal entity that governs a group of schools through a single set of trustees
- A charitable company limited by guarantee
- Established to enable formal collaboration between schools
- Directly funded by the Department for Education (DfE) instead of via the local authority
- Shift of accountability for school improvement from local authority to trustees
- Shared resources
- Leadership capacity



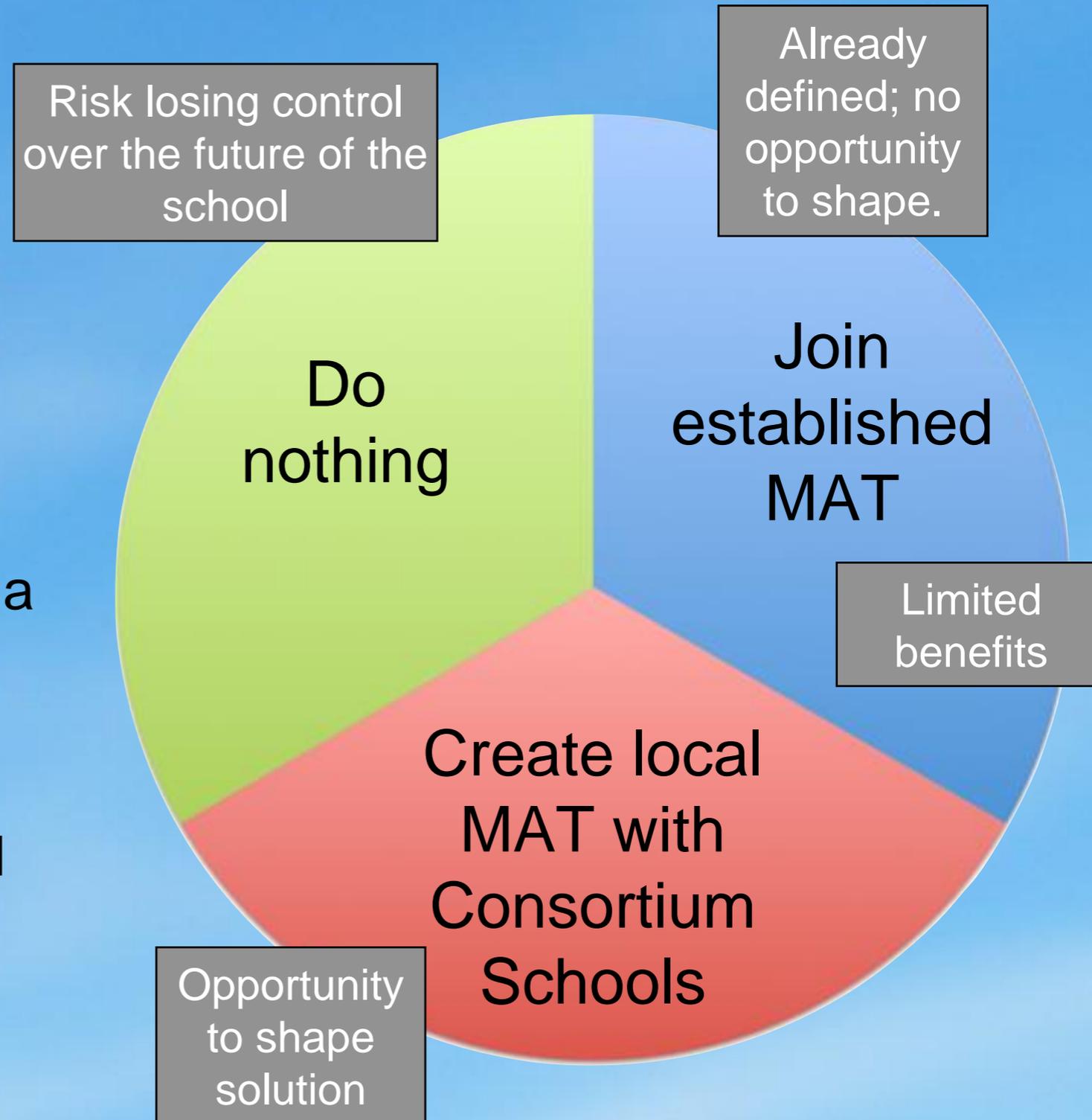
Considering the options

The Governing Body has spent the last year researching the options, including:

- National conferences
- Local authority briefings
- Talking to other MATs
- Discussion with local schools

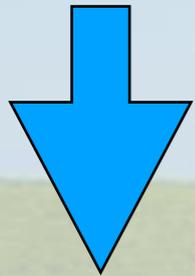
Each option was assessed against a number of criteria including:

- Pupil outcomes
- Staff recruitment, retention and development
- Financial strength and stability
- Values and ethos
- Autonomy



Timetable

Where are we in the process?



Consultation
Jan/Feb 2018

Possible application
Spring 2018

Conversion
Spring term (3/4 months)

MAT established
July 2018



Parent MAT Questions

1. Other schools joining the MAT:

Wave 1

- **Epping Upland Primary**
- **High Beech Primary**
- **Ivy Chimneys Primary**
- **Lambourne Primary**
- **St Johns Buckhurst Hill**
- **White Bridge Primary**

Wave 2

- **Herewood Primary**
- **Alderton Infants**
- **Chigwell Row Infants**
- **Hillhouse Primary**
- **Limes Farm Infants**
- **Oakview School**
- **Staples Road Primary**
- **Theydon Bois Primary**

- **Will this change provision regarding after school clubs? Maybe lead to additional after school care?**

Should not make any difference

Possibly might offer improved opportunities in the future – through joint provision – but generally best on own school site – convenience for children and parents

- **No changes in staffing? E.g. Headteacher? How do you ensure Theydon Bois will not fall victim to watered down leadership or arrangements? Shared headteachers?**

No changes in current staffing – MAT is admissions authority – like Essex is now – but commitment that each school will have its own admissions arrangements

Because this MAT is built on a commitment to autonomous local schools- (earned autonomy) – can't see why there will be a watered down leadership- each school will plan its own staffing arrangements

- **Will changing to a MAT allow any investment into the infra-structure of the school? How will this work?**

We do not know as yet – but one of the possible benefits should be economies of scale leading to more monies being available – and there will be a fund for material developments into which schools can bid – again much like Essex now. This would have to be on the basis of analysed need

- **Will parents get a vote? Looks like it is a done deal which makes consultation a rubber stamping exercise.**

Unfortunately, there is no provision in the arrangements of converting to Academy status for this to happen. The decision to go is made by each Governing Body.

However, it is important to note that this commitment has not been made lightly by the FGB. There was certainly no rush to decide to do so, as we were anxious about a number of factors – not least the idea of being ‘swallowed up’ by an established Academy/MAT if we were forced to convert, especially into a secondary school dominated chain.

However – it is clear that this has become the ‘direction of travel’ for all schools – and Local Authorities have been decimated by reduced funding – so their ability to support schools has been much reduced.

We wanted the school to be well supported in order to continue make progress.

We have been seriously considering this idea for at least 18 months and attended various presentations about various ways of working/read about Academies. We then had a GB meeting to discuss the idea of going down that road last year. We were then made aware of the proposal to form a local and primary based MAT – based upon the local group of schools which has worked together for over 15 years.

**Following further discussions, we then agreed at a further FGB, to make an application to join this
MAT**

- **Will Theydon Bois have to share its facilities e.g. sports field and swimming pool? If so will the MAT/other school pay for upkeep? School house? Who decides how the house will be used? Where will possible proceeds go?**

Who decides how the house will be used? Where will possible proceeds go?

This is unlikely, unless we choose to do so – and appropriate financial arrangements would have to be made

In relation to the school house – we envisage NO changes at this point in time – and we are discussing with the MAT the future arrangements in relation to this – and we are not the only school in this position

- **Is it possible we will get less money as a school? Will schools with higher need take precedent over our needs? What is the current financial settlement and what does the proposed settlement look like?**

We have agreed that each school will have its own budget – (in line with earned autonomy), and as allocated by the government. Each school will then allocate its funding as it wishes

Again – all these matters are assuming proper financial conduct, etc – and no doubt that we do that well!

- **Can /Will we hire unqualified teachers?**

There is no suggestion of doing this – and this MAT has confirmed its commitment to National arrangements as the minimal standards for staff

- **One governing body to cover all schools will surely mean less autonomy for Theydon Bois to set its own strategies/policies/action plans to meet the particular needs of our school? Our character?**

Each school will have its own ‘Local Governing Body’ – much as now – and will continue to do much as it does now.

The Trust and the Members will set the parameters for the conduct of schools through policy formulation and monitoring – again – much as Essex does now – but each school will function in much the same way as now.

Standard policies and the framework for finances will operate at Trust level – but again with the responsibility of securing/monitoring the provision – NOT doing it.

It is worth noting that the school often adopts now from Essex the ‘model’ general policies which all schools need to have in place. Policies which are school based will continue to be so.

- **Is the school confident that it can focus on areas for development identified by Ofsted and the school itself at the same time as undertaking the work involved in the academy conversion process?**

Absolutely – detailed plans are already in place to do this – as part of the review of the Schools development plan and the ongoing work of the school – which is the prime focus at all times.

- **Will becoming an academy lead to better quality of education?**

We hope that by building on the good collaborative work already embedded among these schools that we will continue to develop the provision and the quality of education further