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ASSOCIATES

Consultation Report University Technical College Norfolk

October 2021

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1. Introduction

The Board of Trustees at University Technical College Norfolk (UTCN) made the decision in the Spring term of 2021 to transfer from a single academy trust and join a multi academy trust (MAT). The Board identified Community Schools Trust (CST) as the preferred MAT to join and the DfE approved the transfer in July 2021. The approval meant that the school could move forward in the next stage of planning which proposes that the school will join Community Schools Trust on November 1, 2021.

This decision followed a period of research which had been conducted by the school's trustees to help inform their final decisions and recommendations which in turn has subsequently informed this consultation. Consideration was given to what was in the best interests of learners now, and in the future, as well as considering the implications of the options for staff, parents and the community that the school serves.

One of the first priorities in this phase is stakeholder consultation. Consultation commenced on the September 1, 2021 and concluded on September 30, 2021. Views have been sought from parents and carers, staff, trade unions and partners. Further within the report we have shared a breakdown of meetings that happened, communications which were issued, and a copy of all feedback received as part of the process.

2. Consultation Methodology

The overall aim of the consultation process was to ensure that everyone who has a stake in the decision of the school to become a member school within Community Schools Trust had the opportunity to hear about the plans and to share their views.

The objectives of the process were to:

- Provide relevant background information for stakeholders
- Explain the reasons for the proposed transition to academy status
- Set out the stages in the process for the school to become a member school within Community Schools Trust and the associated timelines
- Answer questions raised

The principles laid down by the project team for the consultation were that it should be:

- An open and transparent process;
- Accessible to all stakeholders in terms of:
 - The times of the events
 - The language used (jargon-free wherever possible and acronyms fully explained)
 - Being well-publicised

A variety of media were used to consult including:

- Direct letters

- Text messaging
- Publicised meetings involving presentations and questions and answer sessions
- Frequently asked questions and comments slips
- Online survey
- School website

2.1 Direct letters

Letters introducing the consultation were sent to the following groups and copies are included in Appendix 1.

- Parents/Carers/Community members
- School Staff
- Trade Unions

2.2 Online survey

A Google Survey was created and used as an online tool to provide everyone with an opportunity to have their say and to gauge reaction to the proposal to convert to academy status and join Community Schools Trust. The results of the survey can be found in this report under section 3.2.

2.3 Publicised meetings

The following timetable of events was communicated to stakeholders and carried out during the consultation period:

Date	Event	Venue
9.9.21	Yr 11 & 13 Parent Consultation Meeting I	UTCN
9.9.21	Unions Consultation Meeting	UTCN
2.9.21 & 9.9.21	School Staff Consultation Meetings x2	UTCN
9.9.21	Yr 10 Parent Consultation Meeting II	UTCN
9.9.21	Yr 12 Parent Consultation Meeting III	UTCN
25.9.21	Governors' Meeting with CST Trustees	CST

2.4 Staff, Parent/Carer and Community Meetings

At each of the consultation meetings, a presentation was shared with information about Community Schools Trust and why UTCN is proposing to join a MAT. A sample copy of the

presentation can be found in Appendix 2. The presentation was also shared online via the school website.

For many, these meetings were not the first time the proposals had been discussed but for some (particularly new parents and staff) it was. There was an opportunity to meet the Chief Executive of CST and to understand more detail about how they would/could be affected by the change.

2.5 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

At Appendix 3 is the FAQs document that was distributed to parents/carers, unions, governors and staff in the school and a copy was also displayed on the school website.

3. Overview of the Feedback received

Appendix 4 contains all the questions, comments and feedback received from the various meetings and surveys which took place throughout the consultation period. The number of participants in meetings and survey responses are outlined on the next page.

3.1 Attendance at Consultation Meetings

Date	Event	Venue	Number in attendance
9.9.21	Yr 11 & 13 Parent Consultation Meeting I	UTCN	1
9.9.21	Unions Consultation Meeting	UTCN	2
2.9.21 & 9.9.21	School Staff Consultation Meetings x2	UTCN	45
9.9.21	Yr 10 Parent Consultation Meeting II	UTCN	100+
9.9.21	Yr 12 Parent Consultation Meeting III	UTCN	50+

3.2 Google Online Survey

We received two completed surveys online. Full detailed feedback is provided on page 6.



Google Survey Responses

Please tick the box which best describes the type of stakeholder you are?	Do you support the proposal for UTCN to join Community Schools Trust?	Do you agree that the Secretary of State should enter into a new Funding Agreement (contract) for UTCN as part of Community Schools Trust? To understand more about what is a Funding Agreement - log onto https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-and-free-school-funding-agreements-multi-academy-trust	Any other comments?
Governor	Yes	Yes	
Staff member	Yes	Yes	I can see benefits for the students at UTCN from this transfer. I also think that CST will gain from adopting some of UTCN's approaches to working with employers.

3.3 Themes and Key Messages

Appendix 4 contains all the questions, comments and feedback received from the various consultation events / media used throughout the consultation period. A summary of all the responses and the messages contained therein, with implications for the school and Community Schools Trust, are provided in the remainder of this section.

Stakeholders are most interested in:

3.3.1 The opportunities for all being linked to a bigger group of schools, these include;

- The possibility to broaden the age range to Years 7, 8 & 9
- Acceleration of the opportunity to become Ofsted Outstanding
- Development / enhancement of the curriculum
- Generating financial efficiencies

3.3.2 Professional development opportunities for staff – sharing of expertise

Many staff can see the benefits of being part of something bigger, being able to access more CPD opportunities and share best practice within departments. This benefit is a two-way street with staff in CST already having an opportunity to learn from UTCN, for example, around employer engagement and careers advice/guidance.

3.3.3 Terms and conditions of employment

Staff sought reassurance on key employment matters linked to contracts of employment and pensions. CST confirmed they honour School Teachers Pay & Conditions and that they do not plan to change contracts as a result of the transfer to CST.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

After reviewing the feedback received, it must be concluded that there are no reasons apparent why UTCN school should not join Community Schools Trust. Stakeholders who raised concerns had their questions answered and were satisfied with the responses. Ultimately stakeholders were provided with the assurances that this is the right decision for the school, its students, staff and community.

The Trust has already demonstrated its commitment to working with UTCN and looks forward to making a positive difference to the students they would be responsible for.

Thank you to Governors, School leaders, staff and Community Schools Trust for responding to the questions raised.

5. List of Appendices

Appendix 1	Consultation letters
Appendix 2	Sample presentation
Appendix 3	Frequently Asked Questions
Appendix 4	Overview of questions and answers