

Ad Astra Academy Trust

Andy Brown OBE

Sue Crowe

We will provide an innovative, first class education to inspire our children to achieve their full potential



Trust

‘If you don’t work hard at building multi academy trust, it’s difficult to be a great Multi Academy Trust.’

Darren Holmes CEO Enquire Learning Trust

Current Political & Educational Landscape

- * Government continue with academy agenda – 5542 open academies, representing 26% of all schools, 3166 in primary phase* (60% Secondary- 30% primary are now academies!)
- * 1241 academies undergoing conversion process*
- * Role of the Regional Schools Commissioner
- * Inclusion of ‘coasting’ schools is likely to accelerate the rate of academy conversions.
- * Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) is now the preferred model
- * Encouragement of medium sized MATs – economies of scale and accountability.

Current Political & Educational Landscape

‘Since the White Paper was published in 2016 the decision about compulsion for all schools to be an academy by 2022 has changed. I still believe though that every school will still become an academy.’

Sir David Carter, National Schools Commissioner Oct 2016

‘We know there are several MATS in the North-East who are doing very well.’

Justine Greening, Secretary of State for Education, Oct 2016

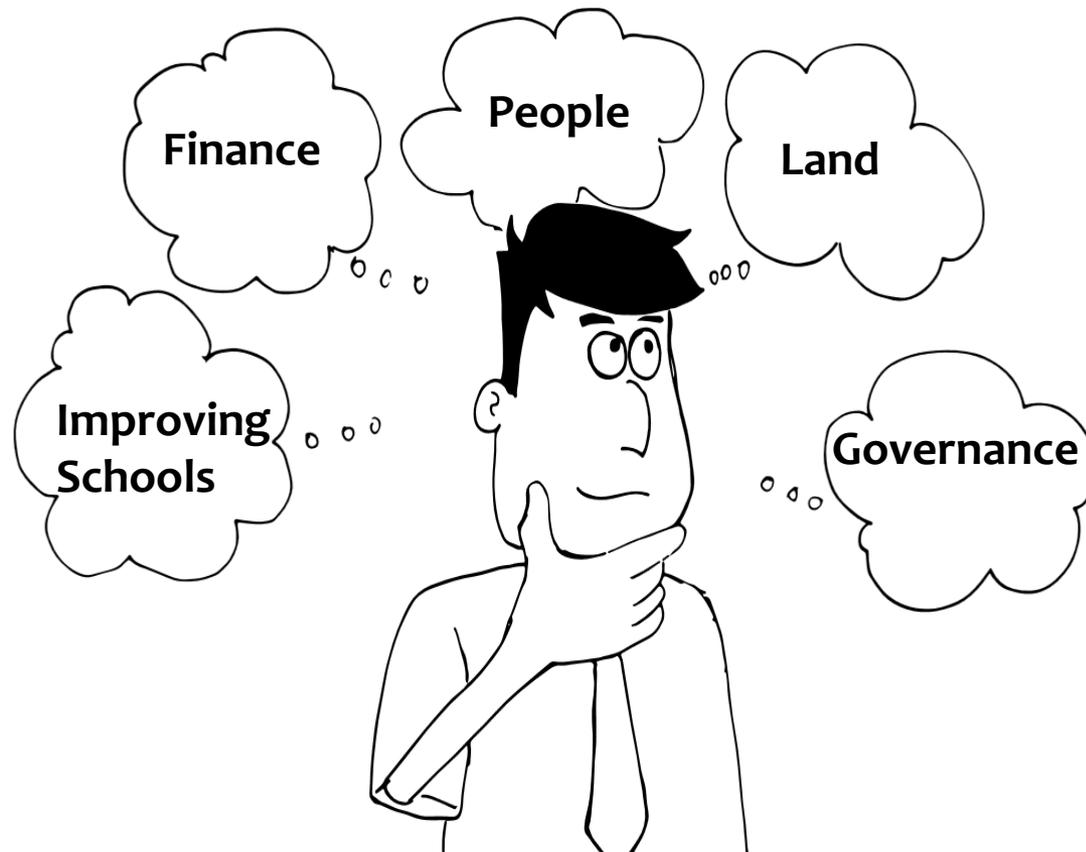
MATS are the future- 9 essential ingredients

1. Shared values
2. Shared aims
3. Relentless focus on the quality of teaching & learning
4. Strong belief in the value and potential of every child
5. Deep commitment to professional development
6. Belief in success of all schools as well as your own
7. Quality Assurance, self-evaluation and peer review
8. Sharing and analysing data
9. Using resources where they are most needed

Ad Astra – The Journey So Far

- Soon to be five schools in the Trust.
 - ✓ West View Primary, Hartlepool converted 1st January 2015
 - ✓ West Park Primary, Hartlepool converted 1st March 2015
 - ✓ Brougham Primary, Hartlepool converted 1st July 2016
 - ✓ Rosebrook Primary, Stockton converted 1st November 2016
 - ✓ Possible 5th school – Middlesbrough, estimated- 2017
- Much has been achieved since conversion. It has been a period of consolidation and embedding practice along with the formulation of future plans and strategies
- Sponsorship accreditation awarded July 2015
- Teaching School application – June 2016
- Central office at Queens Meadow- September 2016

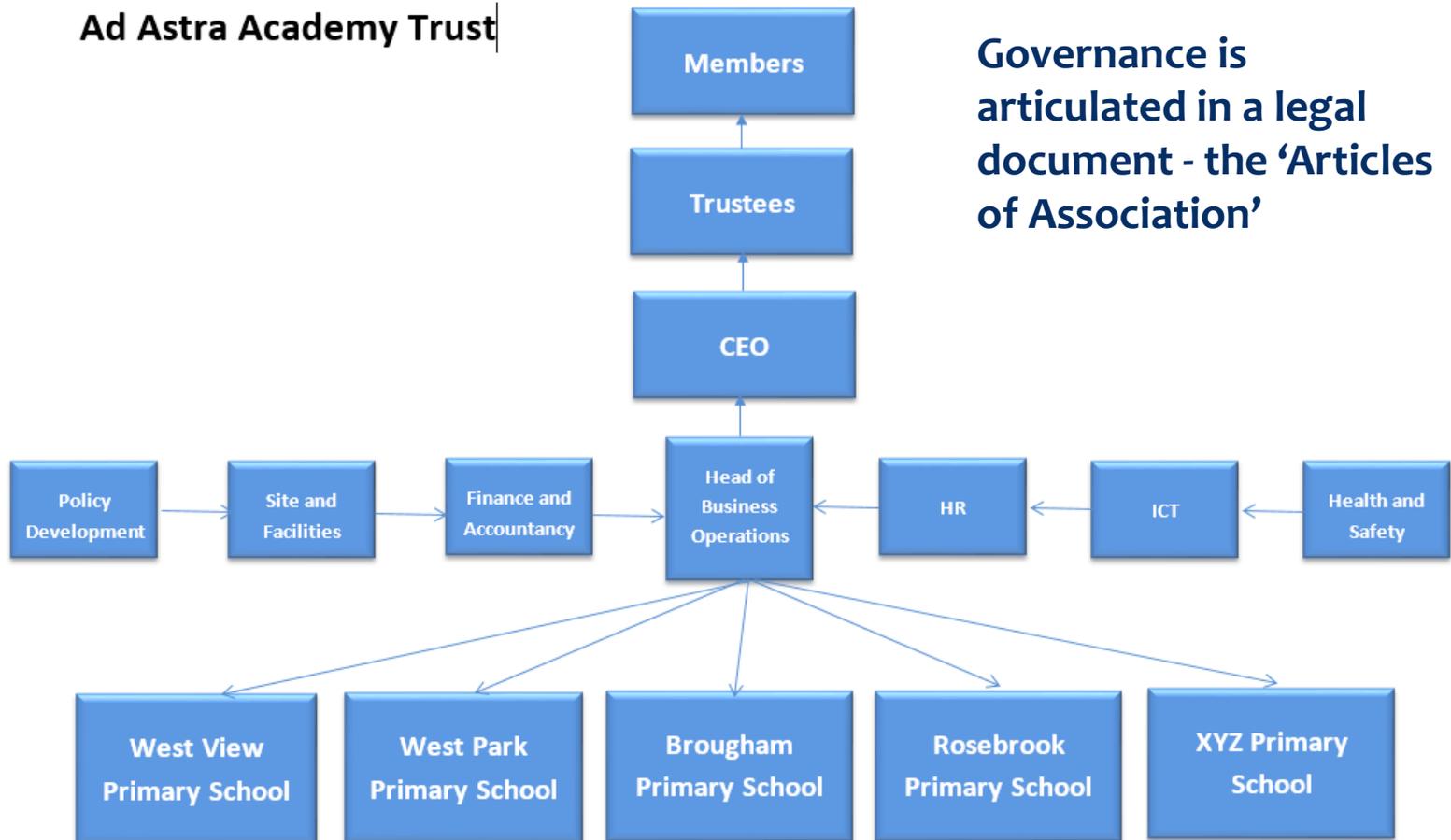
Key Conversion Considerations



Trust Governance

Ad Astra Academy Trust

Governance is articulated in a legal document - the 'Articles of Association'



Local Governing Bodies

- * Know their respective school – can drill down into the detail.
- * Continue to have a vital role in school governance.
- * Make local decisions under a ‘scheme of delegation.’ This is a document that determines the authority to make decisions.
- * Feed into the Trust board.
- * Parent representation
- * Staff representation



Invest time in Ethos

- Trustees invested a lot time and energy in the production and articulation of our fundamental principles that underpin our Trust and future growth strategy.
- What permeates through our ethos is the view that poverty is not an excuse for underachievement. **All** children must be given the opportunity to achieve. **All** children deserve an outstanding educational experience with staff who have the *moral purpose* to make this happen.

Invest time in Scheme of Delegation

The scheme of delegation determines who has the authority and responsibility to make decisions within the Trust.

A good scheme of delegation ensures decisions are made efficiently and effectively and has a strong accountability framework.

A poor scheme of delegation will produce a weak accountability framework that is unclear and has the potential to tie the organisation up in a web of inefficiency and duplication.

Finance

Changes to financial management is arguably the biggest fundamental change to schools post conversion;

- * Funding agreement is the 'rulebook' on which the academy receives its funding. A breach can result in closure
- * Changes to payment profile – monthly, quarterly, termly
- * Cash in the bank.. cashflow – major consideration particularly in the formative months until balances are received from the LA
- * Audit schedule – much more stringent and is as much about governance as it is about the 'numbers'

School Improvement

- * Shared collaboration in a culture of honesty and openness at all levels of the organisation
- * Acceptance of alternative ideas
- * Rigorous moderation
- * Network of good practice and support
- * Trust-wide CPD opportunities
- * Succession planning opportunities

Ad Astra as a Sponsor

As a Trust we believe that through;

- Working collaboratively with all school stakeholders to identify and action areas for improvement.
- Sharing what we know is good practice.
- Allowing the leadership team to focus on educational outcomes (with support) by taking care of the business aspect of running a school.

We can provide effective sponsorship to schools that need direction and support to raise standards.

Sponsorship – Key Considerations

What we promise any sponsored school that joins the Trust is;

- A culture of openness and honesty
- A willingness to listen – ‘you know your children best’
- A commitment to improve the school and the outcomes for all children
- A ‘partnership to improve’ - although sponsorship brings clear responsibilities and accountabilities we do not see it as a takeover!
- An acknowledgement of reciprocity
- An acceptance that there will be potentially difficult decisions and conversations

People

- * Staff are your biggest resource – important to keep them aware of plans
- * TUPE transfer of staff to the Trust
- * Considerations of transferring staff - informal briefings with staff and unions will make formal consultation much easier
- * One set of HR policies and procedures for the Trust
- * Think about any TUPE ‘measures’ carefully i.e. changes to current terms and conditions post conversion
- * Trust is a scheduled employer under TPS and LGPS
- * Be aware of cross-LA boundary HR implications

Land

- * Land and buildings transfer to the Trust on a 125 year lease from the LA
- * Trust becomes responsible for the upkeep and development of the site
- * Flag any known land or shared ownership issues as early as possible with the legal team – can delay conversion
- * Less than 3000 pupils means significant capital investment is via a bidding process to the EFA

Growth

- * Considered approach to growth. Capacity is essential to MAT expansion.
- * Effective and detailed due diligence is a **must** from an educational and business perspective to ensure organisational stability. Crucial to know as much as possible about the incoming school.
- * Trustees are responsible for educational and financial standards for ALL schools in the MAT.

Our Future

- * Plans to grow the number of schools joining the Trust.
- * Not grow too large that we lose the close relationship with schools.
- * Achieve economies of scale – budget
- * Share good practice
- * Self preservation – we don't want to be taken over by a larger Trust!
- * Shift away from Local Authority control of schools – a need to build internal resilience

Think Carefully



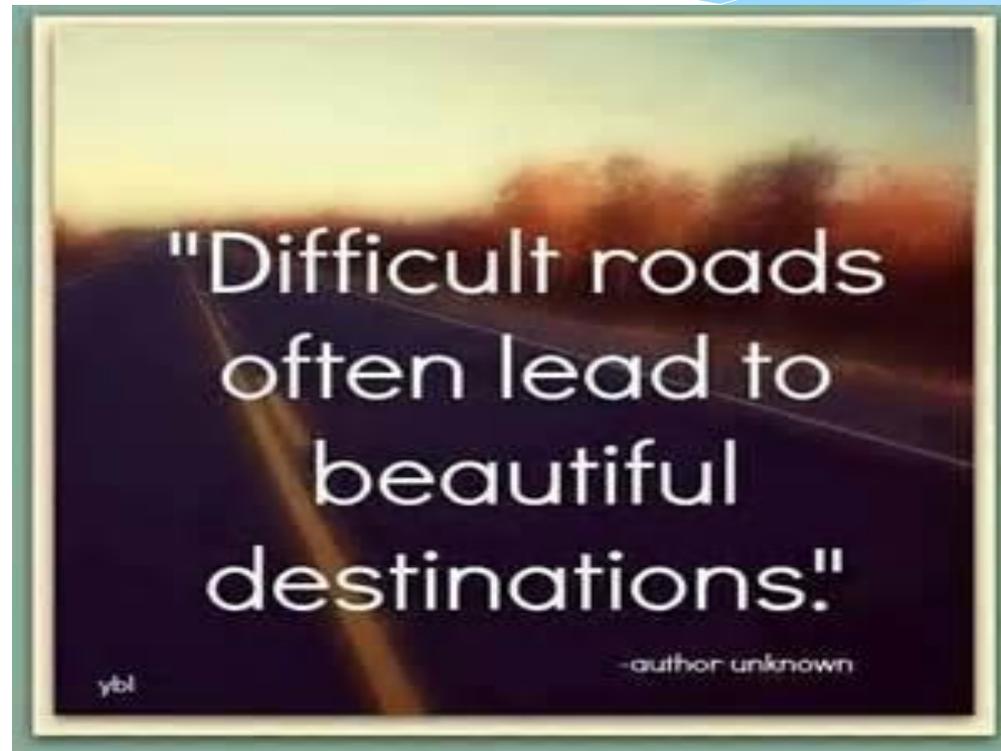
Across Boundaries



It's not going to be easy...



.....final thought



... Think about

- * The future in terms of sustainability, capacity, leadership and governance. There may be difficult initial conversations but careful planning will make things easier further down the line...
- * Plan for growth in terms of what is right for the Trust and what they can bring and not who is your 'friend.' Do your due diligence. Don't have a friend build your extension, what do you do if it goes wrong?
- * Don't be constrained by only considering schools or MAT's within your LA area. Cross LA schools can bring alternative ideas and best practice. However be aware of HR implications!

Thank you for listening
Do you have any questions?
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