KING EDWARD VI COLLEGE

*Consultation to dissolve the Sixth Form College (SFC) Corporation and to enter into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education in relation to a new 16-19 academy, to be formed on transfer and dissolution of the SFC.*

CONSULTATION PERIOD

31 MARCH 2017 to 31 MAY 2017

***The Corporation of King Edward VI College is proposing to join a Multi-Academy Trust, to be established by Coventry University and known as Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust (the Trust).***

***To qualify for membership of the Trust, the Corporation of King Edward VI College would be dissolved in order that King Edward VI College can convert to a 16-19 academy and join Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust.***

***We are consulting on our proposal to:***

1. ***Legally dissolve the Corporation of King Edward VI College.***
2. ***Enter a funding agreement with the Secretary of State in relation to a new 16-19 academy and join Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust as a founder member.***

***We are pleased to provide further details on our proposals here. We believe there is an exciting future ahead of us and we welcome your feedback.***

**OVERVIEW OF OUR PROPOSAL**

King Edward VI College has collaborated with Coventry University for a number of years and both organisations share a commitment to working together to create new opportunities for progression for students, staff and our community.

This document provides an overview of our proposal to strengthen that collaboration by becoming a member of the Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust. We see this not only as a natural next step in our collaboration with a leading university, but also an opportunity to provide a unique student experience at King Edward VI College.

We believe the proposal will also enhance the resilience and capacity of the College and addresses challenges we face as a small college and support our strategic vision. The aim of the Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust is, “To *transform the futures of young people through excellence, innovation and opportunity*”. This aligns closely with and extends our own vision to provide an outstanding education that promotes social mobility.

If the proposal goes ahead, King Edward VI College and Cadbury College would be founder members of the Multi-Academy Trust, which could grow to include other colleges and schools. The Multi-Academy Trust, as a single legal entity, would have overarching responsibility for the governance of its member academies, although the overarching principle is that all members operate with a high degree of autonomy that preserves and enhances their unique identity.

**THE REASONS FOR MAKING THE PROPOSAL**

* **Higher quality and standards:** through the shared expertise of both Coventry University and partner colleges we would be able to ensure even better quality provision for all students.
* **Organisational resilience:** as a small college our finances will benefit from cost reductions through shared procurement, shared services and access to the substantial infrastructure of Coventry University. As an academy we would not be required to pay VAT and this would generate further significant savings.

* **New opportunities for Higher Education and Employment**: the formal and close link with the University and its industry partners would enhance and accelerate our existing work and provide new opportunities for students.
* **Economies of scale:** we are no longer able to achieve further savings as an individual organisation but we could achieve this collectively with like-minded partners. The College is already lean and has implemented all cost saving measures possible, without compromising quality. Savings generated would enable us to pursue innovative projects and ensure resources remain in front line teaching and learning.
* **Development and progression:** we would be able to offer new and high quality staff development opportunities with the University that will help us to retain talent and continue to attract the best staff.
* **University resources:** the College would benefit from access to a range of back-office functions such as shared IT services, human resources, marketing and legal. This would not only generate cost savings, but also provide access to a range and level of service that would ordinarily be beyond our budget.
* **Enables Growth:** Academy status supports our ambitions to grow and work closely with other schools and colleges who could also join the Trust.

If we do not take this action, as a small college we cannot guarantee the continued high quality education offering to our community. We have to respond to changing policy and trends if we are to thrive and seize good opportunities that enhance the achievement of our vision, align with our values and secure our future.

**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL?**

* **Raised aspirations:** by working in a structured and collaborative way with a world-class university partner we can provide fresh and innovative opportunities for our students that raises aspirations and accelerates progression.
* **A unique student experience:** access to university faculties, staff and learning resources will provide students with a unique and rich sixth form experience. Very exciting opportunities become available for innovation and making our students education highly relevant to the needs of their next steps – we will be able to give them more than other sixth form providers can.
* **Employability and progression:** Coventry University has excellent employer links and delivers excellent progression into the local labour market. Membership of the Multi-Academy Trust would provide the scale to help the College to develop existing employer links and establish even better partnerships to benefit our students.
* **Professional services:** we will be in a position to access high quality professional services at scale that are affordable (and, at times, without cost) freeing up management time and resource to focus even more on teaching and learning and even better student outcomes.
* **Raising standards and improving quality:** more funds would be available to spend directly on frontline teaching and learning needs. Alongside this there would be sharing of ‘best in class expertise’ across and between members of the Multi-Academy Trust to further raise standards and outcomes for students.
* **Investment opportunities:**

Through joint economies of scale we could afford to make more investments in IT in particular, and this could be supported by the University’s purchasing power.

* **More opportunities for staff**

As a multi institution organisation there would be more opportunities for career progression, best practice sharing across institutions and a wider CPD offer than we could guarantee as a standalone institution.

**WHAT WOULD CHANGE?**

**If the proposal is implemented the key changes would include:**

* Change of status to academy, part of the Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust
* There would be a change of employer to the Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust
* The existing governing body would dissolve and be replaced by a new Multi-Academy Trust board
* The chair of the King Edward VI College Corporation would become a Trustee of the new multi-academy trust board
* The College would have a local governing body that supports the College and reports to the multi-academy trust board (A majority of members of the local governing body would be from our existing board)
* The College would no longer pay VAT
* Access to back office services at a much more competitive rate than currently available, enabling more money to be spent on teaching and learning priorities
* As a 16-19 Academy we would be required to enter into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State. The model form of that document can be found: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-and-free-school-funding-agreements-multi-academy-trust> .

**WHAT WOULD STAY THE SAME?**

* The name, identity, values, vision and mission of King Edward VI College would remain
* Uly Lyons would continue to be Principal of the College
* Teachers will continue to teach at King Edward VI College only
* Staff terms and conditions would remain the same
* Staffing structure would remain the same
* Students would remain registered at King Edward VI College

**TIMELINE AND DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

We are consulting on our proposals for a two month period from 31 March to 31 May 2017. Following consideration of the consultation outcomes, if the Corporation of King Edward VI College wishes to proceed we would aim to become an academy and join the Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust on 1 August 2017 (or as soon as practical afterward).

**TELL US WHAT YOU THINK**

We welcome your feedback about the proposal. As part of this consultation process, we are particularly keen to hear from interested parties in relation to the following questions:

1. Do you consider the proposal to dissolve the Sixth Form College Corporation and establish a new 16-19 Academy to be positive or negative? If so, why?
2. Do you consider that there will be a positive or negative impact on the local community or those with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) as a result of this proposal?
3. Do you consider the proposal that the new Academy Trust enter a funding agreement with the Secretary of State in relation to the 16-19 academy to be positive or negative? If so, why?
4. Do you have any other comments that you would like to share?

To share your feedback please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/kingedwardvicollege> before 31 May 2017.

A summary of the consultation and its outcome will be published within two months beginning on the date after the end of the consultation period and the summary will be available free of charge to anyone who requests it.

**FAQs**

**How will these changes affect students?** Students would remain registered at King Edward VI College. We would continue with our aim of providing the very best education for all students and our ongoing commitment to improving quality.

Students are currently represented on the board of King Edward VI College. Current legislation does not permit students to sit on the board of a Multi-Academy Trust. However, students can be members of the local governing body of each college and we would continue to facilitate that process.

Overall we anticipate that our proposal will enhance student experience at King Edward VI College by providing access to diverse and unique experiences of higher education and employment.

**Will we get more money as an Academy?** 16-19 academies receive the same level of funding per student as sixth form colleges. However, as an Academy we could claim back VAT, which we are unable to do as a sixth form college. Therefore, our overall financial position would be better.

Additionally, through joining the Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust we anticipate further savings through access to procurement via the University and through shared services across the Trust.

**How will these changes affect staff?** Currently, the employer for all staff is the Corporation of King Edward VI College. If the conversion goes ahead the Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust would employ all staff. Staff are legally protected to transfer under the same employment terms and conditions - this includes pensions. Continuity of service is protected, and all staff will be consulted in accordance with the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations.

We believe that being part of a Multi-Academy Trust would provide greater opportunities for staff than may be available in a standalone college including increased professional development opportunities for all staff, enhanced career progression across the members of the Trust, opportunities for secondments and mentoring. By operating within a shared structure we also expect greater resilience during times of demographic dips.

**Who holds Academies to account?** We would still be accountable to Ofsted. Academies are also accountable to the Education Funding Agency and the Regional Schools Commissioner.

Parents would continue to be involved in the governance of colleges through the Local Governing Body.

**How are Academy Trusts governed?** They have a Board of Trustees made up of people with a blend of educational, legal, financial and HR skills and expertise. Their role is to make sure that the Academies offer the best possible education for their students. They also have a responsibility to make sure the Multi-Academy Trust runs effectively, efficiently, and compliantly.

Trustees are volunteers and are not paid. The Board of Trustees may delegate many of its powers to a Local Governing Body(s), which will have a mixture of representatives from parents, staff, students and the local community.

**What input do parents/staff/stakeholders have as part of the consultation/decision making process**? Parents, staff, students and other stakeholders will be involved in the consultation process. Their views will be considered by each Corporation’s Board of Governors as part of the decision making process. The Governors will, however, make the final decision.

**Is the consultation process a vote on whether to proceed?** No. The decision whether to go ahead has to be, and can only be, taken by the Corporation of King Edward VI College. The consultation is an opportunity for interested parties to comment on the proposal. These comments will be considered by Governors before making any decision to proceed. The other parties who have to confirm we can proceed are the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Transactions Unit (part of Education Funding Agency).

**FAQS Coventry University**

**Why is Coventry University doing it?** We’re a university. Education is our cause. We want to raise aspirations and create opportunities in the communities we work in. We want to strengthen our links in the area and open up more opportunities for progression to students and staff (our own and in the academies).

**But you deal with older students, not Sixth Formers? What expertise do you have?** We think learning is for everybody. We are not restricted by age – our College offer (CU) and university attracts mature students too, for example. Coventry University has a strong record in teaching and learning, raising educational standards and measuring impact.

We will work with the expertise in the Colleges already to share best practice and look at different routes for progression.

Education has changed. Young people and students want different ways and opportunities to access the skills and learning they need. And we will seek the best in the secondary sector to advise us too.

Our offer is expertise in managing high educational standards and professional back-office services to allow teachers to focus on pupils’ learning.

**Will students be forced to go Coventry University?** No, not at all. We would welcome and encourage anybody from the academies to come to Coventry University, but our overriding aim is to raise aspiration and achievement and encourage students to think about the opportunities in higher education in general. We want staff and students to get familiar with the Uni, think about getting job-ready, and then choose the best progression route for them.

**WHAT ARE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A SIXTH FORM COLLEGE AND AN ACADEMY**

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Sixth Form College (SFC) Sector** | **Academy Sector** |
| **BORROWING** | SFCs are able to borrow, i.e. from private banks/enter into finance leases. | Academies cannot borrow without Secretary of State consent. |
| **VAT** | Cannot recover VAT. | An SFC converting to and Academy will be able to reclaim VAT. |
| **AGE RANGE** | It is easier for a SFC to start admitting younger students. | Recruitment of under 16s would place the 16-19 academy into the scope of the Admissions Code.  There is no barrier to an 11-16 school, or primary school joining a multi-academy trust. |
| **REGULATION** | SFCs have more independence than Academies. Please see the EFA guide on the law and regulation, which applies to SFCs and Academies: <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/357068/statutory_schools_policies_Sept_14_FINAL.pdf> | Academies are more heavily regulated than SFCs. They are subject not only to charity law (to the extent that it applies to exempt charities), and company law. They are also accountable to EFA through their funding agreements (and the Academies Financial Handbook 2016). |
| **ADMISSIONS** | Not subject to Admissions Code. | There is no requirement for 16 to 19 academies and free schools to comply with the Schools Admissions Code, but their admission arrangements need to be fair, objective and transparent. |
| **INSPECTION** | Common Inspection Framework | Common Inspection Framework |
| **PERFORMANCE MEASURES** | 16 to 19 academy performance is reported in the 16 to 18 performance tables  Independent Learning Record. | 16 to 19 academy performance is reported in the 16 to 18 performance tables  16 to 19 academies established from sixth-form colleges as part of the area review process complete the ILR so there is no change in data collection processes. |
| **INTERVENTION** | The same triggers are applied to determine if a 16 to 19 academy is underperforming as those applied to SFCs. In summary terms:   1. an overall Ofsted judgement of inadequate 2. performance below the National Minimum Standard set each year | The same triggers are applied to determine if a 16 to 19 academy is underperforming as those applied to sixth-form colleges.  RSCs are responsible for monitoring educational standards in academies in their area. If a 16 to 19 academy is judged inadequate by Ofsted, RSCs will consider appropriate improvement action in the first instance  EFA monitors and intervenes on financial performance in academies. |
| **GROWTH** | Not possible to operate schools within the FE setting. Less opportunities for growth, other than through a sponsorship arrangement. | Model allows for growth, leading to increased purchasing power, security and potential to deliver financial benefits. |
| **FUNDING INITIATIVES** | Less funding initiatives available to sixth form colleges. This is may be due to the fact the academies are central in Government policy. | Academies have access to funding initiatives, which are not easily accessible to SFCs (Capital funding/RPI (insurance indemnity scheme). |
| **CAPITAL FUNDING** |  | MATs with at least five academies and more than 3,000 pupils will receive a capital funding allocation to deploy strategically across their estate, to address their priority maintenance and expansion needs. |