



11 March 2022

Dear St Wilfrid's

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO JOIN THE HURST EDUCATION TRUST

As part of the consultation process and following the meetings held on 11 January 2022, we wrote to staff and parents/carers on 15 February inviting stakeholders to complete a survey form to tell us what they thought about the proposed conversion - and whether they supported it or not, and why.

The results from the public consultation feedback form were as follows:

- 47 respondents (90.4%) indicated that they supported the proposal
- 0 respondents (0%) indicated that they did not support the proposal
- 5 respondents (9.6%) indicated they were unsure if they supported the proposal

Governors have had the opportunity to consider the strength of stakeholder feeling and review the comments that were raised through this survey. There were three issues raised and these are addressed at the end of this letter.

In addition to the consultation survey, stakeholders were provided with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) at the beginning of the consultation process and were provided with a web link to submit further questions. Interestingly, the volume of questions raised early on in our consultation process was higher than average for a two-form entry primary school. However, after our responses were shared and published on our school website on 28 January, the number of further questions was lower than average for a similar sized school. The Governing Body takes this, alongside the survey results, as an indication that the questions were satisfactorily answered and is very grateful to stakeholders for their engagement and support throughout the whole consultation process.

At our recent meeting governors reviewed our stakeholder feedback and voted unanimously to continue with the proposal to convert to academy status. This means that the governing body will begin the legal process of joining the Hurst Education Trust and work towards an academy conversion date late in the summer term.

The governors remain determined to secure the best possible future for our school and will keep communicating with parents and staff throughout the process. If there are any further questions, we would encourage you to email us on: governors@stwilfrids-hh.school

Once again, thank you for your ongoing engagement and support in helping us work towards the very best future for our school.

Yours sincerely,

Jill Garraway
Chair of Governors

Simon Hateley
Headteacher

Further issues raised during the consultation survey

Comment: *Having worked in the independent schools sector, I can see what pressure schools are under to perform and I would like to know that:*

- 1. St Wilfrid's will not become academically selective over its pupil intake; and*
- 2. students will not be pressured to achieve results unnecessarily or over pressured.*

Response: (1) St Wilfrid's will remain non-selective. It would not be permitted to become academically selective. (2) The Governing Body and Hurst Educational Trust (HET) are committed to academic excellence and working to ensure that all pupils achieve their academic potential. We recognise that a broad and balanced curriculum is essential, that pupils are individuals with differing needs and that excessive pressure would be counterproductive and inappropriate.

Comment: *As sometimes these decisions are made, they happen and then are totally the wrong thing to do in the long run but by then it is too late.*

Response: All we can do is make our decisions on the best information available at the time. The Governing Body believes that joining HET provides the best opportunity for the school and its pupils – current and future. If any significant concerns arise during our ongoing work on this proposal, we will respond to them. It is also the Department for Education's vision that all schools become 'part of a family of schools in strong academy trusts' - and a government White Paper on driving forward the academisation agenda is expected shortly. The Church of England is actively working with Regional Schools Commissioners to take this forward for church schools.

Comment: *Better communication - letters in pupils diaries, letters home, virtual meetings, face to face meetings (not just 1 attended by a very small number of parents), video message from Mr Hateley/Teachers/Governors, do this a few times and you'll have communicated properly. It has all been done electronically which is good but with the best will in the world unsure how many parents get time to properly read it.*

Response: Communication is an ongoing process. Mr Hateley and Ms Strange are frequently on the school gate so that they are available for parent /carer questions. Please feel free to feed in any specific concerns about our proposal to join HET. Electronic communication (in our case via SchoolPing), as well as the school website are the accepted norm for school communications. We recognise that parents / carers are busy people which is why we send reminders for key messages. Any further comments on this proposal can be sent electronically to: governors@stwilfrids-hh.school