



### Transforming SPWT to a Multi-Academy Trust

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| <b>Outcome requested:</b>  | Council is asked to <b>consider</b> the proposal for St Paul's Way Trust (SPWT) to become the founding school within the QMUL-Sponsored Multi-Academy Trust (working title University Multi-Academy Trust, UMAT), <b>consider</b> the proposed name of the UMAT, and to <b>consider</b> delegating authority to a small sub-group of Council to approve the application to the Department for Education ahead of the next meeting of Council.   |
| <b>Executive Summary:</b>  | <p>This paper summarizes the proposal to transform St Paul's Way Foundation Trust into a University Multi-Academy Trust with QMUL as the lead sponsor.</p> <p>Noting the long-standing sponsorship of SPWT, Council is asked to consider whether the governance, risks and liabilities for the UMAT are proportionate.</p> <p>Council is asked to consider the proposals and, if agreed, delegate authority to a small sub-group of Council to approve the application to the Department for Education, planned for submission in April-June 2016. The planned start of the UMAT is September 2016.</p> |
| <b>QMUL Strategy: strategic aim reference and sub-strategies [e.g., SA1.1]</b> | SETLA strategic aim 2.1, providing outreach activities to widen participation.  |
| <b>Internal/External regulatory/statutory reference points:</b>                | The application to form a multi-academy trust will be considered by the Department for Education.   |
| <b>Strategic Risks:</b>  | Potential vulnerability of SPWT as a stand-alone non-academy school.  |
| <b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>   | Not applicable.   |
| <b>Subject to prior and onward consideration by:</b>                           | SPWT Governors and Trustees (and staff, parents and the public via consultation), otherwise by QMSE only.   |
| <b>Confidential paper under FOIA/DPA</b>                                       | No  |
| <b>Timing:</b>   | The application to the Department for Education is planned for submission in April-June 2016. The planned start of the UMAT is September 2016.  |
| <b>Author:</b>   | Rebecca Lingwood and Grahame Price (Head of SPWT)   |
| <b>Date:</b>   | 3 February 2016   |
| <b>Senior Management/External Sponsor</b>                                      | Rebecca Lingwood (VP, SETL)   |

## **Transformation of St Paul's Way Foundation Trust into a University Multi-Academy Trust**

### Background

1. Since its formation five years ago, St Paul's Way Foundation Trust has become well established. The school is going from strength to strength. The original 11-16 school has been much enhanced by the addition of a sixth form in 2012 and a primary in 2014. The new build to accommodate the latter will be on site shortly in a partnership with Poplar Harca and the Local Authority. A new research centre in an adjacent building opened earlier this year. Ambitious plans for the future include a much-expanded sixth form, with a further new build.

2. The governance model of SPWT (with QMUL being lead sponsor) has worked well, with clear responsibilities between the Trust (chaired by Professor Philip Ogden until 31 October 2015 and thereafter by Professor Rebecca Lingwood) and the governing body (chaired by Professor Peter Heathcote). New members have been added to the Trust, including the University of Warwick, UCL (via the Institute of Education), and Poplar Harca. The other Trustees are King's College London, University of East London, Andrew Mawson Partnerships, XL Catlin Ltd, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) and the NHS Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group (THCCG).

3. The Trust has enjoyed very good relations with LBTH throughout. However, of late it has become apparent that the non-Academy status of SPWT is severely limiting the scope (for example, in securing capital funding for the required new sixth-form building) and the work of the school as a National Teaching School. There is also an interest in expanding our model to include other schools. The national context including the provisions of the Education and Adoption Act (which limits the role of Local Authorities further) suggests, therefore, that this is a good moment to set up a QMUL-sponsored Multi-Academy Trust (working title University Multi-Academy Trust, UMAT) from September 2016.

4. Since SPWT is an Ofsted outstanding school, soundings with the Department for Education (DfE) is very positive. The DfE and London Schools' Commissioner have indicated that they would be willing to agree to the creation of the MAT, with QMUL as the lead sponsor and SPWT as the founding school, without having to specify other schools that would join the UMAT.

### Proposal

5. A comprehensive consultation exercise has taken place regarding the intention of SPWT to become the founding school within a UMAT, for which QMUL would be the lead sponsor (as it is currently for SPWT). Meetings were held with staff, parents, the general public and professional associations and the overwhelming response to this proposal has been very positive. There were no material objections raised. The governing body of SPWT has been able to give assurances regarding current pay and conditions requests, which were both reasonable and identical to those entered into when the existing Trust was formed five years ago. The Trust Board has endorsed the proposal. QMUL was warmly received as the 'Lead Sponsor' at all of the meetings that were held.

6. All of the current Trustees (see 2 above) have expressed their enthusiasm to remain on the new UMAT Trust Board. Grahame Price, Executive Headteacher, and Rebecca Lingwood, Chair of the Trust, have liaised closely on the setting up of the new governance arrangements. The selection of Members, Directors and associate Directors (for each of the sub-committees) is at an advanced stage. We are delighted that Elizabeth Hall has agreed to join the Board of Directors (Trustees) and to become Vice-Chair of the Trust. It has also been agreed that we should approach the Worshipful Company of Drapers, following their close association with SPWT and QMUL, with a view to asking them to join the Board of Directors (Trustees). Each school within the UMAT will retain its own 'local governing body'.

7. The UMAT would be a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The charitable company's memorandum and articles of association are the primary governing documents.

The financial liability of each of the Members of the charitable company, including QMUL as the lead sponsor, would be £10. Rebecca Lingwood would be chair of the Members' Board. Other Members would comprise a subset of the existing Trustees, including LBTH.

8. Risks to QMUL of taking the lead sponsorship role in the UMAT include: reputational risks should schools within the UMAT perform badly; and QMUL's ability to provide individuals to sustain the same level of governance and estates expertise as currently. On the former point, the UMAT will have no obligation to take on any school, let alone failing schools, that it does not wish to. On the latter point, QMUL has developed extended experience of working with schools (e.g. through its co-sponsorship of the Drapers' MAT) and has a growing pool of individuals with interests in supporting schools, and in this way responsibilities do not necessarily have to fall to a small group within the senior executive. The UMAT would be self-financing, including administrative expenses. If the UMAT failed, as a state-funded entity, it would be put in special measures by the Education Funding Agency (EFA)/DfE until the problem was resolved. The Trust already has a lease from LBTH on the property occupied by SPWT so there is no change there in relation to QMUL's liabilities.

9. In the first instance it is anticipated that Grahame Price, Executive Headteacher of St Paul's Way Trust School (who, through his exceptional leadership, has turned SPWT into the outstanding school it is today), will be Chief Accounting Officer/Chief Executive Officer (CAO/CEO). It will be a key undertaking of QMUL to ensure effective performance management of the CAO/CEO and the development of appropriate management structures as the UMAT grows. Further, there would be some additional QMUL responsibilities, which would grow in scope as more schools join. Discussion at the Trust about how far existing Trustees would be expected to offer support to all schools in the UMAT concluded that this could be readily addressed in the same way it is now, i.e. Trustees would say what they can sensibly offer and these contributions would be balanced up, and of course further Trustees could be added to distribute the commitments. QMUL would, therefore, be in the same position as currently in terms of how far it felt it could offer activities across a number of schools.

10. As stated above, the founding and sole initial member of the UMAT would be St Paul's Way Trust, which includes the National Teaching School, as the 'founding school'. There are, however, a number of expressions of interest from other local schools and we would anticipate that over time several further secondaries and primaries would join the UMAT.

11. For example, following consultation to change its designation from a 14-18 University Technical College (UTC) to an 11-18 comprehensive school from 1 September 2016, Royal Greenwich University Technical College (RGUTC) has approached the UMAT as their preferred MAT for the new school. RGUTC enjoys sponsorship support from Transport for London, Waites Construction, Royal Borough of Greenwich and the University of Greenwich. All of these sponsors are keen to remain on the 'local governing body' and University of Greenwich has expressed a strong interest in becoming a Trustee within the UMAT should the UMAT agree, in due course, to RGUTC joining the UMAT. RGUTC will have an innovative curriculum including the 'Brunel Pathway' and there will be a strong emphasis on engineering (post 16); this can be usefully compared with the SPWT 'Faraday Pathway'.<sup>1</sup> While RGUTC's move from a UTC to an Academy is almost certain, the decision on whether it would join the UMAT clearly depends firstly on the successful formation of the UMAT and then on a careful due diligence, analysis and consideration by the UMAT, covering risks, finances and strategic fit among other matters.

12. Member schools would contribute 1.5% of basic formula funding to the UMAT and would receive high-level estates, HR and leadership and management support. SPWT finances have been well managed and financial planning is a strong feature of the current governing body. RGUTC has struggled to recruit students at age 14 and currently has a large deficit. The EFA would write off this deficit prior to joining the UMAT. The Local Authority (Greenwich) has agreed to cover all of the capital costs for expanding the current building to become a five-form

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<sup>1</sup> The 'Brunel Pathway' delivers an engineering strand while the 'Faraday Pathway' delivers a science strand.

entry comprehensive school with a large sixth form. Greenwich also has a 'new provision' funding formula that will support the new school as it grows. A comprehensive business model has been prepared and Greenwich pupil projections very clearly indicate that this new school is essential if the growing school population is to be addressed.

13. There has been much discussion regarding the type and scale of MAT to develop. The DfE is keen to support the development as a medium-sized MAT with between eight to ten schools, with this growth taking place over three to five years. Our view is that expansion should be carefully managed and phased not least to retain the distinctive and excellent performance of SPWT. The DfE has echoed the opinion of the SPWT governing body that the UMAT should retain geographical effectiveness and restrict growth to schools within LBTH and the neighbouring Boroughs of Newham, Hackney and Greenwich. There are discussions currently taking place with two LBTH schools, one Primary school (OfSTED 'Outstanding') and one Secondary (OfSTED 'Good'). Should these schools wish to join the UMAT and the UMAT agree to this, then their likely start date would not be before 1 September 2017. Trustees and sub-committees will play an active and decisive role in the growth of the UMAT identifying risks and carrying out due diligence.

14. To date, the working title for the MAT has been the University Multi-Academy Trust (UMAT). Although this would work well for schools within UMAT, thinking ahead it is now felt that a more inclusive name might help to further one of the key ambitions of both the Trust and the DfE, namely to nurture much closer relationships between schools and HE partners across the UK. Council is asked, therefore, to consider whether 'University Schools' Trust (UST)' more clearly encapsulates this ambition. This name reflects the fact that all schools within the UST would benefit from exceptional links with HE – links that will vary appropriately for the context of each school. The UST would also seek to create an affiliated membership scheme where other schools enjoying the benefits of close HE partnership could join to share best practice. Such schools might, for example, include UCL Academy, King's Maths Academy, The Drapers' Academy, UEA's Norwich Academy etc. It is anticipated that, over time, we might create a UST website, annual conference, newsletters and set up University school-to-school 'improvement partnerships'.

15. A key benefit of the proposal is that the UST would bring together the largest number of HEIs (including four Russell Group Universities) of any Trust in the UK, all determined to create an effective bridge between UK schools and HE. As such, it is very likely that the UST would quickly be regarded as being of national importance in the area of widening participation and curriculum design. Sir Kevan Collins, CEO of the Education Endowment Foundation has already expressed an interest in proposal.

16. Planned timings are as follows:

- The shadow governance structure will be in place by 1 April 2016.
- The DfE application and EFA agreement will be submitted in April-June 2016
- The QMUL-sponsored MAT will be formed by 1 September 2016

**Council is asked to:**

- Consider the proposal for St Paul's Way Trust (SPWT) to become the founding school within the QMUL-Sponsored Multi-Academy Trust (working title University Multi-Academy Trust, UMAT).
- Consider the proposed name of the UMAT: University Schools' Trust (UST).
- Consider delegating authority to a small sub-group of Council to approve the application to the Department for Education ahead of the next meeting of Council.