



BILBOROUGH
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE



Bilborough Sixth Form College

Consultation document

Consultation period: 1 February 2019 to 15 March 2019

Introduction

The Corporation of Bilborough Sixth Form College is proposing to join the Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust (the Trust).

This move is intended to safeguard the College's future and to preserve the distinctive Sixth Form College experience for students.

To qualify for membership of the Trust, the Corporation of Bilborough Sixth Form College would be dissolved in order that Bilborough Sixth Form College can convert to a 16-19 academy and join the Trust.



The Proposal

CONSULTATION PERIOD 1 FEBRUARY 2019 to 15 MARCH 2019

We are consulting on our proposal to:

1. Legally dissolve the Corporation of Bilborough Sixth Form College.
2. Enter a funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education in relation to a new 16-19 academy and join Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust.

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

Bilborough Sixth Form College is committed to working with partner organisations to create new opportunities for progression for students, staff and our community. It already works closely with a network of Sixth Form Colleges across England and with partner universities to achieve this.

This document provides an overview of our proposal to further strengthen opportunities for collaboration by becoming a member of the Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust, established by Coventry University. We see this not only as a natural next step in our collaboration with a leading university and other Sixth Form Colleges, but also as an opportunity to provide a unique student experience at Bilborough Sixth Form College.

We believe the proposal will also enhance the resilience and capacity of the College, ensure continuity for students 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 be the unique and vibrant Sixth Form College of choice, celebrating individuality, pushing boundaries, achieving excellence and launching exciting careers.

If the proposal goes ahead, Bilborough Sixth Form College would be the second Sixth Form College member of the Trust. The Trust, as a single legal entity, has overarching responsibility for the governance of its member academies, although the key principle is that all members operate with a high degree of autonomy which preserves and enhances our unique identity.



The reasons for making the proposal

Higher quality and standards: through sharing expertise with our partner college, King Edward VI Sixth Form College, Nuneaton, and Coventry University we would be able to ensure even better quality provision for all students.

Organisational resilience and continuity: 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 can reclaim VAT and this would generate further 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: The College is already lean and has implemented all currently available cost saving measures possible, without compromising quality. Therefore we are no longer able to achieve further savings as an individual organisation but we could achieve this collectively with like-minded partners. 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.

By taking this action we can guarantee the continued high quality education offering for our community. In the long term, we have to respond to changing economic, political and social trends if we are to thrive and to seize good opportunities that enhance the achievement of our vision, align with our values and secure our future in the context of static funding and inflationary costs.



What are the benefits of the proposal?

Raised aspirations: by working in a structured and collaborative way with other strong Sixth Form Colleges and a world-class university partner we can provide fresh and innovative opportunities for our students that raise aspirations and accelerate progression.

A unique student experience: access to university departments, 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 their needs in preparing to take 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 labour market. Membership of the Trust would provide the scale to help the College to develop its existing employer links and establish even better partnerships to benefit our students.

Raising standards and improving quality: more funds will be available to spend directly on frontline teaching and learning needs. Alongside this there will be sharing of 'best in class expertise' across and between members of the Trust to further raise standards and outcomes for students.

Access to skilled partners: King Edward VI College, Nuneaton will be our partner college. The link with the college will support our joint ambition to improve our students' experience and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

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 learning community than we could guarantee as a standalone institution.

Professional services: we will be less likely to need to contract in high-quality professional or specialist services, as these will be available at affordable rates (and, at times, without cost) freeing up management time and resource to focus even more closely on teaching and learning and even better student outcomes.



What would change?

If the proposal is implemented the key changes would include:

Change of our legal status to 16-19 academy, enabling the college to join the Trust.

Change of staff employer to the Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust.

The existing governing body would dissolve. The College would be governed by the Multi-Academy Trust board who would delegate authority to a Bilborough Local Governing Body. Bilborough's current governing body will act as local governors.

With academy status, the college would be able to reclaim VAT on payments.

Collaboration between back office services to ensure effectiveness and improve efficiency and allow access to professional services at a much more competitive rate than currently available, enabling funds to be re-directed into teaching and learning priorities.

As an academy the College would no longer be able to act as a sponsor for visas for international students and would no longer recruit international students.

What would stay the same?

The name, identity, location, values, vision and mission of Bilborough Sixth Form College would remain the same.

Students remain registered at Bilborough Sixth Form College, accessing the same provision in the same location

The College would still be headed by its own principal.

Teachers will continue to teach at Bilborough Sixth Form College only.

Staff terms and conditions.



Timeline & decision-making process

We are consulting on our proposals for a six week period from 1 February to 15 March 2019. Following consideration of the consultation outcomes, if the Corporation of Bilborough Sixth Form College wishes to proceed we would aim to become an academy and join the Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust on 1 June 2019 (or as soon as practical afterwards).

Tell us what you think

Governors welcome your feedback about the proposal. As part of this consultation process, we are particularly keen to hear your views on the following:

- 1) Do you support the proposal to dissolve the Bilborough Sixth Form College Corporation?
- 2) Do you support the proposal to establish a new 16-19 Academy?
- 3) Bilborough Sixth Form College, as a member of the BFMAT would retain its name, location and unique identity - please share your views on this proposed arrangement.
- 4) Do you agree that the proposal will support the quality of education for students and the range of opportunities for staff?
- 5) Do you consider the impact of the proposal on the local community is likely to be positive/negative / neutral?
- 6) Do you consider the impact of the proposal is likely to be positive/ negative / neutral on those with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation)?

To share your feedback please visit [our online survey](#) before 15 March 2019.

You may find the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and other information in the following pages helpful when completing the questionnaire.



FAQs

How will these changes affect students?

Students would remain registered at Bilborough Sixth Form College. We would continue with our aim of providing the very best Sixth Form College education for all students and our continuing commitment to improving quality.

Students are currently represented on the Corporation of Bilborough Sixth Form 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 Bilborough Sixth Form College by providing improved 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 benefitting from shared services across the Trust.

How will these changes affect staff?

Currently, the employer for all staff is the Corporation of Bilborough Sixth Form 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 opportunities for enhanced career progression across the members of the Trust, professional development and mentoring.

Who holds Academies to account?

We would still be accountable to Ofsted and the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Academies are also accountable to 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 in compliance with rules and regulations.

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



FAQs

Who is the CEO of the Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust?

Ulysses Lyons is the Principal of King Edward VI College, Nuneaton and also serves as the interim CEO of the Trust. Mr Lyons has held substantive roles in Sixth Form Colleges across the country and brings unique expertise to a multi-academy trust operating in the Sixth Form sector.

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 the 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 Bilborough Sixth Form 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 and Skills Funding Agency).

If Bilborough College joins Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust how will it support and work with schools and colleges locally?

The College remains wholly committed to serving its communities across Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County, Derby City and South East Derbyshire and work with school and college partners will continue as normal.

The College remains unaligned with any particular local Multi Academy Trust and will continue to work proactively with all school partners to help staff, pupils and their parents understand what it has to offer making special arrangements for taster days and open events as required.

We do however, anticipate that joining Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust will serve to enhance our work with partners.

What changes will be made to the curriculum as a result of the change?

No change is anticipated. The College's provision will continue to be based on the needs of local young people for progression into employment, onto higher level apprenticeships and to university locally and across the UK and beyond.

The curriculum will continue to be planned locally according to local need. It will respond to new opportunities as they become available and will continue to consist of 16-19 study programmes based on A Levels and Applied General Qualifications with a broad enrichment offer.



FAQs Coventry University

Why did Coventry University create a multi-academy trust?

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 students' 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 University, think about getting job-ready, and then choose the best progression route for them.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A SIXTH FORM COLLEGE AND AN ACADEMY?

	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 an 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	As independent private corporations, SFCs have more independence than Academies.	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 ESFA through their funding agreements (and the Academies Financial Handbook 2018).
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

	Sixth Form College (SFC) Sector	Academy Sector
PERFORMANCE MEASURES	<p>16 to 19 academy performance is reported in the 16 to 18 performance tables</p> <p>Independent Learning Record (ILR)</p>	<p>16 to 19 academy performance is reported in the 16 to 18 performance tables</p> <p>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.</p>
INTERVENTION	<p>The same triggers are applied to determine if a 16 to 19 academy is underperforming as those applied to SFCs. In summary terms:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) an overall Ofsted judgement of inadequate 2) performance below the National Minimum Standard set each year 	
GROWTH	It is not possible to operate schools within the FE setting. There are fewer opportunities for growth, other than through a sponsorship arrangement.	Model allows for growth and to work in closer collaboration with schools and colleges if desirable which can lead to increased purchasing power, security and potential to deliver financial and quality benefits.
FUNDING INITIATIVES	Fewer funding initiatives are available to sixth form colleges. This may be due to the fact the academies are central to Government policy.	Academies have access to funding initiatives, which are not easily accessible to SFCs (Capital funding/RPI (insurance indemnity scheme).
CAPITAL FUNDING	SFCs bid for capital funding alongside schools and colleges.	The same as SFCs, with the exception that MATs with at least five academies and more than 3,000 students receive a capital funding allocation to deploy strategically across their estate, to address their priority maintenance and expansion needs.