

Park Grove Primary

Academies Discussion –
Feb - Sept 2016



Empowering Children through Creative Learning



What Governors did to arrive at initial Recommendation for Ebor?

- NE Yorks Cluster:
 - HT meeting with cluster HTs July 2015
 - HT & Chair attendance at all day meeting on future of the cluster – 13 January
 - HT's only follow-up meeting – 4 February – no additional specific proposals discussed
 - Further follow-up meetings to be arranged
- Partnership with a Secondary & 2/3 “like minded” Primaries:
 - Some brief and very informal discussions between the Heads
- Join a “major “chain such as School Partnership Trust (SPT):
 - Governors have talked to SPT as well as Absolute Return for Kids (ARK) and REAch2
 - Only SPT is currently operating in the Yorkshire area but in Doncaster
- Ebor Academy Trust:
 - HT, Chair, Vice Chair presentation November ‘15
 - HT & Chair meeting 13 January
 - A number of discussions between HT & other HT's who are members of Ebor Academy Trust to determine degree shared values & ethos. (HT attended Ebor's HT Meeting 11 – February)
 - Academisation Committee (Jo, Jane, Fiona & David) review with Richard Ludlow, CEO Ebor Academy Trust, 28 January
 - Chair attended the 9 February mini conference sponsored by the LA on MAT's & Federations – presentations by both Poppleton Ousebank & Knavesmire on “their MAT experience”
 - Academisation Committee meeting with Richard Ludlow, CEO & James Perry, CFO Ebor Academy Trust, 11 February to review & validate initial recommendations & the financial assumptions involved
 - HT's guest attendance at the monthly Head Teachers' Group meeting – 23 February



Political Realities

- Off the record conversations increasingly suggest that the Government remains committed to 100% academisation
- Accelerating budget restrictions on Local Authorities and DfE policies on academies in general, see next point, and the enforced take-over of “requires improvement” and “inadequate” schools further underlines this commitment
- In the Government’s consultation paper “Schools that work for Everyone”, launched only this month (Sept), page 7, paragraph 13 states, “It remains the Government’s ambition that **all schools** ultimately benefit from the autonomy and freedom to innovate and to meet the needs of their community that **academy status** brings, and we will be supporting **all schools** to make this transition.”
- In parts of the Country, schools seeking to join together to become a Multi Academy Trusts (MAT) are being “told” that they must join an existing MAT to prevent proliferation and maximise the number of schools in each MAT
- In York, given the Government’s stated stance, see above, the unofficial view remains that all schools will become an Academy within the next 3 to 4 years
- **It is not therefore, a question of if Park Grove becomes an Academy but when and with whom it partners in a MAT**



Why Decide Now – What's Changed?

- Pace of change within York rapidly accelerating – only parts NE & West clusters still to decide future direction but ALL are actively considering it
- PG must dictate this pace of change or risk being consumed by it – see previous slide on “Political Realities”
- Costs of LA Shared Services increasing rapidly as less & less schools take up the service – our HR costs increasing 26% in 2016/17
- LA infrastructure to provide advice, support & professional development rapidly diminishing – in the last 4 years advisor numbers have reduced from 50 to 5
- Without a funding change, our current financial reserves will be fully used up within 2 years – how do we then “balance the books”
- Ability to directly influence the development of Ebor Academy whilst it is still growing & does not have its full complement of 6 to 8 schools in 3 or 4 “hubs”
- More understanding of time commitment for HT & Governors to set up a Multi Academy Chain which is both difficult to manage and hugely diversionary particularly in view of an impending Ofsted Inspection and other improvement priorities
- **For these reasons, Governors did not evaluate a “Do Nothing” case**



What are our Key Decision Criteria?

- Options would only be considered if they allowed us:
 - to retain our own ethos, core values and style including our “no uniform” policy
 - to retain 100% responsibility for the management of our budget and spending authorities
 - authority to recruit all of our staff except the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team
 - the ability to maintain our own policies, procedures and teaching practice
 - to retain our existing Governing Board intact with 3 parent selected Governors
 - to maintain our links to the LA, our cluster and other schools
 - to be part of an organisation centred in York



Options Available – Pro's & Con's

Options	Pro's	Con's
<p>Join NE Yorks Cluster – 12 schools including Wiggington, Haxby, Strensall, New Earswick , Yearsley Grove, Haxby Road and Park Grove primaries and Joseph Rowntrees & Huntington secondary's some of whom are already academies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would probably retain own culture, values & ability to control internal change • Should be able to control own budgets & any “top slicing” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still unclear as to who wants to join who & what structure is most appropriate • Who controls & drives the agenda – no CEO appointed and no Trust Board • Different & private agendas • No shared common purpose, culture & values to promote enhanced pupil performance • Huge time commitment for HT & Governors to establish both external & internal organisation & monitoring structures • Would still be wholly reliant on CYC for shared services which are becoming more & more expensive • No experience or capacity for S2SS or teacher training & development to create “financial headroom”



Options Available – Pro's & Con's

Options	Pro's	Con's
<p>Join a geographically close secondary school & 2 or 3 primaries who share PG values to eventually replicate the structure of Ebor Academy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have Ebor Academy Trust model to build on • Would retain own culture, ethos & control of budgets • Could over time ,create common purpose, shared values & culture • More secure transition arrangements with chosen Secondary • Replicates the Middlethorpe & Archbishop Holgates models whose experience could possibly be requested & utilised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No time or expertise for a “driver” such as Richard Ludlow so who controls & drives the agenda • All schools at different points in their evolution • Huge time commitment for HT & Governors to establish both external & internal organisation & monitoring structures • Would still be wholly reliant on CYC for shared services which are becoming more & more expensive • No experience or capacity for S2SS or teacher training & development



Options Available – Pro's & Con's

Options	Pro's	Con's
Join a “Major” MAT chain such as SPT, ARK or REACh2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Established organisation with all “internal” systems & procedures fully in place• Developmental opportunities for staff & HT• Cost saving opportunities from available economies of scale• Less time commitment for HT & Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unlikely Park Grove's identity could be protected• Likely to impose culture & core values including uniform policies• Rigid systems of budgetary control & performance monitoring allowing no scope for local change• Minimal local decision making on staffing structures & changes to systems & procedures - would not have the current freedoms on policy making & curriculum setting• None currently operating in York – Doncaster nearest



Options Available – Pro's & Con's

Options	Pro's	Con's
<p>Join Ebor Academy Charitable Trust</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing culture of “working with” not “doing to” • Pupil achievement within a safe & caring community a central core value • Established organisation with all “internal” systems & procedures fully in place • Member schools retain their own identity, culture & ethos as well as control of their budgets & decision making • Strong developmental opportunities & support of staff • Already established as a quality provider of S2SS & teacher training & development • Would still “partner” with Park Grove if next Ofsted grading is RI • Additional £77 per pupil available which is currently “top sliced” by the LA for Educational Support (ESG) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be able to fully influence the on-going development of the Trust, Park Grove needs to join by 1 April 2017 at the very latest • Time commitment of HT, SLT & Governors over next 9 to 12 months with Ofsted visit still pending . (South Bank say it is TWICE the current meeting commitment) • Recent critical press coverage & knock-on parental concerns BUT less than 15% of Knavesmire parents completed the survey & all detractors committed to “fully supporting the school • At present, no direct involvement /relationship with nearest Secondary schools



Advantages of Joining Ebor Academy Trust - Summary

Park Grove Today

Improved Teaching & Learning:

- Shared best practice
- Practice outside Ebor
- More opportunities:
 - Specialist Teachers
 - School Improvement
- More & targeted CDP
- Support that is available & immediate

Improved Leadership Capacity:

- Head's Board
- Chair's Board
- Retention of the best
- Enhanced training through nationally recognised progs
- Participation in Ebor aspiring Leadership prog

Improved Pupil Outcomes:

- Specialist Teachers
- Wider Curriculum:
 - Languages
 - Visual Arts
 - Sport
 - SEN
- Scrutiny Committee
- Immediate response

Improved Financial Position:

- LA topslice = £77/pupil
- Economies of scale:
 - Items paid by Ebor
 - Scale discounts
- Surpluses from school Improvement prog's

Park Grove Tomorrow

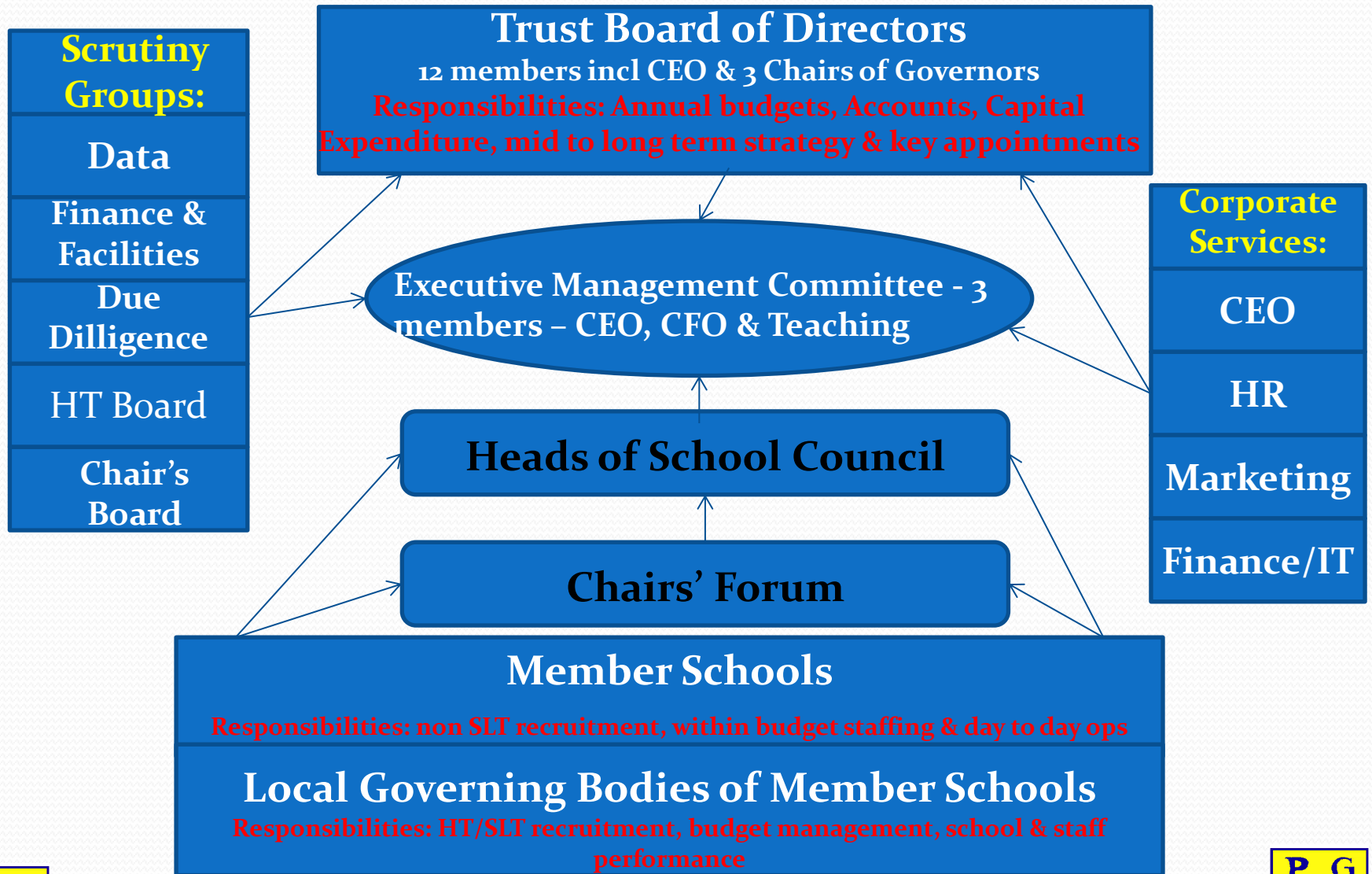
Government Policy remains committed to full Academy conversion by 2022
LA believes all York Schools will move to Academy status by 2020 at the latest



Empowering Children through Creative Learning



Decision Making within Ebor Academy



What Due Diligence have Governors undertaken?

- A meeting with the Executive Head of Hob Moor, an applicant school to Ebor, to discuss :

Key Issue/Question	Answer
Why were they making the decision now?	Hob Moor fully endorse the “political reality” & why decide now” slides
Why they had selected Ebor as an Academy Partner	Ebors’ people & values & the advantages listed by Park Grove
The key questions governors had and how they had been satisfactorily resolved	Similar to PG but governors now satisfied with the responses
How had parents and the wider community reacted during consultation	Some initial concern but strong support once parents better understood the case

- A meeting with the Head of Haxby Road Primary (HRP) & the Vice Chair of Governors, a member of Ebor’s Academy Trust, to discuss:

Key Issue/Question	Answer
How joining Ebor had impacted the school and improved pupil outcomes	Haxby Road has moved from an Ofsted “inadequate” to an anticipated “Good”
How the local Governing Board interacted with Ebor’s Trustee Board	Through the Head ‘s and Chair’s Boards
How the Head and Chair’s Boards impacted decision making	The responsibility of Local Governing Boards does not change under Academy Status. This is however, aided by an understanding of the “wider picture” through these meetings
How intrusive were the “Scrutiny Committees” & how had they helped	They help because their response is more immediate and they can help assemble resource from Specialist Teachers and/or other schools



What Due Diligence have Governors undertaken?

- A number of meetings with Richard Ludlow, CEO, and his Senior Team to both better understand why Park Grove should join Ebor & to ask and get answers to Governors' key questions:

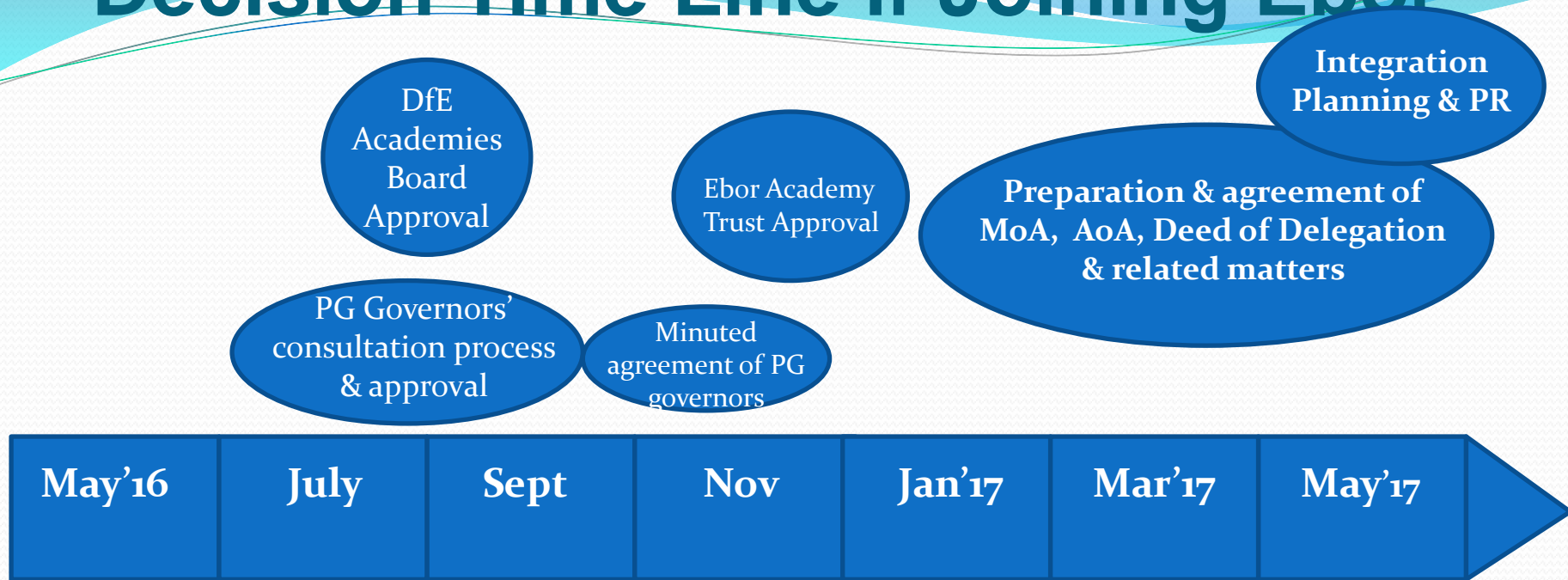
Key Issue/Question	Answer
Why join Ebor and why now?	For the reasons outlined in slide 10. By joining now, PG have the chance to directly participate in "shaping" the MAT to ensure PG's key requirements continue to be met
How are conflicting priorities resolved?	Through the work of the Head's and Chair's Board which agree such priorities amongst themselves
Will PG's Board of Governors continue to operate autonomously?	Yes, for all of the issues/decisions that relate directly to PG. Ebor will be involved the appraisal & recruitment of the HT. Ebor's Data & Finance scrutiny committee will in addition, more involved in school improvement than is now the case with the LA
How large will Ebor become and how will it change over the next 3 to 5 years?	3 to 4 "hubs" in Yorkshire with 8 to 10 schools in each "hub". No change will occur to Ebor's culture & ethos but management will have to in part decentralise, e.g. Head's & Chair's Boards

- A meeting with CYC's Director of Children's Services (Jon Stonehouse) and Deputy Director of Education (Maxine Squire), to discuss:

Key Issue/Question	Answer
What concerns the LA had if Park Grove were to partner Ebor as part of their MAT	They confirmed Ebor enjoyed an excellent reputation in the City and would in their view, be a "good" partner for Park Grove
If the LA itself was considering becoming a sponsor for its own MAT	Their view was that such a move would remove the LA's current independence to help, support and advise York schools. It was possible however, that councillors could take a different view although nothing has been published to date



Decision Time Line if Joining Ebor



Meetings & agreement with DfE, LA, Parents, TU's, Staff & the wider Community

External signage & letterheads, press releases & other related matters

Governors, HT & SLT



Summary Conclusions

- On the basis of stated government policy and off the record comments, Governors are convinced that it is NOT a question of IF Park Grove becomes an Academy but WHEN & WITH WHOM
- Over the last 3 years, the Head Teacher and Senior Leaders working with the Governing Board, have led a transformation of the school from an Ofsted “weak requires improvement” to a solid “good in all categories”. It is therefore, in no one’s interest that such an achievement would be compromised by a “rush to judgement” and/or a mistaken belief that a partnership with Ebor was not in everyone’s interest
- A considerable amount of time has already been spent to ensure Governors fully understand the advantages and disadvantages of a partnership with Ebor including:
 - Asking a substantial number of questions and discussing their responses – see PG website for details
 - Talking to Hob Moor, another applicant school, to ensure their experiences match ours and that they share governors’ views as to the overall benefits
 - Talking to Haxby Road Primary, an existing member of Ebor’s MAT, to both understand how joining Ebor impacted the school and pupil performance in particular and to ensure Ebor’s answers to PG’s question could be validated
 - Talking to the LA to ensure from their experience, Ebor was a “good” partner

