

# Rationale for forming a Catholic Multi Academy Trust (MAT)

# Welcome and Prayer

- **Welcome**
- **Prayer**

Lord; grant us the will to work together, and the wisdom to listen to each other's views. Help us to build a family of schools that supports the development of each individual child, offers a stimulating working environment for staff and provides a focus for the local community. Let our schools become an example of Christian witness in our world and Christian roots in our communities. *Amen*

- **Introductions**
  - Teresa Selvey (HT, St Louis)
  - Clare Robinson (HT, St Felix)
  - Julie O'Connor (Diocesan Director)

*Add in other Directors present.*

# Agenda

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## Rationale for Catholic MAT in the West of the Diocese

- Diocesan Position
- Vision for Our Lady of Walsingham CMAT
- Core values of Our Lady of Walsingham CMAT
- What is a Multi Academy Trust?
- The structure
- A time for change?
- Opportunities and advantages
- What will stay the same?
- Key Principles
- Concerns and thoughts
- Timeline
- Conclusion
- Questions?

# Diocesan Position

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- A direction from Bishop Alan & Julie O'Connor to encourage schools to set up formal, legal partnerships in the Diocese
- The Diocese will no longer allow schools to become academies individually
- Our cluster would be potentially the second Catholic Multi Academy Trust in East Anglia, i.e. a group of academies coming together under one trust
- We have a strong family of schools that could take advantage of the current strong position to shape the future of our Catholic Schools
- Some vulnerability in Suffolk schools – protect and support all Catholic schools
- There are certain non-negotiables, including:
  - Catholic Head, Deputies and Head of RE
  - Conditions of service remain the same...

# Vision

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Our vision is to deliver outstanding education, spiritual and moral outcomes for our children regardless of background.

Our ethos will be based upon full inclusion, high expectations, innovation, outstanding teaching and learning with a relentless focus on the needs and potential of every child.

Each school within Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi Academy Trust will become an outstanding school and work equitably with other schools within the MAT for the mutual benefit of all our pupils.

# Vision

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Each school will continue to maintain excellent working relationships with other schools, parishes, community organisations and the local authority to ensure that they fully serve their local communities.

# Values

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Our core values are:-

- To provide education of the highest standard rooted in Catholic values
- To serve the needs of the wider community through partnership working
- Ensuring effective child protection and safeguarding
- To build capacity and resilience
- To provide stability and governance in leadership
- To encourage innovative and well-considered decision making
- To support grow and develop the next generation of Catholic school leaders

## What is a Catholic Multi-Academy Trust?

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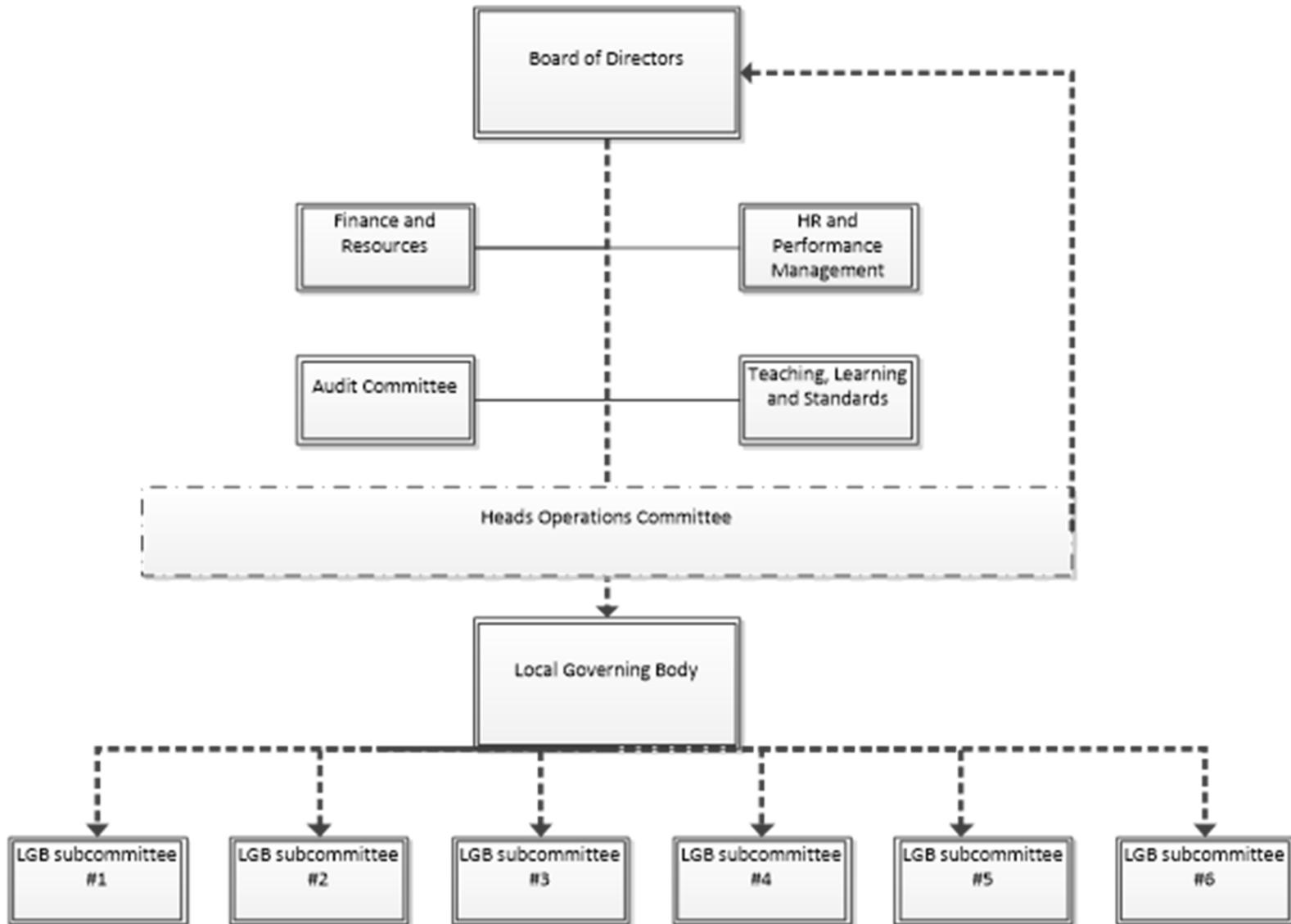
- A Catholic Multi Academy Trust is simply a number of Catholic Academies who agree to work together within an overarching trust body
- A shared vision underpinned by each school's individual Mission Statement and Aims
- Each school retains its own local governing bodies

## Work done to date

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- April 2013 -St Louis Primary School awarded Academy status
- May 2015 - Diocesan Schools commission considered models for formal collaboration between Catholic Schools
- July 2015 – Bishop Alan met with Heads and Chairs to encourage formation of Multi Academy Trusts
- September 2015 – Heads of St Louis and St Felix presented proposal for partnership working to both governing bodies
- November 2015 – Diocesan Catholic Heads meeting – Western Area Heads agreed to explore forming a Multi Academy Trust
- December 2015 Joint Working Party formed between St Felix and St Louis Governing Bodies
- Spring 2016 Governing Bodies agreed to form a MAT.
- 12<sup>th</sup> July 2016 – Academy order granted
- 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016 – Planned conversion date

# MAT structure



## Our schools

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- Same age range from Nursery to Year 6
- Same PAN (Planned Admission Number)
- Collaboration within Bury Catholic Pyramid
- Joint Catholic celebrations
- Like-minded Headteachers who work well together
- Joint working on common areas of school development and improvement – notably to raise attainment in Mathematics
- Joint working to address issues of recruitment and retention of high quality staff and sharing of good practice

## A Time for Change?

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- Schools cannot stand on their own any more.
- There is a National expectation that schools will work together and support each other – this is a better model for school improvement.
- Decline in powers and quality of support from local authorities – brokers and commissioners not deliverers – weakened capacity to support or provide strategic lead
- Protect Catholic schools from being forced into becoming academies
- In an increasingly fragmented system, schools must find alternative ways to secure their viability and effectiveness

# Opportunities and advantages for our children

**Academies benefit from greater freedoms to innovate and raise standards, including:**

- Freedom to direct all our funding to meet the needs of our children
- Schools would no longer have to contribute 10% directly to capital projects
- VA Schools pay 20% VAT on capital equipment and IT at the moment - academies do not
- The Trust could use its purchase power/economies of scale to ensure the best value (cost and quality) in purchasing goods and services, such as Finance and HR services, meaning more money to spend on the children
- The ability to jointly employ specialist staff directly, eg: business manager, IT technician, Educational Psychologist, Parent Support Worker that we would not otherwise be able to afford

## Opportunities continued....

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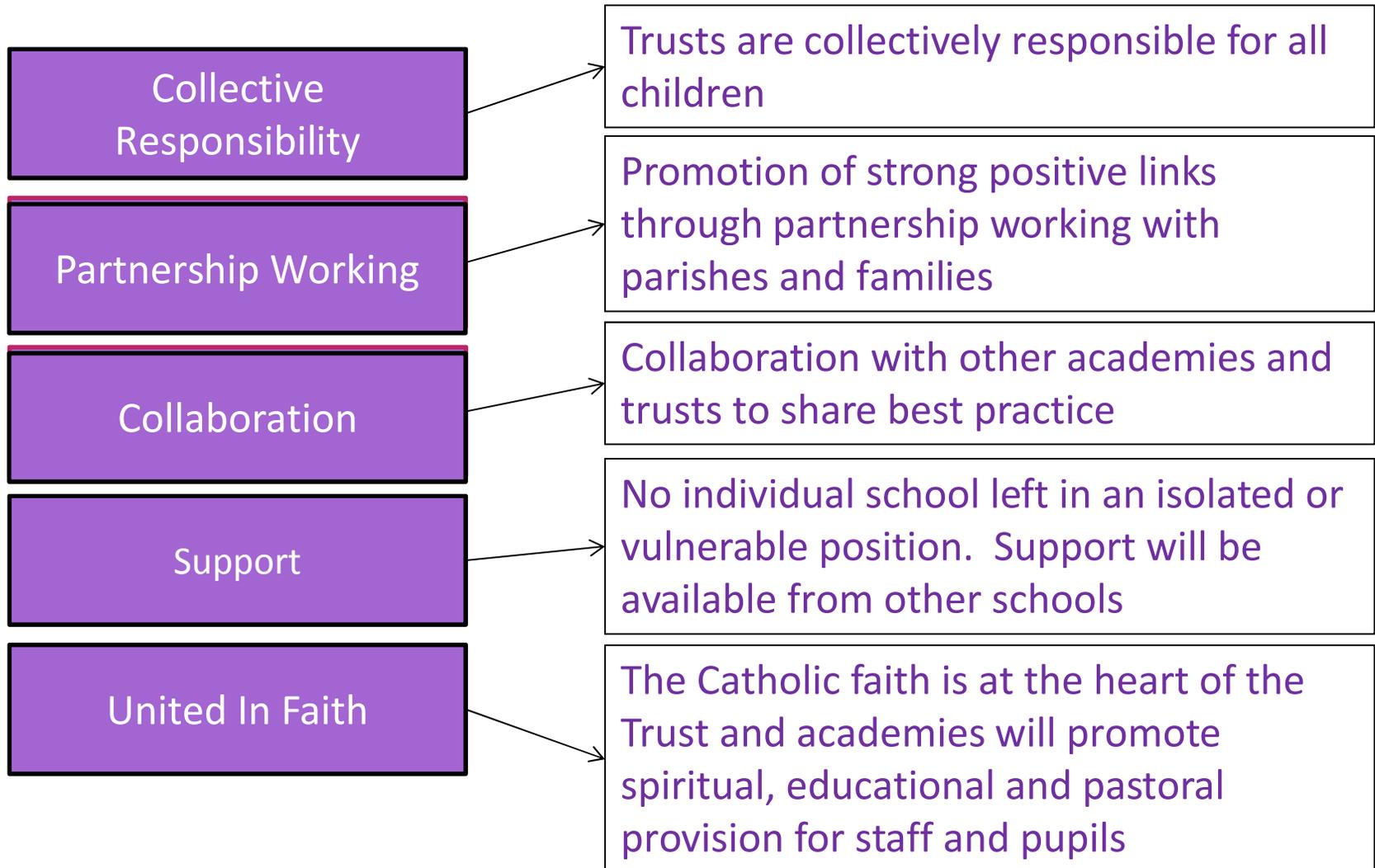
- Freedoms around the delivery of the curriculum
- A seamless learning journey from 3 to 11 years
- Develop collaboration to stimulate innovative research based approaches, share best practice and co-ordinate focussed CPD
- Quality assurance - High level accountability and review of standards in schools to identify and share areas of strength and target support to specific schools
- To become a Living Wage employer
- The potential to commission new schools and annexes
- Enhanced opportunities for shared projects, events, activities
- Opportunities for professional development and growth of staff – sustainable leadership

## What will stay the same?

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- Each school retains its Catholic ethos, name, uniform, local policies such as discipline
- The commitment to pursuing the highest academic and pastoral standards
- Parental representation on the local governing bodies
- Admissions – schools can still select on grounds of faith
- Schools required to follow the law and guidance on admissions, special educational needs and exclusions as all schools
- All staff will continue to be employed on same terms and conditions and their pensions are protected
- Schools' links with existing networks continue
- Ofsted will still come!

## Catholic Multi Academy Trusts – Key Principles



# Concerns and thoughts

**Won't this cost a lot of money?**

Legal fees to convert. A one off grant supports this.

**Does becoming a MAT mean schools have less money and therefore need to lose staff?**

No. Schools would have the same level of funding and it would be received directly to the MAT who then distributes it. It is up to the schools to budget for costs accordingly and understand requirements.

**Would schools continue to use the Suffolk Local Authority?**

Yes if that is best for them, however the Local Authority is reducing services. It is likely there would be shared Finance and HR services within the MAT.

**Why change a system that is working?**

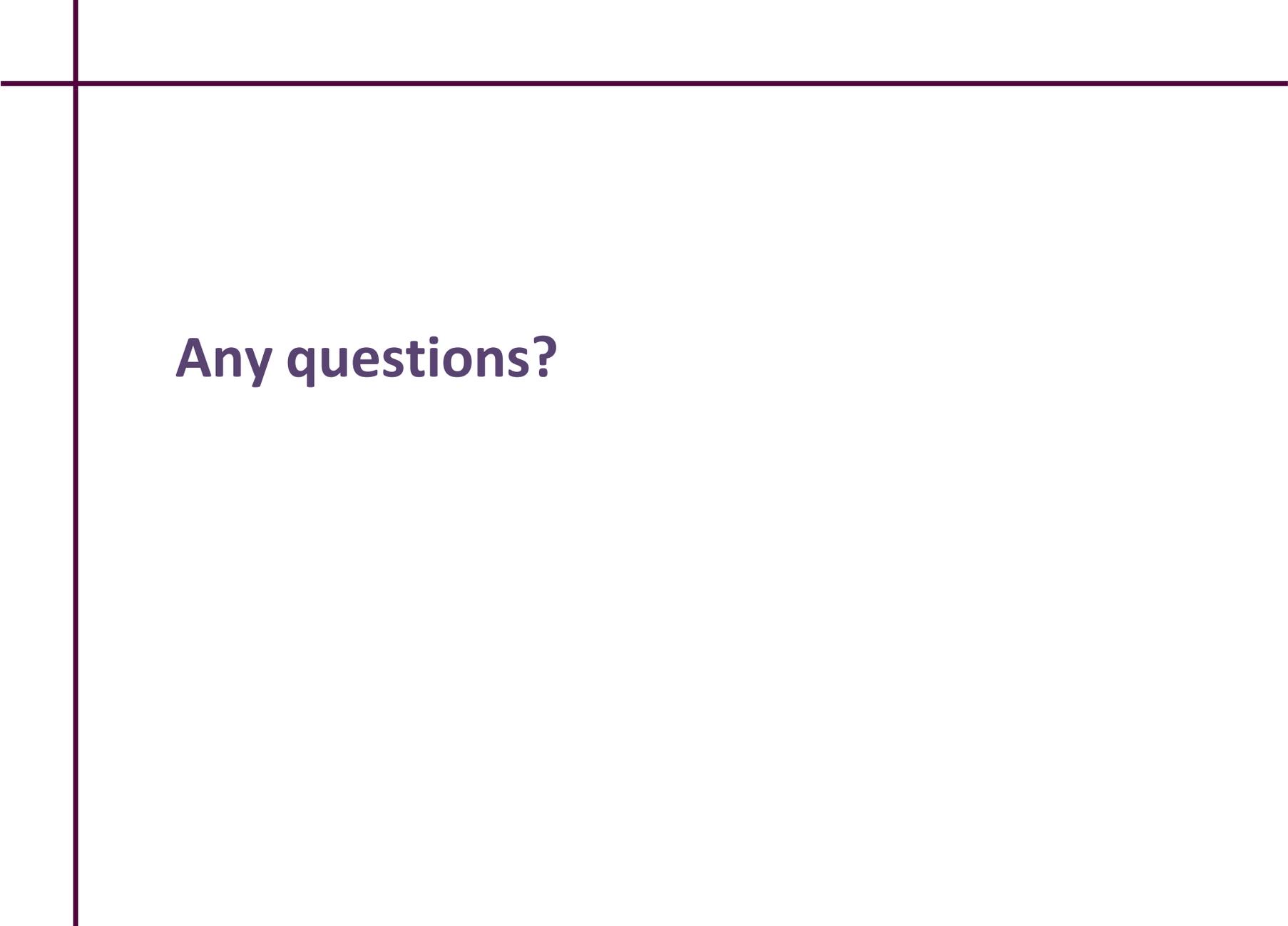
Some would love to keep the status quo. However, the government is pushing school to school work, rather than LA support. Also the Diocese would like a system to protect and support the mission of the Catholic church. Starting from a strong position, rather than a forced position/position of weakness, we can be directly involved in shaping the future of our schools, to best suit the needs of our communities

## In conclusion

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We are enthusiastic about the potential benefits of working in closer collaboration with other Catholic schools. We envisage that the formation of the MAT will give fresh impetus to working together, and will enable us to:

- *protect our Catholic identity*
- *strengthen mechanisms for support and challenge*
- *improve learning opportunities for pupils*
- *promote innovation and creativity*
- *widen opportunities for professional development*
- *maximise the financial resources available.*



**Any questions?**