



**NASUWT**

The Career Teachers' Organisation



10 December 2009

The Chair of Governors

Wetherby High School

Dear Sir

This is a joint union response to the formal consultation on Trust status. As a consequence of being unable to consult with our members at the school it is, of necessity, generic in its content. The comments below are intended to protect the interests of our members without jeopardising the future success of the school.

Staff should be concerned about changes to their conditions of service as a result of Trust status and we have seen nothing in the documentation received to allay such fears. At the “Open Meeting for Parents” on 23 November Brian Owen referred, in a section on “where will the money come from?”, to “negotiating contracts for staff”. We don’t know what this implies but we would require an undertaking that staff conditions of service and pension provision would not be affected by any change in the status of the school. Even with such an undertaking there is no guarantee that the Trust will, in future, keep to such a commitment.

We understand that the University of York and The British Library are “committed to learning development, young people and the community and have a real desire to contribute in significant ways”. We would expect a school of your standing to have developed significant and robust relationships with multiple partners who would aspire to such a statement. To restrict the formal trust partnership in this way seems to be very limiting on the aspirations of the school and its students. The section “What will it mean for our students?” has nine statements, describing the “wide range of benefits”, which we would expect to be included in aspirational statements of any secondary school.

In your opening remarks on 23 November you referred to “raising funds, getting facilities” presumably in the belief that charitable status gives access to immediate and sustainable funding. The Trust would be responsible for the land and fabric of the school; what would be the implications for the cost of maintenance and repairs without any financial input from the Trust? Services such as personnel and HR will have to be outsourced or bought in from Education Leeds which also has implications for the budget. Any additional sources of funding through its charitable status for capital costs will be subject to limits on availability due to the economic downturn and the probability of increasing numbers of schools all bidding for such sources of funding.

We believe that reliable and worthwhile partnerships are more likely to be achieved using the expertise and experience of educational professionals. Mechanisms for this are already in place through wedges, clusters and families of schools within the existing framework of the local authority as well as opportunities for involvement with Further and Higher Education institutions and local business. We believe that the school should stay as a well established and strong partner within the Leeds Local Authority with its accountability to the democratically elected representatives of the community.

Yours sincerely

Tim Hales

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