



Consultation about whether to convert to an Academy

Further Information about the Academies Programme

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Further Information about the Academies Programme

Finance

What happens now?

Central Government, through the DfE, provides Local Authorities (LA) with a sum of money each year known as the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The LA uses this grant to:

- Fund nursery provision in their area.
- Fund individual school budgets.
- Provide a range of services on behalf of schools such as free school meals entitlement, education welfare services and special educational needs services.
- The LA also tops up the funding for its centrally provided services through the Council Tax.

The LA is responsible for setting a formula for determining each school's fair share of the total money delegated to schools and for those services that will be provided by the Council on behalf of schools. This allocation methodology is based on recommendations made by the Schools Forum, a representative group of headteachers and governors from across the County. The school uses this delegated grant to spend on things such as staff salaries, computer equipment, books, heating, building maintenance and cleaning.

In addition to this, Tarporley School receives funding for Post 16 education.

The LA funds the additional support required for children with Statements of Special Educational Need. As a Foundation School, the Governing Body own the school buildings and land. The money paid to the school is accounted for in a set of accounts prepared by office staff. A special committee of the Governing Body, called the Resources Committee, is accountable for how the money is spent and for making sure that the accounts are accurate. The school's accounts can be inspected by the LA at any time.

Tarporley School also raises additional money from external funding sources.

No decisions have been made nationally as to how schools or academies will be funded after 2013. The Government are considering a national formula for distributing grants but it is not yet clear how academies will be affected by this. This therefore gives additional financial risk to both community schools and academies.

What would happen if Tarporley High School were to become an academy?

Academies are funded by the DfE through the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA). If Tarporley High School were to become an Academy, the YPLA would provide it with a General Allocation Grant (GAG) made up of two components:

- Core funding which is exactly the same as the school would have received from the LA.
- Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant (LACSEG) which would be Tarporley High School's share of the money, based on student numbers, which the LA currently spends centrally on those services that the academy would now be responsible for.

The LACSEG is the additional money that Tarporley High School would receive in comparison to an LA maintained school. On receipt of this money, Tarporley High School would need to decide how and where to buy the services that it needs and which are currently supplied by the LA. The school may be able to get those services less expensively than the LA currently charges, or it may have to pay more for them. Because the school would be buying services directly, the quality of the services it receives could improve.

Using the DfE calculator, the school has calculated that it would receive an additional £250,000 approximately, 6% of the school budget, each year in LACSEG funding if it becomes an academy which the school would use to invest in the afore mentioned services and enhance its provision. Although this is a substantial amount of money, it should not be the only factor considered when making the judgement on whether or not Tarporley High School should convert. The LA continues to fund support for children with Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN).

The LA would no longer have the right to inspect the school's accounts at any time. Instead, the school would need to have its accounts audited by a firm of accountants at least yearly.

If Tarporley High School becomes an academy, the Governing Body would not change the terms and conditions of staff, including pensions.

Also, the school buildings and equipment would be owned by a special type of charity called a trust. A trust is described in the Governance section of this document.

Things to think about

- Does it concern me that the LA would have less money to spend on providing shared services to a smaller number of schools in the county?
- Am I confident that the Resources Committee will continue to look after the school's money and to make sure that it is used for the benefit of the children if Tarporley High School becomes an academy?

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

What happens now?

The Local Authority (LA) has responsibility for assessing students and maintaining their Statements of SEN. It also, together with the school's SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator), has a responsibility to identify students that might

need additional help and then work with a range of school staff and outside agencies to develop an individual education programme that will help.

The Local Authority has responsibility for students with Special Educational Needs Statements. They have to:

- Ensure that students are appropriately assessed and statemented where necessary;
- Fund any individually assigned SEN resources;
- Monitor arrangements for SEN students in academies;
- Conduct reviews of the Statements of children in academies at least annually.

The school has to comply with the Admissions Code for England and any SEN obligations set by the LA.

What would happen if Tarporley High School were to become an academy?

The school would still have to comply with the Admissions Code and any SEN obligations. The LA would retain responsibility for students with Statements in an academy on the same basis as for statemented students in maintained schools. They would still have to:

- Ensure that academy students are appropriately assessed and statemented where necessary;
- Consider parents' representations for an academy to be named on a Statement and act reasonably in considering those representations;
- Fund any individually assigned SEN resources;
- Monitor arrangements for SEN students in academies;
- Conduct reviews of the Statements of children in academies at least annually;
- Monitor SEN provision and educational psychology services in the school;
- Fund student referral units;
- Fund education out of schools;
- Fund education for excluded students;

If it converted into an academy, Tarporley High School would additionally receive a share of funding for other provision in relation to SEN including: behaviour support services; licences and subscriptions (for instance for software); therapies and other health related, education and welfare services.

There are obligations on schools which convert to academies; these are equivalent to those placed on maintained schools. In practical terms, this would require new academies to continue to:

- Inform parents that their child has SEN and the special educational provision being made;
- An unqualified obligation to admit a child to the school if the school is named in the Statement;

Appoint a qualified teacher as SEN coordinator (SENCO) and ensure that any new SENCO would undertake prescribed training.

Admissions

What happens now?

As a Foundation School, Tarporley High School and Sixth Form College is its own Admissions Authority. It has its own Admissions Policy, agreed by the Governing Body in line with national code for Admissions. The school also handles its own Admissions Appeals via an independent panel. This has enabled the school to build on its already strong links with its Partner Primary Schools.

What would happen if Tarporley High School were to become an academy?

The school would still be bound by the statutory Admissions and Appeals Codes. The Governing Body would be the school's Admission Authority as currently. Governors would not seek to change the principles underlying the current Admissions Policy. The greater autonomy that academy status would bring to Tarporley High School would enable existing partnerships to be strengthened and extended.

Transport

What happens now?

The Local Authority (LA) has an obligation to co-ordinate school transport for all students living within the catchment zone of the school, in both East and West Cheshire. Tarporley High School, working with parents, has facilitated school transport for students living in Winsford who attend our school.

What would happen if Tarporley High School were to become an academy?

The Local Authority would still have an obligation to co-ordinate school transport for all students living within the catchment zone of the school, in both East and West Cheshire. The Governing Body is committed to continuing to facilitate transport for our students living in Winsford.

Curriculum

What happens now?

As a Foundation School, Tarporley High School and Sixth Form College must follow the National Curriculum. The school is subject to the same Ofsted Inspection regime as other maintained schools.

What would happen if Tarporley High School were to become an academy?

Academies are not required to follow National Curriculum except for the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science. This greater freedom to personalise and develop the curriculum would allow Tarporley High School to respond more effectively to the Wolf Review of Qualifications and the forthcoming National Curriculum Review, in accordance with student's needs.

Academies are subject to exactly the same Ofsted Inspection regime as other maintained schools; conversion would present no change.

Governance

Governance is about how the school operates and ensures a good quality of education for all its students, including those with special needs.

What happens now?

School governors bring a range of experience and interests from many walks of life. They work closely with others to make good decisions about school aims and policies. Governors work as a team of volunteers who are responsible for making sure the school provides a good quality of education. They do this together with the head teacher, who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school.

Tarporley School like all schools has a Governing Body. It includes:

- Parents elected by other parents in the school;
- Staff governors elected by the teaching and non-teaching staff;
- Local Authority governors;
- Community governors appointed by other members of the Governing Body;
- The headteacher.

Tarporley High School has 7 parent governors, 3 Local Authority (LA) governors, 4 Community governor, 4 staff governors (including the Headteacher) and 2 partnership governors. The number of governors may vary depending on the school's type or size. Governor appointments are for up to four years.

What would happen if Tarporley School were to become an academy?

The Governing Body would be responsible for establishing an Academy Trust. The Academy Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee. This type of company has no share capital and is required to utilise all its funds for achieving the educational aims of the school. The Academy Trust would then enter into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State for the running of the academy. The Academy Trust has a strategic role in running the academy and would be responsible for appointing the governors to the Governing Body.

Some of the governors would also be directors of the Academy Trust and would be responsible for the day to day operation of the school on behalf of the members of the Academy Trust. As now, some functions of the Governing Body would be delegated to specific committees. For example there are separate committees to deal with admissions, finance and resources, curriculum, safeguarding and staffing.

Their key responsibilities would be to:

- Ensure the quality of educational provision;
- Challenge and monitor the performance of the academy;
- Manage the school's finances and property;
- Employ staff;
- Enter into contracts on the Academy Trust's behalf.

It would be for the members of the Governing Body of the school to decide and agree, in discussion with the Secretary of State, who among them would wish to be members of the Academy Trust and which of them would wish to be governors of the Academy Trust. It is possible to be both a member and a governor.

If Tarporley High School becomes an academy the new Academy Trust governing body will continue as the direct employer of staff, continue to have direct health and safety responsibilities, continue to be the school's admission authority and are responsible for ensuring that the Academy Trust is solvent and well managed and that the school undergoes an external financial audit.

The DfE model Articles of Association have set a minimum of three governors, but not a maximum, appointed by the Academy Trust. The basic governance model would be decided by the Governing Body. The Secretary of State may also appoint additional governors in certain circumstances

Under the new regulations for converting to an academy, there is no requirement for academy schools to have an external sponsor e.g. from outside business and it is not expected that Tarporley High School would have such a sponsor.

The make-up of the Governing Body of an academy is determined by its Articles of Association. The Articles of Association can be adapted to mirror the current governance structure if so required.

As the Academy Trust is a charitable company, some of the Governors would also be directors and charitable Trustees, and would therefore need to comply with obligations under company and charity law.

Things to think about:

- Would academy governance arrangements be more or less effective than the current arrangements?

Building and Emergency Contingency Plans

What effects would Tarporley High School becoming an academy have on the school land and buildings?

As Tarporley High School is a Foundation School, the land and buildings are already owned by the Governing Body of the school. Should Tarporley convert to an Academy, the land would transfer from the Governing Body to the Academy Trust.

What happens if something happens to the building if we become an Academy?

There would be a General Annual Grant that would be paid by the Government to the Academy Trust. This would cover the costs of the academy including: staffing budget, repairs; servicing and maintenance of buildings (including redecoration,

heating, plumbing, lighting etc); maintenance of grounds (including boundary fences and walls); cleaning materials and contract cleaning; water and sewage; fuel and light (including fuel oil, solid and other fuel, electricity and gas); rents and rates; purchase, maintenance, repairs and replacement of furniture and fittings; and insurance.

If the academy building suffers damage which means that it cannot be used as a school, the Local Authority (LA) would be required to provide facilities for the children to continue their education. This is the same requirement that the LA currently has because its duty is to provide for the children and not the Academy Trust.

Would there be a specific insurance grant to cover for emergencies?

Academies are required to have insurance cover at specified minimum levels. They are also eligible to seek an Earmarked Annual Grant from the YPLA (Young People's Learning Agency) for emergencies, in the same way that an LA can pay a maintained school a contingency payment.

By becoming an Academy, would Tarporley School's building be more or less likely to be upgraded?

In the same way that LAs have a capital building programme, so there will be an academies building programme. If Tarporley School's need for capital investment was prioritised and met agreed criteria, it could be earmarked for investment. However, becoming an academy would not guarantee capital investment.

How to have your say

In order to make an informed decision, there are many factors to be considered. However, we hope the information provided has given you a summary of the Governing Body's position and a useful overview of the key issues. For more information visit:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies>

If you do have queries that have not been answered here or on the website above, then please raise them by:

- Emailing the school at: academyconsultation@tarporley-high.cheshire.sch.uk
- Mark your email, "Academies Consultation".