

## **Potteries Educational Trust Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021**

### **Annex 3: Potteries Educational Trust Growth Strategy**

The Trust is now in its second full year and aims to grow in a way that is both sustainable and adds value to each institution and child joining the PET. The PET's mission and purpose is the north star that guides everything.

We see growth as multi-faceted:

- Growth in terms of quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the learning community
- Growth in terms of community and the wider aspects of curriculum
- Growth in terms of student numbers at individual academies
- Growth in terms of numbers of institutions

The first of the above is covered in the document relating to school and college improvement strategy and the second and third are examined in detail in the PET strategic plan (copies available on request). This document will focus on the final point, and look at strategies and progress to date.

#### **Aims of PET Growth**

The growth of the PET is based on these factors:

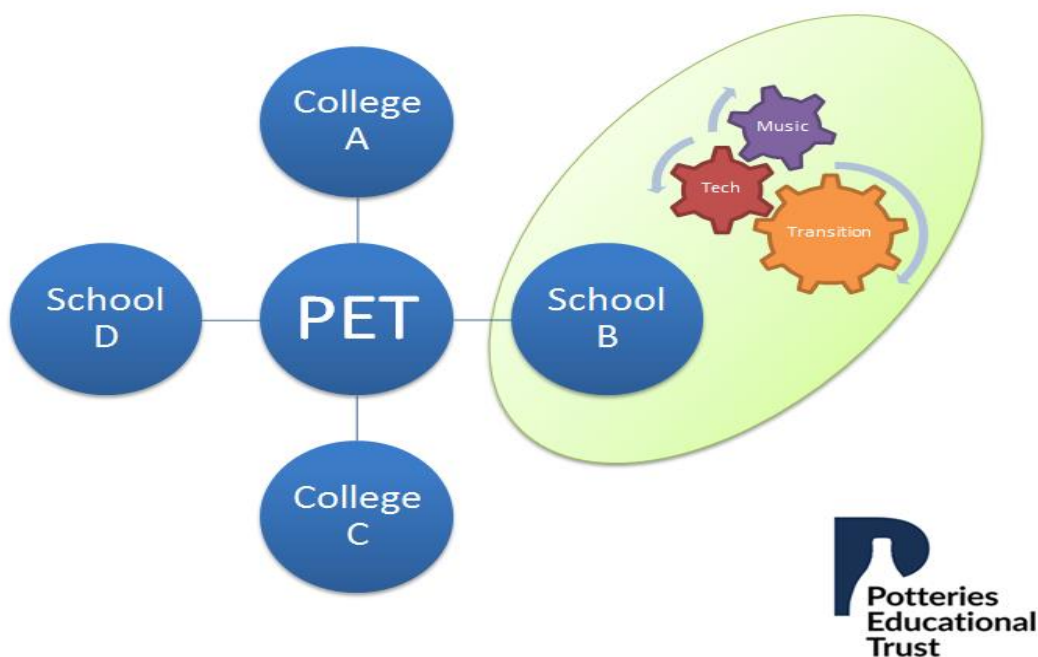
- Working within the parameters set by the Department for Education and the Regional Schools Commissioner.
- Meeting obligations (legal and financial)
- Adapting governance structures in light of the changing membership and context of those institutions.
- Responding to schools' current performance.
- Having the necessary financial resources.
- The capacity and capability of the 'Central Services'.
- The PET's capacity for delivering school improvement.
- The MAT's geographical spread.
- Attracting new schools and keeping them on board.

We seek to be a local Trust with all institutions within a 30-minute commuting radius from the Sixth Form College hub. There may be exceptions to this and we would consider a second hub based regionally at another strong provider educationally. In terms of numbers of institutions, we are looking in the first instance to be a Trust of between 5 and 10 organisations with a mixture of primary, secondary and post 16 organisations involved.

The concept of *subsidiarity* is important to the PET – the idea that individual academies are the local centres of expertise, with local priorities and delegated freedoms to function in such a way as to meet their local needs, within the over-arching oversight and support/challenge of the Trust.

Institutions are empowered by the Trust to make the most effective decisions for the students as close to the students as possible.

## Strategic model



### Progress to Date

A series of conversations, learning visits and business breakfast meetings involving the CEO and Headteacher of Biddulph High School have, or are about to, take place with around 10 secondary and primary schools in the area – chiefly focusing on the Moorlands secondary schools (all of whom are big feeder schools for the college) and their feeder institutions. Additionally, we are looking to bring in to the PET local primaries in near proximity to the University Quarter, whose students typically progress to the college's main feeder school.

All have been positive but as yet we haven't progressed with any school to the next phase. Nevertheless, the three most recent engagements have reached the full governing body stage and it is hoped that these three schools will seek to join as Associate Members in the very near future.

### Next Steps

*There is a principle at stake here, which is to only grow at such a rate as the PET has the capacity to integrate and bring about significant positive change. Measured growth also allows for further*

*evolution of the processes and systems of the Trust, with each school bringing its own unique character and expertise to the PET.*

Growth will focus on three main areas:

- Continued engagement with schools we have had conversations with, including invitations to PET training events, opportunities to staff share or indeed other resources sharing, and indeed any other opportunities to demonstrate the value and expertise within the PET, and the benefits of joining with us.
- Meetings with new schools as the opportunities arise and partly through discussions with the Regional Schools Commissioner and the local authority. We would seek however for this option to occur potentially after a couple of years to allow integration of new schools into the Trust first.
- The possibility of free school applications – this could include 16-18 mainstream schools, but also 16-19 free schools to replicate the success of the Sixth Form College and Biddulph High School sixth form in areas of lower educational standards and where there is a need for places – this is a longer term part of the strategy and only to be used once the Trust has a higher capacity to carry out such a task.

The first strategy above has been the main focus of energy thus far, but we will examine the next two more deeply and look at ways we can engage with each one going forward. The first strategy of engagement is a lengthy process that involves time and relationship building but we believe will be successful in the long-term. In addition to what is suggested above we will look to a range of ways to engage these schools including:

- Joint CPD
- Staff and curriculum resource sharing
- Invitations to joint tendering opportunities
- Involvement in master classes and mentoring opportunities
- Invitation to participate in curriculum activity, high achievers events etc.
- By offering educational opportunities to students within the North Staffordshire area and in doing so ignoring the political city / county border that discriminates based on postcode.

All of the above will be designed to be tasters at a smaller scale, but to give a flavour of what is on offer at the PET. We will also offer the unique option of Associate Membership of the PET in the first instance to new joiners, allowing an 18-month trial approach to potential Trust members. This will help to minimise the risk to both school and Trust and is a model that has been espoused by the former chief schools commissioner Sir David Carter.

Regarding engagement with other schools, we will endeavour to meet with both the RSC and the LA to discuss what we can offer as solutions to local problems. We believe the PET has a lot to bring to school improvement and good governance and wish to be active in doing so within the locality.

***Longer Term Option for growth:***

Regarding Free Schools, we will carry out an exercise looking at local and regional need before submitting an application – this will as indicated above be in later waves depending on need and timing of the application process and only once the PET has the capacity to do so.

There is attractiveness in creating a sixth form college environment in other urban areas of need, supporting social mobility and the generation of higher standards of teaching and learning as well as curriculum breadth and the wider student experience, and this is something we will seriously consider. The advantage of doing so for the PET is the business services capacity and expertise which resides already in the Trust which could provide these functions for a new institution, so lowering its cost base and freeing it up to focus on the core business of the organisation.

### **Growth Targets**

Establishing targets is demanding, given the lengthy discussions and negotiations needed with joining schools and indeed with any free schools. Thus the ambition below is simply that and subject to slippage:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Full Members</b>	<b>Associate Members</b>	<b>Total</b>
2017-18	1	1	2
2018-19	2	3	5
2019-20	4	2	6
2020-21	6	2	8
2021-22	8	2	10

The aim is that each year associate members from the previous year would convert to full membership (though not all may do so) which in itself should attract new joiners. Within 5 years we hope to be a Trust of around 10 institutions, promoting and displaying collegiate and collaborative working and in doing so improving the educational and social outcomes for the whole community covered by the Trust.