

**Business Case for proposed academy expansion for September 2017 implementation.**

**Bedfordshire East Multi Academy Trust Ltd [BEMAT]**

**Etonbury Academy [ETA]**

<b>1</b>	<b>The need to provide local schools for local children, ensuring a sense of community belonging and also promoting sustainable modes of travel.</b>
	<p>In accordance with Section 38 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 BEMAT wishes to fulfil its duty to promote community cohesion. The promotion of this expansion of Etonbury Academy which is local to and serves a catchment including the towns of Arlesey and Stotfold and the Parish of Fairfield will enable children living in the local community to attend the same academy fostering a coherent community identity and enabling community ownership to build around a range of extracurricular activities.</p> <p>If the proposed expansion of Etonbury Academy to 6 forms of entry with a PAN of 180 and a capacity of 1260 did not take place the pupils would need to be bussed to Samuel Whitbread Academy as the existing academy fills or if parents' preferred travel outside of the catchment, probably by car. By providing these local places for local pupils the need for travel is significantly reduced.</p> <p>In accordance with Section 76 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 BEMAT intends to support the local education authority to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel to meet the school travel needs of their area. The expansion of the academy also supports the LA in ensuring the sufficiency of provision local to the areas of demographic demand and supports this duty by reducing the need for car journeys and also limits potential growth in the cost of providing school transport on distance criteria to qualifying pupils to meet the Council's statutory responsibilities.</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>The need to create schools that are of sufficient size to be financially and educationally viable.</b>
	<p>BEMAT sets five year projections for all academies as part of its budgeting planning process. The estimated pupil numbers supplied by CBC admissions service and operational related costs show a surplus at Etonbury over the next five years. The forecast shows a £157,700 deficit in the current year [2016 / 2017] but this will be eliminated by Local Authority Growth Fund the application for which is being processed. BEMAT is confident that the expanded academy is sustainable in the long term.</p> <p>The academy will be ideally placed with six forms of entry [180 pupils in each year group] in terms of supporting a broad curriculum offer. Six forms of entry would be what most educationalists and their professional bodies would consider to be the minimum year group size to support the curriculum offer to meet the range of needs typical in a Central Bedfordshire context.</p> <p>BEMAT will have more options with the expanded school in shaping an excellent curriculum to meet the needs of students, especially at Key Stage 4</p> <p>The proposals to expand Etonbury Academy to provide the required additional middle school places, has not been subject of an options appraisal. However, the proposals provide for growth from within the local catchment and in all other</p>

relevant respects are aligned with the Council's Policy Principles for Pupil Place Planning in Schools.

The requirement to provide 240 additional upper school places serving the catchment of Samuel Whitbread Academy has however been subject of an options appraisal undertaken with Council support by Bedfordshire East Multi Academy Trust.

A summary of the key elements of the options appraisal follows:

The current site of Samuel Whitbread Academy was re-developed and expanded through the Bedfordshire Education Partnership PFI scheme. This increased the capacity of the school to 1758 places. Presently, the Sixth Form has more than 450 students on roll and each of the school's year groups are between 400 to 450 students in size.

The academy was graded as 'Good', including the Sixth Form by Ofsted in its last inspection in June 2014. The Academy proposes to achieve an 'Outstanding' standard with support of a new Chief Executive Officer, new Principal and the newly constituted Board of Directors, within the academic year 2019 / 2020.

As the Upper school serving the catchments that are undergoing significant demographic growth, demand for additional places for 13-19 year-olds would normally be accommodated within a redevelopment of the campus. However BEMAT has declared that accommodating the required expansion from 1758 places to 1998 places on the Samuel Whitbread campus would not be its automatic choice for a number of valid reasons, including the following statements made by the Multi Academy Trust for inclusion within this business case.

**Logistical Issues in Size:** BEMAT has made significant improvements at KS4 in the past two years, taking the GCSE 5A\*- C including Maths and English from 47% to 67% and significantly improving outcomes at 16+. However, KS 4 is currently at 52% and it is felt that increasing the size of year groups to almost 500, coupled with the expected expansion of the Sixth Form as a result of increased staying on rates will potentially hinder BEMAT's drive to deliver outstanding education across the board on the Samuel Whitbread site. The resulting size of the Samuel Whitbread campus would place it above the Council's own guidelines for the optimum size of Upper Schools, outlined in its Policy Principles for Pupil Place Planning in Schools.

**Issues with Community Disconnect & Transport:** At present approximately 80% of children are transported by bus to the Samuel Whitbread campus, many from Stotfold, Arlesey and the surrounding villages. It could be argued that this creates a 'community disconnect', hindering the development of positive relationships with children, families, and the community and to the detriment of sustainable extra-curricular and community projects. The 'remoteness' of the Samuel Whitbread campus to some of the communities within its catchment that are giving rise to the need for the identified new school places is not only a potential obstacle to improving standards further, but will also add to the Home-School transport costs and is in conflict with both the Trust's and Council's obligations to promote sustainable school transport. It would also be at odds with BEMAT's aim 'to advance education and community cohesion'.

BEMAT based upon the detail expounded above believes that expanding Etonbury Academy to an appropriate size is likely to contribute towards the likelihood of success and improved outcomes on a single site.

3	<p><b>The ability to support the expansion of local popular and successful schools or to link expanding schools with popular and successful schools.</b></p>
	<p>Etonbury Academy is rated 'Good' and is in a multi academy trust that includes good and outstanding academies. BEMAT has moved academies within its membership from 'requires improvement' to 'Good' [Samuel Whitbread [SWA], Etonbury Academies] and has the capacity to support the expanded school in terms of standards and quality in order that it can become outstanding itself.</p> <p>ETA is oversubscribed, at its current PAN of 120 to be increased to 150 for September 2016 has year groups of 178, 183, 140 and 119 [years 5 to 8] and with the larger cohorts forecast to increase to a potential Year 5 intake of 217 in September 2017. ETA is a successful and oversubscribed academy.</p>
4	<p><b>The potential to further promote and support robust partnerships and learning communities</b></p>
	<p>BEMAT is a collaborative partnership of six academies and works closely with Henlow Academy through its foundation trust Bedfordshire East Schools Trust Ltd. Our Robert Bloomfield Academy operates the Central Bedfordshire Teaching School Partnership (CBTSP) and brings great value in relation to school improvement and to teacher education, qualification, induction and development; to leadership development and succession planning and also in relation to identification and transfer of successful practice. CBTSP will support the development of Etonbury as it expands and fills. BEMAT also works closely with the Bedfordshire Schools Training Partnership which trains teachers through its School Centred Initial Teacher Training programmes at primary and secondary level. This partnership will enable recruitment of outstanding staff. BEMAT's long established CPD programmes BEMAT can fully support the expansion of ETA and the recruitment, induction, training and professional development staff. BEMAT has developed excellent in-house support services including HR, Finance, IT, projects and Operations and Marketing. These services will add great value to the academy as it expands and fills.</p> <p>BEMAT is developing a strategy of school community engagement in order to facilitate parental and school-led system development and as funding reforms are rolled out, so affecting the viability of some school budgets, this policy will continue in order to ensure small school settings serving rural communities can reconfigure the way they are run in order to continue to provide education close to home. Already Gravenhurst, Langford and Gothic Mede academies have benefited from the economies of scale BEMAT has brought.</p> <p>The 9 to 16 model at Etonbury will enable existing lower schools to continue to serve their local communities whilst having the option to join BEMAT in the future to further obviate the effects of transition and dislocation, not to mention the disruption and concern the closing of small rural schools would bring to their communities, many of which have only the school left as a community focal point.</p>
5	<p><b>The ambition to achieve a single phase of education 0 -19 and reduce school transfer points</b></p>
	<p>There is evidence that learning and progress can be lost at points of transfer between schools and also transition within schools from one phase or key stage to another. BEMAT is addressing this in two ways.</p> <p>The first is to design systems that limit the number of points at which a child transfers from one school to another. The second is to promote collaboration amongst schools through which a cohort of children will pass, on such issues as continuity of pedagogy, curriculum, expectations, progress, behaviour and ethos.</p> <p>BEMAT has close agreements between its constituent academies and with the</p>

	<p>knowledge of the community it serves will mitigate some of these effects. Reducing transfer and transition or the effects of transfer and transition is a core objective. By extending the age range at ETA the transition between KS2 and KS4 is entirely eliminated. BEMAT and ETA work closely with the local feeder schools to mitigate the transition at year 4 and will continue to do so.</p> <p>BEMAT with its foundation BEST intends to extend integrated early years provision in a variety of settings, wrap around childcare and nursery education to ensure all parents who require it have access to an extended and flexible early years offer so that they can access training or work. It is BEMAT's intention to promote a 0 – 4 nursery on the ETA campus to mirror the outstanding nursery provision BEST operates in Shefford through BEST Nurseries Ltd.</p> <p>Where new early years provision is needed as a result of demographic growth or changes in entitlement, and is forecast to be required in a similar timeframe and location as proposed new lower or primary places, BEMAT will seek to develop both new provisions on the same academy site and under its leadership. This will obviate transition points at pupil admission points. By developing all through systems, seamless curricula and leadership in Mathematics, English and Science BEMAT will also reduce transition issues between Key stages and sites.</p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>The need to support the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA).</b></p>
	<p>Government policy ensures that all young people are in either education, training or work related education / training full time up to the age of 18. By expanding ETA from September 2015 BEMAT has reduced the number of pupils currently transferring to SWA. This will enable the Sixth Form at SWA to be expanded at no cost to accommodate the growing number of 16+ students who will be remaining in education until they are 18 years of age.</p> <p>BEMAT will also support the maintenance of a diverse range of post-16 provision, enabling students to choose between remaining at ETA or transfer to SWA, transferring to an FE college or taking advantage of vocational routes of study. BEMAT by expanding Sixth Form provision will be able to offer a wide range of academic and vocational courses and provide a sustainable local service. BEMAT expects the number of students in its Sixth Form to grow to 800 in the long term.</p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>To seek opportunities to create inspirational learning environments for the school and to maximise community use.</b></p>
	<p>BEMAT has adopted a high standard of design and community engagement as part of its delivery of the first expansion of its ETA campus, working with the Football Foundation, Sport England, CBC Leisure and Recreation, local councils and local sporting clubs and societies to provide a 4 court sports hall, a 40 station fitness gym, and an all-weather floodlit pitch in addition the new teaching block, the delivery of which is due to complete at the end of May 2016. BEMAT has entered into a Community Use Agreement with Central Bedfordshire to ensure the community has access to all the indoor and outdoor facilities at ETA.</p> <p>BEMAT has also invested heavily in the existing academy buildings to bring them up to the standard of the new buildings. IT infrastructure, welfare facilities, offices, outdoor spaces, classrooms and corridors have all been improved. All windows have been replaced with aluminium double glazed units, roofs have been insulated and replaced, boilers renewed with all pipework lagged, low energy lighting has been installed with 3 photo voltaic arrays providing power during the day and Feed in Tariff payments have been deployed.</p> <p>The design brief for the expansion project will be based on a schedule of accommodation (SoA) that is derived from both the DfE's Building Bulletin 103 and Central Bedfordshire Council's (CBC) own example SoA models. The</p>

	<p>Council's funding of the project will only be based on the capital costs associated with the additional students to be accommodated within the academy however; where sensible the briefing analysis will also seek to address any existing deficiencies, inefficiencies or issues of suitability. The SoA for this project will be developed by an independent expert in schools capital and will be checked by CBC for accuracy and appropriateness.</p>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>To promote the diversity of provision offered in Central Bedfordshire to increase opportunities for parental choice</b></p>
	<p>BEMAT sets out its vision and values to all its member academies but each academy is governed by the high autonomy high accountability principle. The academies provide for different age ranges in different local communities. As ETA grows and develops its key stage 4 offer it will provide parents with choice, a unique ethos and a complimentary curriculum to Samuel Whitbread within a competitive framework of support and challenge. All BEMAT academies are co-educational comprehensives.</p> <p>The BEMAT geographical area comprises only co-educational academies and the majority of academies are based on a three tier system of education although academies are encouraged to consider alternative models of leadership, governance and organisation to achieve the BEMAT's overarching aim of raising standards. This creative thinking has created a hybrid two tier system in Arlesey and Stotfold with nurseries, lower schools and a 9 to 16 extended secondary at ETA, with a Sixth Form available on BEMAT's SWA campus.</p> <p>BEMAT's aim is to create a more diverse school system offering excellence and choice, where each academy has a strong ethos and sense of mission and may act as a centre of excellence in particular areas or offer specialist provision in order to meet the aspirations of parents, help raise local standards and narrow attainment gaps.</p>
<b>9</b>	<p><b>To support vulnerable learners in Area Special Schools and integrate appropriate Special Educational Needs provision within mainstream schools</b></p>
	<p>A significant part of this work will be developing the provision for SEND and high achieving students. BEMAT have reached 'Outstanding' results in KS2 on its Robert Bloomfield campus and the best KS2 results at Etonbury in 2015 with the most able pushing beyond expectation. With the enhanced provision we should be able to push more high achieving students from an early age through 'Outstanding' levels of achievement in KS2 and then KS4 due to the more seamless transition we will provide for them on the Etonbury campus and due to the proximity of the KS4 provision for KS3 students to access. For example, Year 7 and 8 (indeed KS2 students) could access Engineering facilities designed for GCSE and, no doubt, access GCSE standards of teaching and learning. Similarly, our impressive Options programme (recognized by Ofsted as being an 'Outstanding' element of our curriculum) would be enhanced further to give even more real life learning opportunities that are not found within the core National Curriculum taught at mainstream schools. The development of 14-16 on our Etonbury campus will allow us to create an impressive all-through curriculum from 9-16 with greater opportunities for acceleration and enrichment for pupils with special needs. We will work with our business and commercial partners to provide work placements for our young people. Our SEND provision at 8-13 was rated 'Outstanding' in 2008 and again in 2009 as part of an HMI inclusion inspection.</p> <p>Along with catering for the mainstream and the high achievers, the 14-16 provision at our Etonbury campus will provide for Special Education Needs and Disabilities [SEND] students far more effectively than we are currently able to do.</p>

	<p>Our refurbished buildings with enhanced access have already had a positive impact. The buildings now have provision for students with mobility and sensory impairments and we expect the building work to support these students with state-of-the-art provision. Similarly we expect to develop our Ofsted recognized successful pastoral and SEND provision to cater for the 9-16 journey. One key to this sort of support is the fact that children learn naturally in mixed age group provision – families, for example, when going well have learners of all ages supporting each other to overcome disadvantages. Our SEND students will be supported by an enhanced family of 9-16 aged learners framed within our Ofsted recognize ethos of care for others and high achievement. The development of a single point of contact children and family services team across BEMAT and a single SENCO structure will greatly enhance provision. Children and their families will be supported by these teams throughout their 9-16 journeys and into the Sixth Form at our SWA campus.</p> <p>BEMAT expects to make its facilities at Etonbury available to the Central Bedfordshire Academy located in Stotfold.</p>
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<b>10</b>	<b>Capacity to Deliver the proposed expansion</b>
	<p>For schools/academies that would like to procure design and construction works directly and manage the project to completion, please set out below the project management approach that you intend to take, including governance arrangements. Please ensure that you are clear of the professional support that you intend to engage and of the experience of the School and its Governing Body in successfully delivering significant capital projects.</p>
1	<p>Whilst BEMAT has a good track record of delivering building projects, for a scheme of this size we will seek to engage a specialist team to provide additional capacity and expertise. We have identified AMR Consult as our chosen partner, the same team that has delivered the projects at Robert Bloomfield and Etonbury Academies on time and on budget. This programme was eventually valued at just under £10m when all the associated works were taken into account. AMR Consult has also delivered in the region of 20 other projects on behalf of CBC or schools within the local authority area, all of which have been achieved on time and on budget. We are confident that this track record can be maintained, particularly as the academy and site are ones both BEMAT and AMR Consult have recently worked on.</p> <p>The BEMAT Board has agreed the existing governance arrangements which have successfully delivered the first phase of Etonbury's development will continue. The Transforming Education Steering Group will provide day to day scrutiny and management of the project and will include;</p> <p>CBC Head of Admissions, School Organisation and Capital Planning  BEMAT Chair of Directors  BEMAT Chief Executive  BEMAT Head of Projects, Resources, Operations and Capital  AMRConsult Ltd  Principal Etonbury Academy  Chair of Governors Etonbury Academy  BEMAT Head of Finance</p>

