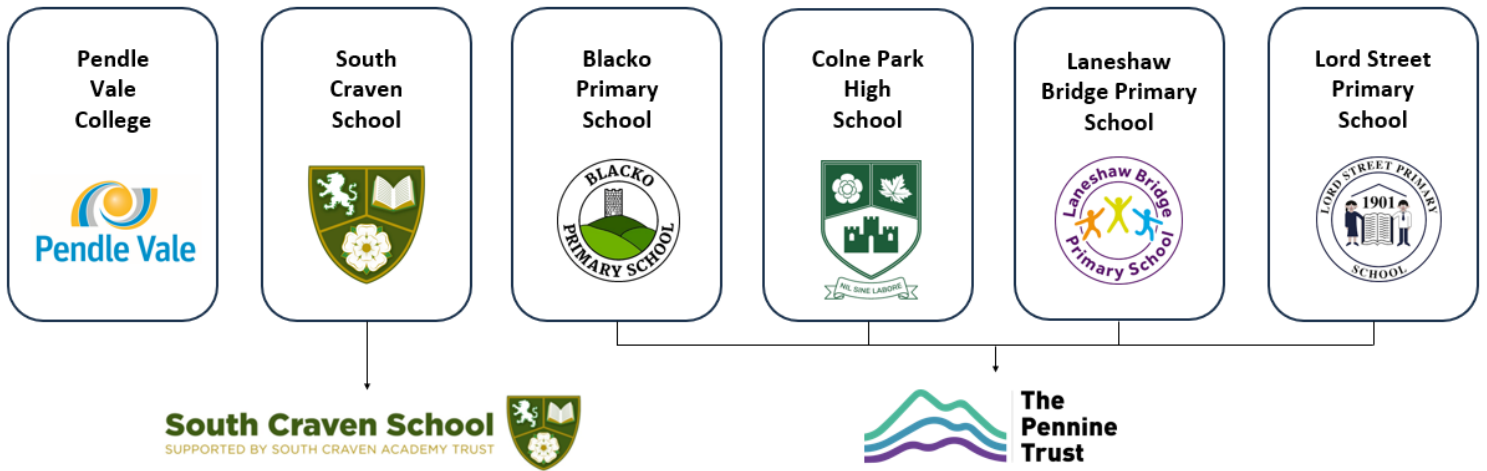


# **gail khan**

ASSOCIATES



# Consultation & Engagement Report Northern Roses MAT

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Contents	Page
<b>Introduction</b>	3
<b>Consultation methodology</b>	6
<b>Overview of the Consultation Feedback received</b>	9
<b>Conclusion and recommendations</b>	14
<p><b>Appendix 1:</b>            1A: Direct Letters to Staff of Pendle Vale College            1B: Direct Letters to Parent/Carers/Community of Pendle Vale College            1C: Direct Letters to Staff of South Craven Academy Trust            1D: Direct Letters to Parent/Carers/Community of South Craven Academy Trust            1E: Direct Letters to Staff of The Pennine Trust            1F: Direct Letters to Parent/Carers/Community of The Pennine Trust</p> <p><b>Appendix 2:</b>            2A: Staff Consultation Presentation for Pendle Vale College            2B: Parent/Carer/Community Consultation Presentation for Pendle Vale College            2C: Staff/Parent/Carer/Community Consultation Presentation for South Craven Academy Trust            2D: Staff Consultation Presentation for The Pennine Trust            2E: Parent/Carer/Community Consultation Presentation for The Pennine Trust</p> <p><b>Appendix 3:</b>            3A: Stakeholder FAQs for Pendle Vale College            3B: Stakeholder FAQs for South Craven Academy Trust            3C: Stakeholder FAQs for The Pennine Trust</p> <p><b>Appendix 4:</b> Additional questions/answers and feedback received via email, surveys and consultation/engagement meetings</p>	

## 1. Introduction

Trustees of one single academy trust and one multi academy trust in Craven, North Yorkshire and East Lancashire have seen their Trustees agree to a proposal to move towards forming a new Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). The Governing Body of one maintained school have previously passed resolutions to commence exploring academy status and have come together with the academies to move towards forming a new Multi-Academy Trust, which, has a current working title of Northern Roses. (Consultation on the name to continue after the outcome of the DfE advisory board has been heard). The draft mission of the MAT is:

***“Making a difference in our communities by placing learning at the heart of all we do”***

The schools involved as part of the consultation and engagement were:

1. Blacko Primary School (Academy - The Pennine Trust)
2. Colne Park High School (Academy - The Pennine Trust)
3. Laneshaw Bridge Primary School (Academy - The Pennine Trust)
4. Lord Street Primary School (Academy - The Pennine Trust)
5. Pendle Vale College (Maintained)
6. South Craven School (Academy – South Craven Academy Trust)

These decisions followed a period of up to two years of research which had been conducted by the respective bodies to help inform their final decisions and recommendations which informed the consultation and engagements. Consideration was given to what was in the best interests of learners now and in the future as well as what the implications of the decisions would be for staff, parents, and the wider communities that the schools serve.

Following the consultation and engagement period and upon final governor and trustee approval, applications were submitted to the DfE on the 24<sup>th</sup> May for the following:

- I. Application for South Craven and The Pennine Trust to merge and form a new multi-academy trust
- II. Applications for Pendle Vale College as a maintained school to become academy and join the new multi-academy trust

A steering group and working party have been established and they developed the consultation and engagement processes and materials, alongside preparing the applications. These groups have representation from South Craven School and Pendle Vale College’s leadership and representation from the CEO of The Pennine Trust, on behalf of all four schools within that MAT.

**Timescales:**

The consultation for Pendle Vale College commenced on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024 and concluded on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

Engagement for South Craven Academy Trust and The Pennine Trust schools commenced on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024 and concluded on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024. It should be noted that engagement and communications will continue beyond this period and the submission so that we continue to keep stakeholders informed and gauge input and contribution.


**1.1 Geographic distribution of the proposed Northern Roses Schools**

The map on the page below shows where the schools proposing to join Northern Roses are located. Their proximity will significantly aid joint working.


### Northern Roses

Private: 6 places


[Share](#)

- 


**Lord Street Primary School, Colne**  
4.9 ★ (7) ⓘ  
Primary school

[+ Note](#)
- 


**Laneshawbridge Primary School**  
Primary school

[+ Note](#)
- 


**Park High School**  
4.0 ★ (8) ⓘ  
Secondary school

[+ Note](#)
- 

**Blacko Primary School**  
4.0 ★ (2) ⓘ  
Primary school

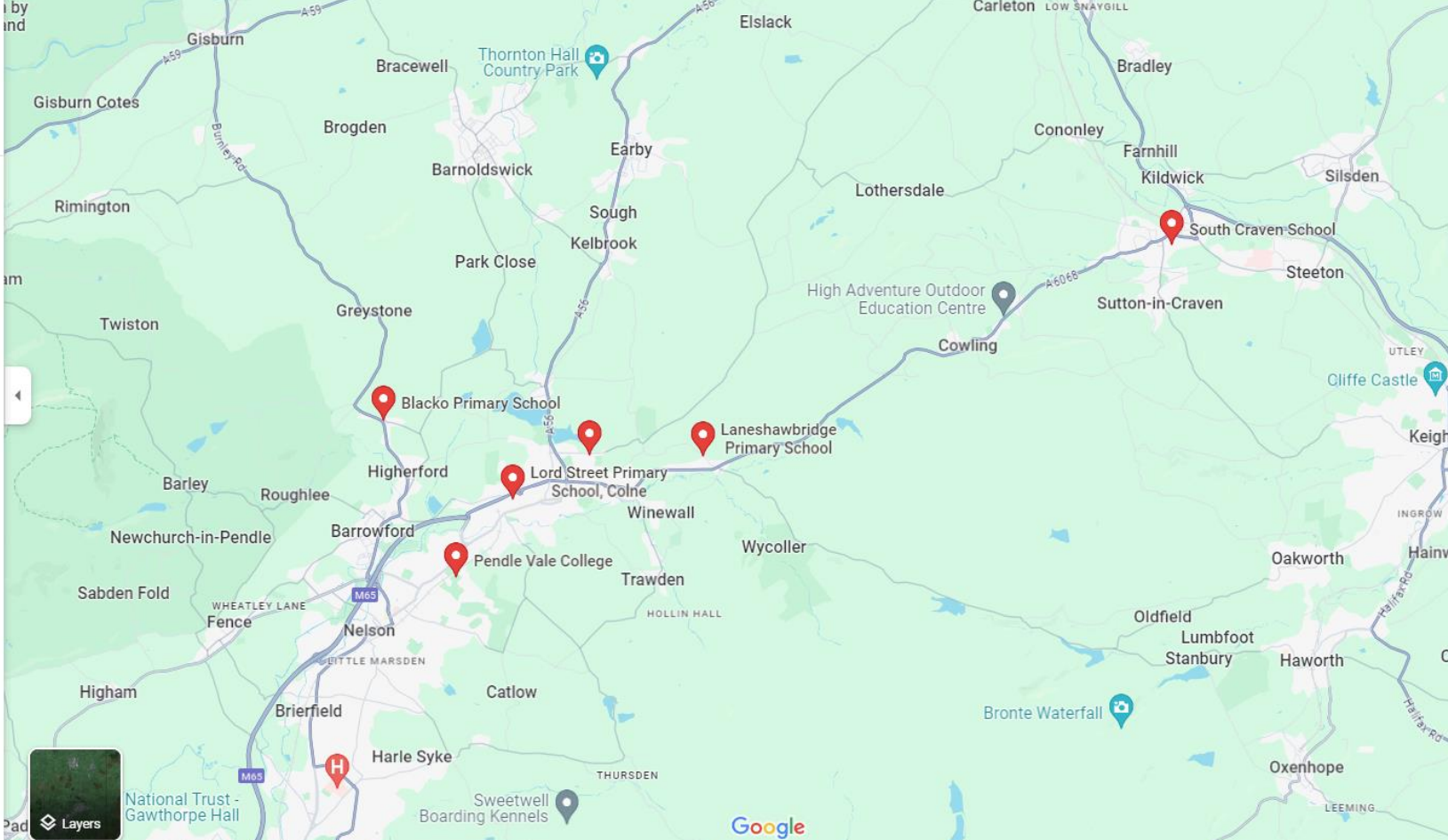
[+ Note](#)
- 

**South Craven School**  
2.6 ★ (18) ⓘ  
School

[+ Note](#)
- 

**Pendle Vale College**  
3.3 ★ (15) ⓘ  
Secondary School

[+ Note](#)



## 2. Consultation and Engagement Methodology

The overall aim of the consultation and engagement processes was to ensure that everyone who has a stake in the decision of each of the schools/academies to become an academy and/or transfer to the proposed new MAT, had the opportunity to hear about the proposals, ask questions and to make their views known about the plans.

The objectives of the process were to:

- Provide relevant background information for stakeholders
- Explain the reasons for the proposal
- Outline the pros and cons for the proposal
- Set out the stages in the process for each school, including what is involved for Pendle Vale College to become an academy and what is involved for all schools/academies to form the MAT and the associated timelines

The principles laid down by the project team for the consultation and engagement were that it should be:

- An open and transparent process
- Accessible to all stakeholders in terms of:
  - The times of the events
  - The media used
  - The language used (jargon-free wherever possible and acronyms fully explained)
  - Well-publicised and advertised

A variety of media were used to consult including:

- Social media channels
- Direct communications sent to:
  - Staff,
  - Parent/carers
  - Community Members
  - Local Authorities
  - Trade Unions: NASUWT, NEU, Unison, GMB, ASCL, NAHT
  - Local Schools: primary, secondary and colleges.
  - Local press
- Text messaging, school websites, and online messaging platforms
- Direct meetings held by heads of schools/ trust CEO to regularly inform their members of staff
- School/Trust websites hosting consultation and engagement information, including stakeholder frequently asked questions.
- Information on how to give feedback or ask questions via an online survey, emailing directly to [northernroses@outlook.com](mailto:northernroses@outlook.com) or various avenues within the schools.



An invitation to a consultation and engagement events held across the schools for staff and parent/carers (a comprehensive list of meetings can be found in section 2.2 below)

A collation of all questions, answers and feedback comments received across consultation and engagement forums is to be compiled and an update sent to stakeholders by way of an update and reply to anonymous questions.

A copy of this consultation and summary engagement report will be uploaded to school websites to conclude the consultation and engagement periods.

## 2.1 Direct letters/ emails / messaging

Letters/emails/messaging introducing the consultation and engagement were sent electronically to the following groups:

- School staff
- Parent/Carers
- Community Members
- Trade Unions (a copy of the staff letter was sent to them for their information and invitations to the staff meetings were also extended to them)
- Local schools: primary, secondary and colleges.
- Governors/Trustees
- Local Authorities

(Copies of Staff, Parent/Carer and community letters can be found in appendix 1).

## 2.2 Publicised events

Staff were kept informed regularly as part of set staff meeting and briefing structures throughout the consultation and engagement, however, dedicated consultation and engagement meetings were held for staff as follows (invites were also extended to Trade Unions):

South Craven Academy Trust (all staff)	Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	@4.15pm, Fells Theatre
Pendle Vale College (all staff)	Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	@3pm, Pendle Valle College
The Pennine Trust (Primary Staff)	Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	@4pm, Laneshaw Bridge Primary
The Pennine Trust (Secondary Staff)	Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	@ 3.15pm, Park High School
South Craven Academy Trust (all staff)	Wednesday 15 <sup>h</sup> May 2024	@3:30pm, Pinnacle Suite

Parent/carers/ community meetings were also held on the following dates:

South Craven Academy Trust	Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	@7pm, Fells Theatre
The Pennine Trust	Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	@6pm, Park High School
Pendle Vale College	Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	@6.30pm, Pendle Vale College



## 2.3 Consultation & Engagement PowerPoint Presentations

At Appendix 2 is the Consultation and Engagement PowerPoint presentations which were presented to staff and parent/carers and the community at their respective events:

Appendix 2A	Staff Presentation	Pendle Vale Collage
Appendix 2B	Parent/ Carer/ Community Presentation	Pendle Vale College
Appendix 2C	Staff/ Parent/ Carer/ Community Presentation	South Craven Academy Trust
Appendix 2D	Staff Presentation	The Pennine Trust Schools
Appendix 2E	Parent/ Carer/ Community Presentation	The Pennine Trust Schools

## 2.4 Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

A copy of frequently asked questions (FAQs) for stakeholders was distributed with the direct letters that were sent to staff and parent/carers. A copy was also uploaded to school websites and emailed to the Trade Unions for their information.

Appendix 3A	Stakeholder FAQs for Pendle Vale College
Appendix 3B	Stakeholder FAQs for South Craven Academy Trust
Appendix 3C	Stakeholder FAQs for schools within The Pennine Trust

## 2.5 Websites

Pendle Vale College and South Craven School updated their websites to offer dedicated information on their proposals and advice on how to become involved in the consultation and engagement process and to share any questions, comment or feedback that they may have. The four schools within The Pennine Trust created engagement webpages to that linked stakeholders to the same context of information hosted on The Pennine Trust's main website.

## 2.6 Social Media channels

The Schools/Trust used various social media channels including X, Facebook and Instagram to raise the profile of the consultation and engagement periods and signpost how to access the proposal information.

## 2.7 Press Releases

A press release was shared with LCC which contained the link to invite stakeholders to provide their feedback via the [northernroses@outlook.com](mailto:northernroses@outlook.com) email address. It also referred them to the school websites for further details on the consultation/engagement meeting dates. This was published in the Lancashire Evening Post the Craven Herald, the Burnley Express, and featured on Drystone Radio and Rombolds Radio stations. The press release was also shared across various social media platforms. [Link Here to the Article.](#)



### 3. Overview of the Consultation Feedback received

#### 3.1 Attendance at Consultation/Engagement Meetings & Survey responses

Date	Event	Venue	Number in attendance
<b>Consultation Events for Pendle Vale College</b>			
08.05.24	Staff	Pendle Vale College	99 staff 3 Governors 1 Trade Union Representative
09.05.24	Parent/Carers/Community	Pendle Vale College	5 parent/carer/community 3 governors
<b>Engagement Events for South Craven Academy Trust</b>			
07.05.24 & 15.5.24	Staff	South Craven School	23 staff over two dates
08.05.24	Parent/Carers/Community	South Craven School	5 parent/carer/community
<b>Engagement Events for The Pennine Trust</b>			
09.05.24	Primary Staff	Laneshaw Bridge Primary	12 staff 1 Trustee 2 Trade Union Representatives
15.05.24	Secondary Staff	Park High School	27 staff 3 Trade Union Representatives
08.05.24	Parent/Carers/Community	Park High School	1 parent/carer/community

Survey Question	Reponses Received
<b>Survey Responses received for Pendle Vale College</b>	
Number of survey responses:	<b>73</b>
Did you attend our consultation evening or watch the online presentation?	Yes: 56 No: 17
Have you read the information provided by Pendle Vale College, including the FAQs?	Yes: 70 No: 3
Have you received enough information about the proposed new multi-academy trust: Northern Roses?	Yes: 51 No: 3 Don't Know: 19
Do you support the proposal for our school to become an academy and form part of the Northern Roses trust?	Yes: 42 No: 13 Don't Know: 18
Should the Secretary of State enter into a Funding Agreement for our school?	Yes: 25 No: 5 Don't Know: 43

Survey Question	Reponses Received
<b>Survey Responses received for South Craven Academy Trust</b>	
Number of survey responses:	<b>24</b>
Engagement meetings are being held for Staff and for parent/carers of students at school. Did you (or will you) be attending our scheduled consultation meeting?	Yes: 10 No: 14
Have you received enough information about the proposed new trust?	Yes: 13 No: 5 Don't Know: 6
Do you support the proposal for South Craven to be a founding partner in forming the new trust?	Yes: 6 No: 12 Don't Know: 6
<b>Survey Responses received for The Pennine Trust</b>	
Number of survey responses:	<b>98</b>
Engagement meetings are being held for staff and for parents/carers of students at schools within the Pennine Trust. Did you (or will you) be attending our planned engagement meeting?	Yes: 46 No: 52
Have you received enough information about the proposed new trust?	Yes: 78 No: 10 Don't Know: 10
Do you support the proposal for the Pennine Trust to be a founding partner in forming the new trust?	Yes: 87 No: 2 Don't Know: 9

### 3.2 Themes and Key Messages

Appendix 4 contains the questions, comments and feedback received from stakeholders from the various media used throughout the consultation and engagement period and from the stakeholder meetings.

A summary of all the responses and the messages contained therein, with implications for the schools and proposed MAT is provided in the remainder of this section.

Stakeholders are most interested in:

#### 3.2.1 Specifically for Pendle Vale College who are consulting on academisation before joining the MAT - What are the differences between academies and maintained schools and what does it mean for children? Do you have to become an academy?

Stakeholders wanted to understand the differences between the two statuses, queries were raised about;

- The status of an academy within a MAT
- Curriculum freedoms
- Admissions
- Accountability / Leadership within the individual schools
- Identity, e.g. school names, uniform, day and term times

### **3.2.2 Timing**

General queries were raised around the process:

- How long does it take to set up a MAT and for the schools to join?
- What if there is a change in government or policy?
- Will inset days and term dates align?

### **3.2.3 The formation of the Trust and its governance arrangements, and future growth**

Stakeholders sought reassurance around the proposed governance model, what it would look like, and how it would work in practice. Stakeholders were keen to understand who would be running the organisation, who would be the CEO and at what level decisions would be taken, as well as what powers the trust board and anyone new joining the MAT in the future have to change what is initially designed and put in place.

Stakeholders sought reassurance that other models had been considered first before advancing with this proposal and what consideration had been given to the current agenda of the government. Specifically, stakeholders were keen to ensure that the schools have not been forced down a particular route rather than leaders putting this proposal forward as what they feel is best for pupils and staff. Both staff and parents were keen to understand how a MAT structure would affect individual schools values and priorities and what this meant for changes to rules and regulations and the school's delegated level of autonomy.



Stakeholders were keen to learn what the next stage of discussions would be, assuming the applications were approved and were supported in understanding the roles and responsibilities of all the parties involved in the decision making and exploring whether a comprehensive due diligence has been completed across all schools. Questions were also asked around the anticipated timescales should this proposal reach application and approval given by the DfE.

It was also asked what the options would be if the school changed their mind down the line.

Staff and parents were keen to understand the growth aspirations for the Trust and what size they see the MAT becoming. Parents asked questions on the geographical boundaries of the schools, specifically for South Craven School and if there were plans for their local feeder schools to join the trust in the future. It was also explored if any other sixth forms are set to join the Trust or would likely to do so in the future. A lot of the questions asked also linked in with a want for more information on how any admissions criteria or admissions boundaries were likely to change when becoming a MAT.

### **3.2.4 Financial considerations such as increased costs/central top slice/ falling budgets – ultimately how will this MAT be funded?**

This was highlighted as a high priority during consultation with stakeholders keen to understand this proposal wasn't going to cost any more than what a school pays now and if anything would reduce costs overall. It was explained that a working party had been set up to look at this exact point and further detail would be known in coming weeks and months.

Leaders were clear that there was a finite budget for set up and this would be monitored throughout. They also stressed the point that as an academy you can access funding streams that are not available to maintained schools and that this represents new and additional opportunities for capital and school improvement funds beyond the annual budget.

Stakeholders were keen to know:

- How this will enhance funding in school and how are funds attributed to the schools across the MAT?
- What does the top slice/central offer would be
- To what extent schools would remain in control of their own budgets

### **3.2.5 The impact on learners now and in the future**

Stakeholders were keen to learn how will SEND support would work as an academy and how will it be different and better.

The National Curriculum and Early Years Statutory Framework were a focus of parental questions as they were keen to understand if the schools would still adhere to it as academies. Headteachers reassured parents that the National Curriculum and Early Years Framework were central to teaching and learning, planning and practice and that children still had to be prepared to sit the same testing systems as they do now and move between Primary and Secondary effectively, regardless of destination.

Stakeholders were supported in understanding that staff will have increased opportunities for professional development, sharing best practice and developing their skills. Recruitment and retention is hard in schools today and together it is hoped the schools and MAT will increase career choice for staff and retain the best professionals locally.

### **3.2.6 Staffing – contractual implications, general concerns and opportunities**

Staff across the schools raised queries with a particular emphasis on:

- The extent to which schools have a choice and who makes the decision for the school to become an academy
- Whether staff be deployed to work in any of the other Trust schools
- Impacts on contractual aspects including roles, job security and redundancy; pay progression; pensions, terms and conditions; costs; and recruitment.
- Contracted days/hours/term dates/holiday patterns
- General professional development & CPD.
- Schemes of delegation

Colleagues were able to see the distinct benefit of working collaboratively and sharing best practice.

Overall, stakeholders were cautious but optimistic in identifying the risks and benefits this proposal could bring to the individual schools and their learners / communities. A lot of positive feedback was received on how this felt like an exciting journey and how they appreciated the opportunity to give their feedback into this process.

## 4 Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the feedback and data received to date, the emerging conclusion that can be drawn is that **there are no apparent legitimate reasons why academisation for Pendle Vale College and the development of the MAT for all three parties should not continue according to the timescales outlined**. There is a view that this will be a positive move for all the schools, but this is not yet shared widely amongst all stakeholder groups, and it is important to recognise the ongoing dialogue is going to be extremely important.

South Craven have seen a lower response rate for feedback and most of the surveys received were prior to them holding engagement meetings, which offered stakeholders further information and the opportunity to ask more questions or highlight any reservations they had. Uncertainty seemed to centre round the geographical nature of the merger and understand why it is beneficial to enter into a MAT with neighbouring boroughs. It is thought that the low numbers in attendance at these meetings and no further questions transpiring after the events, indicates some of those uncertainties were answered and fulfilled. It is however, **recommended that South Craven Academies Trust continue their dialogue with stakeholders beyond their engagement period** to ensure that stakeholders feel assured.

Whilst there are queries about the process and the detail of how the MAT will operate (much of which is still to be agreed and decided), **there are no major concerns or contra-indications that have been raised** through this process.

Survey response rates from stakeholders at all schools is considered low and particularly so from schools that are already single or multi academy trusts. From this can be deduced that:

- Stakeholders are generally content for **Pendle Vale College to become an academy**
- Stakeholders appear to be generally content about their school joining a MAT and creating Northern Roses MAT
- Stakeholders are content to leave these decisions to the managers and leaders of their schools
- Stakeholders of schools that have already recently converted have been through the process before and do not have further questions and queries.

Following the completion of the consultation period for all schools wishing to join/form the MAT it is recommended that:

- **All schools proceed with the next phase of the application process**
- A range of media are used to further inform/update stakeholders of all the interim milestones and timescales and plans for the MAT as they progress
- Due diligence and financial modelling is completed

## 5 List of Appendices

### Appendix 1:

- 1A Staff Letter for PVC
- 1B Parent Carer Community Letter for PVC
- 1C Staff Letter for SCAT
- 1D Parent Carer Community Letter for SCAT
- 1E Staff Letter for TPT
- 1F Parent Carer Community Letter for TPT

### Appendix 2:

- 2A Staff Presentation for PVC
- 2B Parent Carer Community Presentation for PVC
- 2C Staff Parent Carer Community Presentation for SCAT
- 2D Staff Presentation for TPT
- 2E Parent Carer Community Presentation for TPT

### Appendix 3:

- 3A Stakeholder FAQs for PVC
- 3B: Stakeholder FAQs for SCAT
- 3C: Stakeholder FAQs for TPT

### Appendix 4:

- Questions & Feedback Received -TPT.SCAT.PVC