

**21st June 2022**

**C.I.T CHURCH MAT**

**CONSULTATION REPORT**



**The consultation window opened on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022, and closed on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2022.**

**Thank you very much to all who responded to our consultation and gave feedback. CIT's follow up responses to any questions raised are highlighted in green further down the page.**

## **The Proposal**

The Community Inclusive Trust (C.I.T) is exploring the possibility of becoming a Church Multi-Academy Trust (a mix of Church of England Schools, Community Schools and Special Schools) with the majority of the Members being appointed by the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education (LDBE).

For C.I.T to become a Church MAT in the diocese of Lincoln, the Trust would need to adopt model 'majority' Articles of Association approved by the Church of England and Department for Education. These articles would ensure that the Christian foundation of church schools entering C.I.T would be protected. It is important to note that the articles would also preserve the individual character and identity of existing schools within the Trust and any non-church schools considering joining C.I.T. In brief, this change in the articles would allow both church and non-church schools to join the trust, which C.I.T feels is in line with the recently released White Paper.

The decision for church schools entering the multi-academy trust (MAT) would rest with the Governing Board of the church school. In every case, the LDBE would need to give consent and C.I.T and the DfE would need to then approve church schools entering the Trust.

C.I.T would work collaboratively with other Church MATs in the diocese. There are currently four church MATs in the diocese, namely the [Lincoln Anglican Academies Trust](#), [the Abbey Academies Trust](#), [the Infinity Academies Trust](#) and [the St Lawrence Academies Trust](#). C.I.T would expect to become an equal stakeholder within the LDBE MAT strategy. It will support the LDBE to implement its M.A.T strategy and like other Church MATs provide support to schools of different sizes with varying levels of educational performance.

C.I.T appreciates it is important for the LDBE to provide church schools with a good choice of 'majority' Church MATs. It is important that all Church Schools and all Church MATs are able to thrive and succeed in the future. There are 141 Church of England Primary Schools across Greater Lincolnshire currently, some of whom have expressed an interest in furthering links with C.I.T. Becoming a Church Academy MAT has the potential to support the Trust's growth model, developing resources effectively in geographical clusters, which in turn further strengthens the support provided to existing and joining schools.

# The Consultation

For this consultation C.I.T Academies direct mailed over 3,000 stakeholders. This included all schools in the county, all staff, and all parents and carers of pupils currently attending C.I.T schools.

The Trust also promoted the consultation via its websites and social media channels:

<https://citacademies.co.uk/consultation-on-community-inclusive-trust-to-become-a-church-mat/>



## C.I.T asked the following question and welcomed comments:

1. Do you think C.I.T should become a 'majority' Church Mat?
2. What positives do you see in this proposal?
3. What concerns do you have about this proposal?
4. **LA Schools and stand-alone Academies only:** Would your school value having C.I.T as one of the MAT options in the future (if approved as a Church MAT)?
5. **LA Schools and stand-alone Academies only:** Please give reasons for your answer above.
6. **Church MATs only:** Would you value C.I.T being a Church MAT in the diocese of Lincoln?

## **Documentation used for consultation:**

[Letter to Stakeholders](#)

## **Stakeholders were given the following opportunities to provide feedback:**

By emailing: [jacki.bartram@citacademies.co.uk](mailto:jacki.bartram@citacademies.co.uk)

By calling: 03300 585520

By completing a quick online form:

<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=loM95ITEAki5q9duGED0BS3YiW0KMFOjsEDubAHonhUQ005UkNIVkJRMFJSOVNHWTJEWIZLWTZLWC4u>

By post to: Jacki Bartram, C.I.T Academies, Poplar Farm School, Helmsley Road, Grantham, NG31 8XF.

## **The Feedback**

In total, C.I.T received 33 responses to the consultation. 18 in favour, 13 against, 2 were undecided. Please see further information below (detail has been removed for data protection purposes):

### **Two responses via email:**

1. Do you think C.I.T should become a 'majority' Church Mat? **Yes**

What positives do you see in this proposal?

- *C.I.T would further extend its inclusiveness to allow for non-religious and religious school offerings;*
- *I think it would assist with 'levelling up' especially as we would extend our SEND experience to pupils at these schools (and staff);*
- *It shows we are forward thinking, a growing MAT;*
- *More opportunities for staff to develop and progress their careers;*
- *Greater economies of scale with more schools to procure for;*
- *C.I.T schools could benefit from different approaches and ideas that the new schools could bring.*

What concerns do you have about this proposal?

- *Will existing C.I.T schools experience the same emphasis on protecting their individual identities as the Church Schools are theirs in the proposal?  
Yes, the members, Trust Board, and CEO are fully committed to maintaining and supporting all school's unique characteristics. This commitment is also confirmed in the proposed new Articles of Association.*
- *Will C.I.T schools be expected to pay a diocesan levy/charge similar to church schools for the upkeep and religious education and contribution to the diocese?  
For all current CIT schools and non-church schools wishing to join the Trust, the answer is no. However, for church schools joining the Trust, will pay a service levy to the Diocese.*

- Will current C.I.T leadership remain or will there be change/expansion to incorporate religious educational leader roles?

*Yes, it will remain the same. However, the church schools will still be required to take part in SIAMS inspections. Within the current Executive Leadership Team and across the Trust there are already senior staff who have significant experience in SIAMS inspections and the ability to support church schools who join CIT in preparation for these visits.*

- Is there equal opportunity for staff to be able to work across these schools (i.e., in some cases, Catholic Schools prefer and advertise for Catholic Heads, will preference be given to a CofE candidate?)

*In line with the earlier question about protecting non-church school's specific characteristics, a prospective Headteacher for a church school would need to demonstrate the ability to uphold a church school's ethos and values.*

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2. "Simple reply, don't do it.

*Your organisation has so much to offer in terms of inclusion and diversity which many Trusts do not. There are other academy trusts out there that would enable you to keep this unique identity with security and with wisdom."*

*Thank you for your kind words regarding CIT. The decision to explore becoming a majority Church MAT at Members level, has not been taken lightly. Although the Diocese will have a majority of appointed Members, the new proposed Articles of Association legally protect the characteristics of non-church schools and church schools. It is the Members responsibility to ensure the 'vision and values' of the Trust set by the Trust Board and Executive Leadership Team, are in line with the Articles.*

*The proposed Articles will not reduce CITs diversity, as its current schools will retain their current characteristics. Any non-church schools wishing to join CIT will also retain their status, and the new Articles will allow church schools to broaden the needs of pupil's and families that CIT support.*

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**31 responses via Microsoft Forms:**

1. Do you think C.I.T should become a 'majority' Church Mat? (0 point)

[More Details](#)

● Yes	17
● No	12
● Maybe	2



2. What positives do you see in this proposal? (0 point)

[More Details](#)

 Insights

27

Responses

Latest Responses

"Religion of England is important "

"Breadth within the portfolio plus the opportunity to expand if needed"

"As an 'Inclusive' MAT this would truly show us to be so. Potential to further ...

*"It would allow church schools to join the MAT and create a rich diversity of associations and partnerships. This would strengthen school to school support and create a unique learning culture."*

*"Wider community of schools to share practises with."*

*"More schools working closely together and learning form one another."*

*"We are a really strong trust and I feel we have the capacity to work with additional schools. Church schools will be able to share good practise."*

*"CIT will be able to widen the work of providing high quality of education for pupils in Lincolnshire."*

*"Growth of Trust and opportunities for existing staff promotion."*

*"More choice for schools wanting to academise and join a MAT."*

*"Ability to grow and learn with other MAT's and aligns with our existing values."*


*"Whilst maintaining CIT's current school's ethos, it is an opportunity to support a broader community of schools."*

*"Economies of scale from becoming a larger MAT. Increases the diversity of the MAT by adding a faith element."*

*"As an 'Inclusive' MAT this would truly show us to be so. Potential to further build on our economy of scales and fits with Trust Strategy of expansion."*

3. What concerns do you have about this proposal? (0 point)

[More Details](#)

 Insights

25

Responses

Latest Responses

"None "

"The Church articles must not alter the rules governing existing schools but ...

"Majority' - concerned that Diocese influence could change the 'flavour' of o...

*“Our school is multifaith and this diversity should be cherished and promoted.”*

*“I feel this would further push Christianity onto children when children should be allowed their own freedom of choice, and not believe in God because the school has told them to. I want my child to learn facts. The bible is fiction, not fact.”*

*“There is already too much of a Christianity bias within your schools, this would only make things worse.”*

*“Only real concern is that some may see this CIT becoming a church-based organisation, rather than a MAT that values and protect the characteristics of its various member academies, be they church affiliated or not.”*

*“Selling out to get schools with double standard diocese. How can it not work both ways. It's a scandal that in effect community schools are church controlled. You can't wrap it up in any other way sell out for growth. A church school is protected in minority mixed mat articles!”*

*“Capacity of central team to support new schools.”*

*“We would not have considered a CIT school if its parent organisation was affiliated with a religion or religious organisation. If the Trust were to adopt Articles of Association approved by a religion, that religion would have influence over the Trust and that is unacceptable to us, and likely many other parents, who want their children to grow up free to form their own beliefs and views of the world.”*

*“Diocese eventually running C.I.T?”*

*The strategic direction of the Trust in accordance with the DfE and the Academies Handbook, is set by the Trust Board not the Members. It is at Members level where it is proposed a majority of church representatives sit, in line with the proposed new Articles of Association.*

*“That due diligence is done to ensure that schools joining the Trust have properties that are in good condition and will not require investment to rectify issues. That the schools joining are financially healthy and will not be a drain on CIT's resources.”*

*“‘Majority’ - concerned that Diocese influence could change the ‘flavour’ of the existing MAT. CIT is currently well known to be supportive of the Special School sector, I personally would not want to see that message altered, diluted or overshadowed. With the members being appointed by Diocese, would there be a push to change existing community schools to faith schools or actively block further non-faith schools from joining the MAT? Will the changes to the Articles result in a change of ethos and vision?”*

*The ethos of the Trust is something that CIT is extremely proud of and its' roots within special schools are highly valued across the organisation. Although the Diocese will have a majority of appointed Members, the new proposed Articles of Association legally protect the characteristics of non-church schools and church schools. It is the Members responsibility to ensure the ‘vision and values’ of the Trust set by the Trust Board and Executive Leadership Team, are in line with the Articles.*



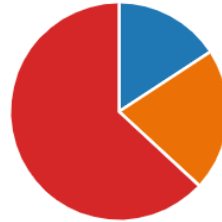
*“The Church articles must not alter the rules governing existing schools but must enhance. Must avoid one set of rules for one and another set for another on fundamentals.”*

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4. **LA Schools and stand-alone Academies only:** Would your school value having C.I.T as one of the MAT options in the future (if approved as a Church MAT)? (0 point)

[More Details](#)

Yes	3
No	4
Maybe	0
Not Applicable	12



5. **LA Schools and stand-alone Academies only:** Please give reasons for your answer above: (0 point)

[More Details](#)

3  
Responses

Latest Responses

*“We don't follow a religion.”*

*“Explored previously and ethos not for us.”*

*“MAT's would be preferred if funding will switch to central government rather than schools which suffer when local authority funding is stretched to cover all local services.”*

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6. **Church MATs only:** Would you value C.I.T being a Church MAT in the diocese of Lincoln? (0 point)

[More Details](#)

Yes	3
No	4
Maybe	0
Not Applicable	9



