

Developing an Estates and Facilities Management Strategy for your Multi Academy Trust

MAKING BUILDINGS WORK **BETTER**



“How can we align our Estates and Facilities Management strategy with our educational objectives?”

Multi Academy Trusts face the challenge of harmonising the physical environment with educational goals to create a symphony that propels students towards unparalleled achievements.

We have identified five strategic questions a Multi Academy Trust should consider when deciding and implementing an Estates and Facilities Management Strategy.

Strategic Considerations for Effective Estates and Facilities Management in Multi Academy Trusts

Within the dynamic domain of education, the leadership within Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) faces the critical challenge of overseeing Estates and Facilities Management (EFM) to ensure an optimal learning environment for students. This responsibility transcends the operational aspects to include strategic planning and alignment with the educational goals of each academy. Achieving excellence in EFM requires addressing several key questions that shape a comprehensive and effective strategy. This document outlines the essential questions that MAT leadership teams need to consider for enhancing the functionality and sustainability of their facilities. These considerations include aligning EFM practices with educational aims, finding the right balance between centralised and decentralised operations, maximising resource efficiency, risk mitigation, maintaining regulatory compliance, adopting innovative technologies, and sparking innovation across academies.

Strategic Alignment

01



Centralised or De-centralised

02



Self Delivery vs Outsourced

03



Cost Saving Potential

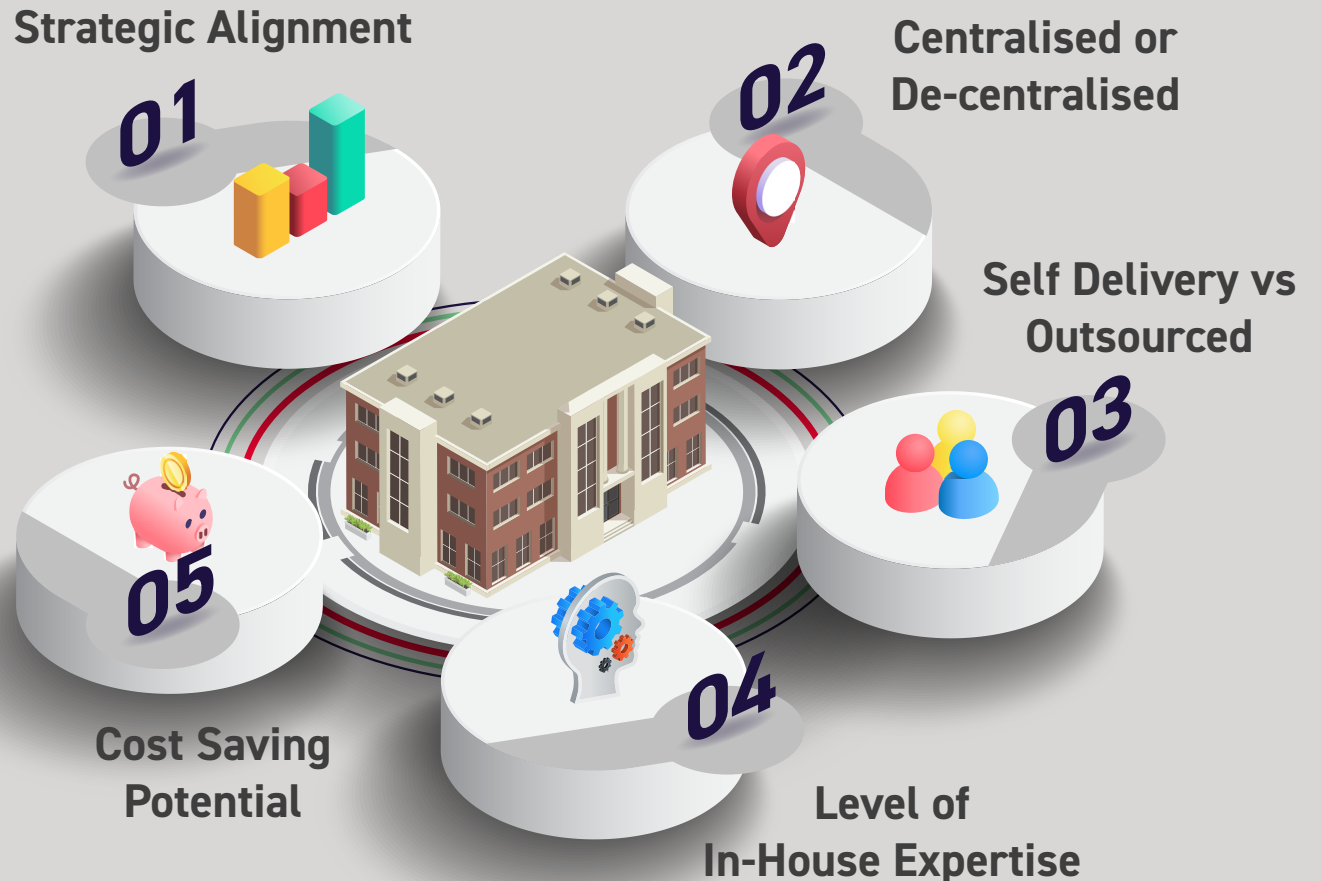
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04



Level of In-House Expertise



Balancing Time Vs Cost

Delivering EFM services requires navigating the delicate balance between time and cost, akin to balancing a finely tuned scale. On one side lies time, on the other cost, with the pivotal element of statutory compliance at the core of this equilibrium, an aspect that must remain uncompromised.

Time

We understand that excessive time invested in facilities management can divert attention and resources away from the core focus of teaching and learning. As time expands, educational standards may suffer, and the overall mission of the Trust may be jeopardised. Striking the right balance means carefully allocating time to ensure that it supports the efficient and effective delivery of facilities management services without detracting from educational excellence.

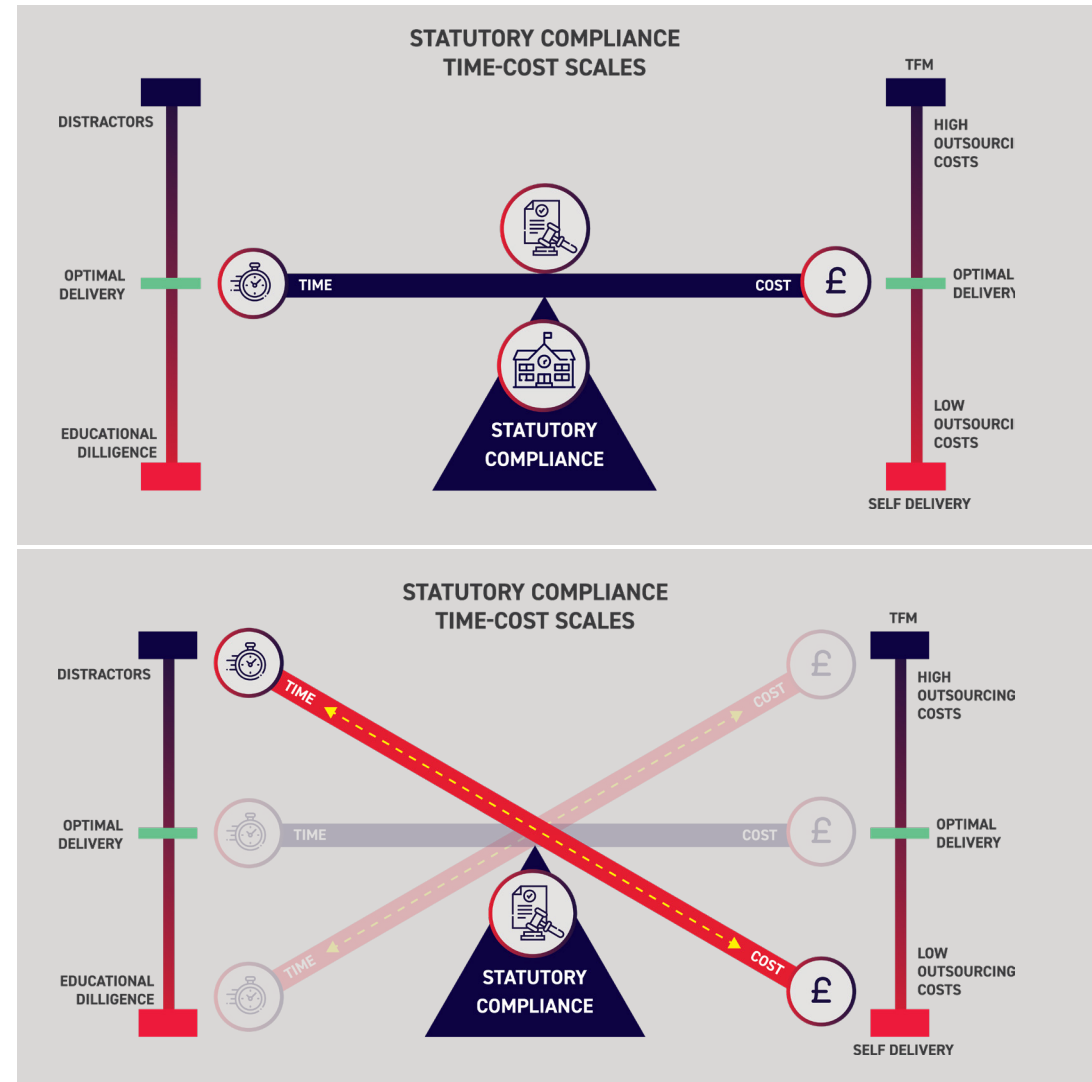
Cost

Delivering top-notch facilities management services is essential, but an unchecked escalation in costs can strain the Trust's resources, leading to budgetary constraints that may impact the overall operations and educational programs. Therefore, we must carefully evaluate and optimise cost structures, seeking innovative solutions and strategic partnerships to deliver services cost-effectively without compromising quality or compliance.

Statutory Compliance

In the middle lies statutory compliance - the non-negotiable foundation of facilities management. Compliance with regulations and standards ensures the Trust's safety, well-being, and legal obligations. Regardless of the balancing act between time and cost, we must prioritise and achieve statutory compliance as the consequences of neglecting it can be severe.

MATs face the complex and unenviable challenge of finding the optimal point on this balancing scale. To continuously deliver efficient and compliant facilities management services, while safeguarding educational standards and financial sustainability, leadership teams must repeatedly find a delicate equilibrium between time and cost. Managing that balance will then enable the Trust to better achieve its goals.



External factors beyond our control can significantly influence decision-making processes.

Economic fluctuations, policies, and resource limitations can create unforeseen challenges, and several external macro-economic and geo-political factors beyond our control are compounding already difficult decisions, mainly related to cost and resources:

Energy prices and inflation

High energy costs directly affect the operational costs of academies, as does high inflation, which leads to a general increase in prices for goods and services.



Skills Shortage

The Estates and Facilities Management sector needs more skilled labour in areas such as engineering and hospitality. Short supply is driving labour costs higher and filling vacancies is very challenging.



Regulatory Constraints

The ever-increasing and complex regulations within the built environment require specialist advice, servicing, and maintenance to ensure full statutory compliance.



Five Strategic Questions to Consider in Order to Define Your EFM Strategy



1. Strategic alignment

How should we align the EFM strategy to the educational objectives of the MAT? How can we make the EFM strategy support and align with the overall educational goals and mission of the MAT? How do the facilities and estates contribute to creating an optimal learning environment for students and supporting the educational outcomes of the academies within the Trust?

2. Centrally led or academy led

What level of centralisation or decentralisation is appropriate for EFM services that provide the optimal balance of cost and time? It involves assessing what should be managed centrally by the MAT or delegated to individual academies, considering factors such as cost-effectiveness, consistency, autonomy, and resource allocation. Should the MAT hold a central budget? If not, do we allow the academies to decide how best to manage and self-service their Estate?

3. Self-delivery vs outsourcing

How should we ensure efficient and effective utilisation of EFM resources? Do we self-deliver all, some, or none of the services? Or do we outsource all, some, or none of the services? What delivery model will support the Trust and individual academies if outsourced? Considerations may include sharing resources across academies, implementing sustainable practices, prioritising investments, and identifying opportunities for cost savings.

4. Optimum level of in-house expertise

How can we balance in-house resources and external partnerships? What is the size, shape and type of expertise needed within the in-house team to manage a centralised EFM service? Or on an individual academy basis? It involves assessing the capacity, skill gaps, and scalability of the Trust's internal resources, alongside evaluating the potential benefits and risks of partnering with external providers.

Identifying EFM functions that require specialised knowledge or resources beyond the Trust's capabilities. This question helps determine where it is more cost effective and efficient to outsource certain services to external vendors or partners, ensuring optimal delivery and compliance.

5. Cost saving potential

Depending on the decisions you have come to, what economies of scale can be achieved by centralising and consolidating EFM spending?

By considering and evaluating these strategic questions, a MAT can gain valuable insights into the strengths, cost-saving potential, and the appropriate level of in-house resources versus external partnerships. This enables informed decision-making, ensuring the optimal EFM strategy that aligns with the Trust's goals, maximises cost efficiencies, and delivers high-quality facilities management services to support the educational mission of the academies within the MAT.

**The following pages will
expand on each of these areas.**



Steps to Strategic Alignment

- 1. Understand the educational objectives** including the Trust's vision, mission, and values, as well as any specific goals or priorities outlined in its strategic plan. This should also consider the educational needs and aspirations of the students, teachers, and stakeholders within the Trust.
- 2. Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment** to understand the specific requirements and challenges related to the built environment and facilities. This assessment should consider the condition and suitability of existing buildings and spaces, as well as any future needs or expansion plans. It should involve gathering input from school leaders, teachers, staff, local authorities, and other stakeholders to identify areas that require attention or improvement.
- 3. Establish a cross-functional team** that includes representatives from educational leadership, facilities management, finance, and other relevant departments. This team will ensure that perspectives from different areas of expertise are considered, fostering collaboration and shared decision-making.
- 4. Define clear and measurable strategic objectives** based on the educational objectives and needs assessment, and in collaboration with the cross-functional team. These objectives should align with and support the MATs educational objectives. Examples could include creating modern learning environments, improving energy efficiency, enhancing safety and security measures, or optimising space utilisation.
- 5. Develop a detailed implementation plan** which outlines specific actions, timelines, responsibilities, and resource allocations to achieve the strategic objectives. It should consider budget constraints, regulatory requirements, and stakeholder engagement.
- 6. Establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate progress of the EFM strategy** through regular reporting and processes reviews to assess the implementation of strategic initiatives, measure outcomes, and identify areas for improvement. Feedback from school leaders, staff, and stakeholders should be sought to ensure ongoing alignment with educational objectives.
- 7. Foster collaboration and open communication channels** between the EFM team and educational leadership. Regular meetings, workshops, and forums should be organised to exchange information, share updates, and gather feedback. This collaborative approach ensures that the EFM strategy remains responsive to the evolving educational needs of the Trust.
- 8. Continuously review and adapt** the EFM strategy. This includes staying updated on emerging trends, technological advancements, and best practices in educational facility management. By actively seeking opportunities for innovation and improvement, the EFM Team can ensure the ongoing strategic alignment of the EFM strategy with the educational objectives of the Trust.



Centrally-Led or Academy-Led EMF

1. **Understand the current EFM structure within each academy** of how services are current procured, managed and delivered. This includes identifying the number of schools or academies, their geographical distribution, the existing roles and responsibilities, supply contracts and the level of autonomy or central oversight in managing facilities. This understanding will serve as a baseline for the review process.
2. **Evaluate the potential benefits and challenges of centralising the EFM service** which include improved consistency, standardised processes, better coordination, increased buying power, and centralised expertise. On the other hand, challenges may involve resistance to change, loss of local autonomy, increased bureaucracy, and potential disruptions during the transition.
3. **Assess the potential benefits and challenges of a decentralised EFM** which may offer advantages such as localised decision-making, responsiveness to specific school needs, enhanced community engagement, and tailored solutions. However, challenges can arise in terms of potential duplication of efforts, inconsistency in service delivery, and variations in standards across schools.
4. **Analyse the unique context of the MAT**, considering factors such as size, geographic dispersion, available resources, skill sets, and operational requirements. This analysis should determine the feasibility and suitability of centralisation or decentralisation based on the specific needs and circumstances of the Trust.
5. **Seek input and consultation** from various stakeholders within the MAT, including school leaders, facilities management staff, teachers, governing bodies, and other relevant parties. Their perspectives and experiences can provide valuable insights and help identify potential concerns or opportunities associated with centralisation or decentralisation.
6. **Research and review best practices and case studies** related to EFM in other MATs or similar educational contexts and seek counsel from your existing advisors and service partners. This analysis can shed light on successful models, lessons learned, and potential strategies for effective centralisation or decentralisation.
7. **Develop alternative models for the EFM service** based on the evaluation and input received, outlining key features, responsibilities, reporting lines, decision-making processes, and resource allocations for centralisation or decentralisation options. The models should consider potential hybrid approaches that combine centralised functions with localised decision-making where appropriate, for example, centralised procurement but locally managed.
8. **Assess each model's implications, trade-offs and risks**, considering financial implications, staff capacity and skill requirements, potential impacts on service quality, and the ability to effectively achieve the MATs' educational objectives.
9. **Make an informed decision** based on the evaluation, stakeholder input, and assessment of alternative models. The decision should align with the MATs' strategic objectives, educational priorities, and overall organisational goals.
10. **Develop a detailed plan and execute the transition** with timelines, communication strategies, resource allocation, training requirements, and a robust change management process. Clear communication and stakeholder engagement will be essential during the transition to ensure buy-in and minimise disruptions.
11. **Monitor and Evaluate:** Following the implementation of the chosen model, establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness. Key performance indicators should be established to track progress, identify areas for improvement, and make necessary adjustments as required.



Centrally-Led or Academy-Led EMF

There are both potential advantages and the perceived drawbacks associated with each option.

Centrally Led EFM

Potential Benefits:

- **Standardisation:** Central Management ensures consistent EFM practices across all academies within the Trust, promoting uniformity and alignment.
- **Economies of scale:** By consolidating resources and aggregating EFM spend, the MAT can potentially achieve cost savings and negotiate better deals.
- **Expertise and specialisation:** Central teams can provide specialised knowledge and expertise in EFM, ensuring efficient and effective service delivery.

Perceived Downsides:

- **Reduced autonomy:** Academies may have limited control over EFM decisions, as they are directed by the central team or trust policies.
- **Communication challenges:** Coordination and communication between the central team and individual academies can be more complex, potentially leading to delays or misunderstandings.
- **Reduced flexibility:** Academies may need more local flexibility to tailor FM services to their specific needs, as decisions are made at the central level.

Academy Led EFM

Each academy within the MAT has autonomy over its FM services in this approach.

Potential Benefits:

- **Local control:** Academies can make decisions regarding their EFM services, allowing them to tailor services to their specific requirements and priorities.
- **Direct accountability:** Academies can directly manage and oversee the EFM services, promoting ownership and accountability.
- **Flexibility:** Academies can respond quickly to its unique needs, making adjustments and adaptations without relying on centralised decision-making.

Perceived Downsides:

- **Inconsistency:** Each academy may have different EFM practices, leading to potential inconsistencies and variations in service quality across the Trust.
- **Resource constraints:** Smaller academies may need help regarding resources, expertise, and negotiating power when procuring EFM services independently.
- **Duplication of efforts:** Without centralised coordination, there is a possibility of duplicate efforts, inefficiencies, and missed opportunities for sharing best practices.
- **Data inconsistency for MAT:** With centralised systems to manage compliance and performance data, it may make it easier for the Trust to understand levels of compliance and spending.

The choice between centrally led and academy-led facilities management services depends on various factors, such as the size and structure of the Trust, the level of expertise available within the academies, and the desired level of consistency and autonomy. The Trust must consider these factors and strike a balance that best meets its needs and objectives.

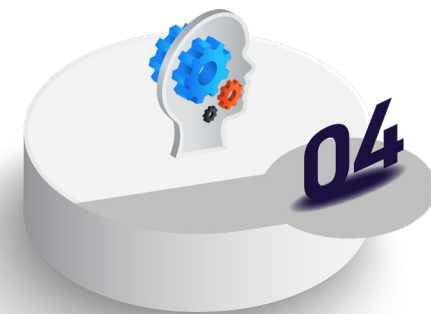
Self Delivery vs Outsourcing

1. **Assess and evaluate the MATs' current EFM capabilities** which includes assessing the in-house team's expertise, resources, and capacity to deliver the required services effectively. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the internal team to determine if self-delivery is feasible and sustainable.
2. **Clearly define objectives and scope of the EFM required** through identifying the specific services that need to be delivered, such as maintenance, repairs, security, cleaning, and energy management. Establish the quality standards, compliance requirements, and performance expectations for these services.
3. **Conduct a cost-benefit analysis** comparing the costs and benefits of self-delivery versus outsourcing. Evaluate the financial implications of both options, including personnel costs, TUPE, training and development, equipment and technology investments, and ongoing operational expenses. Consider the potential savings, efficiency gains, access to expertise, and scalability that outsourcing may offer.
4. **Evaluate the MATs' core competencies** to determine if EFM align with its strategic focus. Identify the areas of expertise critical to the MATs' core mission and educational objectives. If EFM is not a core competency, outsourcing may be a viable option to leverage external expertise and resources.
5. **Analyse risks and dependencies** associated with self-delivery and outsourcing by evaluating service reliability, accountability, flexibility, and the ability to meet evolving needs. Assess the risks and potential impacts of relying on external providers, including contractual obligations, data security, and potential disruptions to service continuity.
6. **Research and engage potential service providers** to identify reputable firms with relevant experience, expertise, and a track record of delivering high-quality EFM services. Engage in dialogue, request proposals, and conduct due diligence to assess their capabilities, cultural fit, financial stability, and references from other clients. If the value of services exceeds £138,760, including VAT, there is a legal requirement to advertise on 'Find a Tender' (FTS).
7. **Consider hybrid models** that combines self-delivery and outsourcing, an approach allows the MAT to retain control over critical functions while outsourcing non-core activities or specialised services. Evaluate the potential benefits of this hybrid approach, such as cost optimisation, access to expertise, and flexibility in service delivery.
8. **Evaluate legal and contractual considerations of outsourcing** through engagement with legal counsel, reviewing potential contracts and agreements to ensure compliance, mitigate risks, and protect the interests of the MAT. Pay particular attention to service level agreements, TUPE regulations, termination clauses, confidentiality, and intellectual property rights.
9. **Engage stakeholders** including school leaders, staff, governors, and trustees, in the decision-making process. Communicate the rationale behind the review and involve them in discussions about the potential impact on the MATs' operations, service quality, and overall objectives. Consider their perspectives, concerns, and expectations when making the final decision.
10. **Make an informed decision** based on the assessment of capabilities, cost-benefit analysis, core competencies, risks, potential service providers, and stakeholder input. The decision should align with the MATs' strategic goals, operational requirements, and long-term sustainability.
11. **Develop a transition execution plan** that outlines the steps, timelines, resource allocation, communication strategies, and change management processes for implementing the chosen approach. Ensure that all necessary legal, contractual, and operational arrangements are in place.
12. **Monitor performance and outcomes** by establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) and regular reporting mechanisms to track service quality, cost-effectiveness, stakeholder satisfaction, and alignment with the MATs' objectives. Use this feedback to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments.



Optimum Level of In-House Expertise

1. **Assess specific service requirements** by identifying the tasks and responsibilities involved, such as maintenance, repairs, health and safety compliance, space planning, and project management. Determine the expertise needed for each area.
2. **Evaluate core competencies** of the in-house team's existing skill sets and capabilities to determine if they possess the necessary expertise. Consider technical knowledge, industry certifications, and experience in managing similar facilities.
3. **Assess the scalability and flexibility requirements** and evaluate if the demand for EFM services fluctuates over time or if there are any plans for expansion or consolidation. Consider whether in-house expertise can adapt to changing needs or if external partners can provide more flexibility.
4. **Conduct a cost-benefit analysis** comparing the costs and benefits of maintaining in-house specialist expertise versus engaging external partners or providers. Evaluate the financial implications of both options, including personnel costs, training and development expenses, recruitment efforts, and ongoing management. Consider potential cost savings, efficiency gains, and access to specialised knowledge with external partners.
5. **Assess risks and mitigation** of relying solely on in-house expertise or external partners. Consider factors such as continuity of service, staff turnover, dependence on a single provider, and the potential impact on service quality. Develop strategies to mitigate these risks, such as cross-training in-house staff or establishing partnerships with multiple providers.
6. **Seek industry insights** from industry experts, consultants, or professional associations to gain to understand into industry trends and best practices. Stay informed about emerging technologies, regulatory changes, and innovative EFM approaches to evaluate the viability and benefits of external partnerships.
7. **Engage stakeholders** including school leaders, staff, governing bodies, and users of the facilities to understand their perspectives, concerns, and expectations regarding in-house expertise versus external partners. Consider their input when making the final decision.
8. **Explore external partnership opportunities** with providers who specialise in EFM. Evaluate their track record, experience, reputation, and the services they offer. Assess their ability to align with the MATs' values, objectives, and long-term goals. Seek references and conduct due diligence to ensure they meet the MATs' requirements.
9. **Consider developing a hybrid approach** that combines in-house expertise and external partnerships. Assess if specific core competencies can be maintained internally while engaging external partners for specialised or resource-intensive tasks, for example, management of capital projects. Evaluate the potential benefits of this hybrid model, such as cost optimisation, knowledge transfer, and increased capacity.
10. **Make an informed decision** on the level of in-house specialist expertise versus external partners based on the assessment of service requirements, core competencies, scalability, cost-benefit analysis, risk assessment, stakeholder input, and potential partnership opportunities. Choose the approach that best aligns with the MATs' strategic goals, operational requirements, risk tolerance, and long-term sustainability.
11. **Develop an implementation plan** outlining the steps, timelines, resource allocation, communication strategies, and change management processes required for integrating external partners or developing in-house expertise. Ensure clear communication and engagement with stakeholders throughout the transition.
12. **Monitor and evaluate** the performance and outcomes of the chosen approach. Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to track the effectiveness of the EFM service. Assess service quality, cost-effectiveness, stakeholder satisfaction, and alignment with the MATs' objectives. Use this feedback to make necessary adjustments and optimise the chosen approach over time.



Potential Cost Savings

1. **Assess current expenditures** by reviewing financial records, invoices, and contracts to understand the existing costs related to maintenance, repairs, utilities, cleaning, security, and other relevant areas. Identify the significant cost drivers.
2. **Analyse the cost structure** in detail to identify areas of potential savings. Break down costs by category: personnel, supplies, equipment, contracts, and outsourcing. Evaluate the cost components for each category to determine if they are reasonable and if there are opportunities for optimisation or reduction.
3. **Identify inefficiencies and waste** within the current operations, looking at areas where resources could be more utilised, duplicated, or misallocated. Evaluate processes and workflows to identify bottlenecks or unnecessary steps. Look for opportunities to streamline operations, reduce service specifications and eliminate non-value-added activities.
4. **Conduct a benchmark and comparative analysis** of the MATs' EFM costs to industry benchmarks or similar organisations. Seek out data and metrics that provide insights into cost performance within the education sector or comparable institutions. Identify gaps and areas where the MATs' costs may be higher than the norm.
5. **Evaluate outsourcing potential** of certain functions or services to external providers, identifying activities that could be performed more cost-effectively by specialised vendors. Evaluate the costs and benefits of outsourcing against keeping those functions in-house, considering factors such as expertise, economies of scale, and service quality.
6. **Explore collaboration opportunities** with other MATs or educational institutions to leverage economies of scale and cost-saving opportunities. Explore joint procurement initiatives, shared services models, or cooperative agreements that can help reduce costs through bulk purchasing, resource sharing, or collective bargaining power.
7. **Evaluate the potential for technology and automation** to streamline processes and reduce costs. Identify areas where technology solutions, such as computer aided facilities management systems (CAFM), energy management systems, or automated scheduling tools, can optimise resource allocation, improve efficiency, and reduce manual workloads.
8. **Prioritise cost-saving initiatives** based on their potential impact and feasibility. Assess the effort, resources required, and implementation timelines for each initiative. Consider short-term and long-term cost-saving opportunities and evaluate their alignment with the MATs' strategic objectives.
9. **Develop an implementation plan** for the identified cost-saving initiatives. Outline the specific actions, responsible parties, timelines, and resource allocation required for each initiative. Ensure clear communication, stakeholder engagement, and change management processes to support the successful implementation of cost-saving measures.
10. **Monitor and track progress** of cost-saving initiatives. Establish KPIs to measure the effectiveness of the implemented measures. Regularly review financial reports, budgets, and performance metrics to assess the realised cost savings and adjust strategies as needed.
11. **Foster a culture of continuous improvement** within the EFM function. Encourage staff to identify and propose cost-saving ideas. Regularly evaluate and reassess the operations to identify new opportunities for cost optimisation and efficiency gains. Encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing among staff members to drive innovative cost-saving initiatives.
12. **Communicate cost savings and celebrate the success** with MAT stakeholders. Share the positive impact of cost-saving initiatives on the organisation's financial sustainability and its ability to allocate resources to core educational activities. Use success stories to reinforce the importance of cost management and encourage ongoing commitment to efficiency and optimisation.



Sustainability and Equity:

Our Contribution to Multi Academy Trusts' Mission

Social corporate responsibility is a core value at DMA and we understand its significance for Multi Academy Trusts. We believe that organisations have a responsibility to contribute positively to the communities they serve, and Multi Academy Trusts play a vital role in shaping the educational landscape. By prioritising social corporate responsibility, we aim to align our actions with the values and goals of your Trust, supporting the broader mission of providing quality education to today's youth. We actively engage in initiatives that promote sustainability, environmental conservation, and social equity. This includes implementing eco-friendly practices, reducing our carbon footprint, and fostering diversity and inclusion within our workforce.

A Powerful Partnership for Shared Success

By partnering with us, your Multi Academy Trust can entrust its facilities management needs to a reliable and experienced team. Our relationship strategy places emphasis on aligning our organisations to ensure products and services flow effortlessly for you. We are dedicated to supporting Multi Academy Trusts in their pursuit of excellence, enabling you to focus on your core mission of providing quality education to young people.

How to Work With Us

DMA is a supplier on Crown Commercial Service's (CCS) Facilities Management & Workplace Services DPS framework. DMA is also a Bloom accredited supplier, through their digital platform Pro-vide. Bloom are an exclusive partner to NEPO for the delivery of their NEPRO3 framework.



Proudly Supporting our Customers in the Education Sector



Contact Us

5 Beaufort House
Sir Thomas Longley Road
Medway City Estate
Rochester, Kent
ME2 4FB

sales@dma-group.co.uk
01634 384 220

www.dma-group.co.uk

