

REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO JOIN A NEW MULTI ACADEMY TRUST, CHELMSFORD LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

1. Background

The Governing Bodies of four primary phase schools in Essex are individually and collectively considering a proposal to join a new multi-academy trust being created by The Boswells School, Chelmsford Learning Partnership, and for Barnes Farm Infant, Barnes Farm Junior and Perryfields Infant Schools to convert to academy status. (The Tyrrells School is already an academy).

The four primary phase schools are listed alphabetically below:

- Barnes Farm Infant School
- Barnes Farm Junior School
- Perryfields Infant School
- The Tyrrells School

The four Governing Bodies each agreed in September 2017 to consult upon the proposal for the schools to join the new multi-academy trust.

The Academies Act 2010 requires the Governing Body of a Local Authority maintained school to carry out a formal consultation on this proposal.

A working group of Governors from the four schools recognised that it was important for the consultation to be managed consistently and cohesively so agreed to run a coordinated consultation.

This report describes the consultation activities undertaken by each Governing Body, the feedback from this activity and makes a recommendation about the outcome of consultation.

2. Purpose of Consultation

It is recognised by the Secretary of State for Education and the DfE that the Governing Body and leadership team of a school is best placed to assess the benefits of academy status and to decide whether it is appropriate for their school. Therefore, the purpose of consultation is for each Governing Body to present the proposal to stakeholders, to gather feedback on the proposal and to understand the level of stakeholder interest, support and objection. Each Governing Body can then determine whether there is any significant stakeholder objection to the proposal that would cause them to reconsider.

3. Consultation proposal

To join the new multi academy trust being formed by The Boswells School, Chelmsford Learning Partnership, and for Barnes Farm Infant, Barnes Farm Junior and Perryfields Infant Schools to convert to academy status.

4. Consultation Process

The academy consultation ran from Wednesday, October 18th until Friday, November 17th, a period of nearly four (4) academic weeks.

A summary of the consultation plan identifying the different stakeholders, how those stakeholders were consulted and what information was to be provided, is overleaf.

Stakeholder	Approach	Information
Parents and carers of pupils attending the schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter and Consultation proposal sent to all parents on Wednesday, October 18th • Individual consultation meetings were held at each of the schools on Wednesday, November 1st and Wednesday, November 8th • Survey forms were distributed at the consultation meetings • Meeting Q&A summary published Tuesday, November 21st 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent & Carer Letter • Consultation Document • Consultation presentation • Consultation survey • Meeting Q&A summary
Staff employed by the schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter, Consultation Document and FAQs sent to all staff on Wednesday, October 18th • Individual consultation meetings held on Tuesday, October 31st, Wednesday, November 1st and Wednesday, November 8th • Survey forms were distributed at the consultation meetings • Meeting Q&A summary published Tuesday, November 21st 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff letter • Staff Consultation Document • Staff FAQs • Consultation presentation • Consultation survey • Meeting Q&A summary
Unions & professional associations for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint letter with copies of staff letters, consultation FAQs and survey sent to representatives on Wednesday, October 18th • Unions invited to attend the staff consultation meetings (See above) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union letter • Staff letters • Consultation Document • Staff Consultation FAQs
Other local schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter sent to Headteachers of local schools on Wednesday, October 18th 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community letter
Local MPs and Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter sent to local politicians on Wednesday, October 18th 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community letter

The range of documents and information were published on the individual school websites with the URLs detailed below:

<http://www.barnesfarminfants.co.uk>

<http://www.barnesfarmjuniors.co.uk>

<http://www.perryfieldsinfantschool.org.uk>

<http://www.tyrrellsprimary.com>

5. Consultation meetings

5.1 Parent/carer consultation meetings

The parent/carer meetings at all the schools were generally well attended. A total of 25 parents/carers from across the four schools (Attendance at each of the meetings was as follows: Barnes Farm Infant & Junior fifteen (15), Perryfields Infants 3 parents & 4 staff (3) and The Tyrrells School seven (7)).

The format of the meeting was that the Headteachers presented the reasons for and benefits of the proposal, the CEO, Paul Banks explained the multi academy trust's proposed governance, leadership and management principles. Parents were then given the chance to ask questions and a summary of the Questions & Answers is attached as appendix A.

5.2 Staff consultation meetings

The staff meetings were generally also well attended. A total of 78 members of staff from across the four schools (Attendance at each of the meetings was as follows: Barnes Farm Infant & Junior sixteen (16), Perryfields Infant seventeen (17) and The Tyrrells School forty-five (45)).

The format of the meeting was that the Headteachers presented the reasons for and benefits of the proposal, the CEO, Paul Banks explained the multi academy trust's proposed governance, leadership and management principles. An advisor, Philip Cranwell, then explained how staff would be affected by the proposal and outlined the proposed trust's employment principles. Staff were then given the chance to ask questions and a summary of the Questions & Answers is attached as appendix B.

The staff meetings were attended by representatives from ASSWT and Unison. Although other unions were invited, no other union representatives were in attendance at the meeting.

6. Consultation surveys

Survey forms were distributed at the meetings to enable stakeholders to respond to the proposal.

The survey contained the following questions:

Q1. Which school applies to you? (Please tick all that apply to you)

- Barnes Farm Infant School
- Barnes Farm Junior School
- Perryfields Infant School
- The Tyrrells School

Q2. About you (Please tick one that applies to you)

- Parent/Carer
- Teacher
- Support staff
- Member of local community
- Other (please specify)

Q3 What do you like about your school?

Q4 Do you support the proposal of your school converting to academy status (where appropriate) and joining Chelmsford Learning Partnership, a multi-academy trust, with The Boswells School?

Q5 Please explain your response to question 4.

Q6 Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposal?

By the close of consultation on Friday, November 17th, a total of 216 survey responses had been received.

A summary table of all the survey data can be found in Appendix C.

6.1 Breakdown of survey response rates

The response rates for parent/carers at each of the four schools consulted were above the averages for primary school academy consultations, with Barnes Farm Infant parents/carers being significantly higher than average at 20%. (Note: the number of pupils is used as the universe for parent responses.)

The response rates for teaching staff at all four schools were at or below the averages for primary school academy consultations. The response rate from Barnes Farm Infant teachers was significantly below average with only 7%.

The response rates for support staff at all four schools were at or below the averages for primary school academy consultations. There were no responses received from support staff at Perryfields Infant School.

Low response rates and absolute number of responses means interpretation of the survey results is statistically difficult for teaching and support staff.

Survey number of responses and as % of universe.

SURVEY	BFI	BFJ	PI	Tyrells	Total
Parents	53 (20%)	39 (11%)	22 (12%)	43 (10%)	157 (13%)
Teachers	1 (7%)	11 (61%)	4 (40%)	9 (43%)	25 (40%)
Support Staff	7 (24%)	11 (39%)	0 (0%)	16 (30%)	34 (24%)

7. Analysis of survey responses

7.1 Overview of trust responses

- Of the **13%** of parents/carers that responded trust wide, the YES/NO responses, as a proportion of the total number of parent and carer responses, were **50%** and **16%** respectively. As a proportion of the total universe those in support of the proposal represent **6%** and those not supporting the proposal are **2%**. At each school there were at least twice as many YES responses as NO responses.
- Of the **40%** of teachers that responded to the survey, the YES/NO responses, as a proportion of the total number of teaching staff responses, were **60%** and **4%** respectively. The remaining responses were MAYBE.
- Of the **24%** of support staff that responded, there were twice as many NO responses (**42%**) as YES responses (**21%**).

Comments in support of the proposal included:

- The schools already work closely together so this would be the natural progression.
- Having attended the presentation and read about the proposal, I believe it is viable, beneficial and strengthening for the schools.
- I feel the school leaders and governors are doing a good job and I trust their judgement.

Comments against the proposal included:

- The lack of evidence that supports the idea that academies do better than non-academies.
- Our school is already great the way it is.
- I do not like the idea of the school losing its autonomy.

7.2 Barnes Farm Infant School

The survey responses are summarised in the table below.

Of the 20% of the parent universe that responded, there were over three times as many YES responses as NO responses.

From the relatively small number of teachers and support staff that responded, there was one NO response.

Audience	Data	YES	MAYBE	NO	DON'T KNOW
Parents	Number	28	10	8	7
	% of Universe	10%	4%	3%	3%
	% of Responses	53%	19%	15%	13%
Teachers	Number	1	0	0	0
	% of Universe	7%	0%	0%	0%
	% of Responses	100%	0%	0%	0%
Support Staff	Number	2	2	1	2
	% of Universe	7%	7%	3%	7%
	% of Responses	29%	29%	14%	29%

7.3 Barnes Farm Junior School

The survey responses are summarised in the table below.

Of the 11% of the parent universe that responded, there were twice as many YES responses as NO responses.

Of the 61% of the teaching staff universe that responded, there were three times as many YES responses as NO responses.

Of the 39% of the support staff universe that responded, there were a few more NO responses than YES responses.

Audience	Data	YES	MAYBE	NO	DON'T KNOW
Parents	Number	16	10	8	5
	% of Universe	4%	3%	2%	1%
	% of Responses	41%	26%	21%	13%
Teachers	Number	3	7	1	0
	% of Universe	17%	39%	6%	0%
	% of Responses	27%	64%	9%	0%
Support Staff	Number	3	2	5	1
	% of Universe	11%	7%	18%	4%
	% of Responses	27%	18%	45%	9%

7.4 Perryfields Infant School

The survey responses are summarised in the table below.

Of the 12% of the parent universe that responded, there were three times as many YES responses as NO responses.

Of the 40% of the teaching staff universe that responded, all the responses were YES.

There were no responses from support staff.

Audience	Data	YES	MAYBE	NO	DON'T KNOW
Parents	Number	12	3	4	3
	% of Universe	7%	2%	2%	2%
	% of Responses	55%	14%	18%	14%
Teachers	Number	4	0	0	0
	% of Universe	40%	0%	0%	0%
	% of Responses	100%	0%	0%	0%
Support Staff	Number	0	0	0	0
	% of Universe	0%	0%	0%	0%
	% of Responses	0%	0%	0%	0%

7.5 The Tyrrells School

The survey responses are summarised in the table below.

Of the 10% of the parent universe that responded, there were over four times as many YES responses as NO responses.

Of the 43% of the teaching staff universe that responded, the majority were YES responses and there were no NO responses.

Of the 30% of the support staff universe that responded, there were four times as many NO responses as YES responses.

Audience	Data	YES	MAYBE	NO	DON'T KNOW
Parents	Number	23	8	5	7
	% of Universe	5%	2%	1%	2%
	% of Responses	53%	19%	12%	16%
Teachers	Number	7	2	0	0
	% of Universe	33%	10%	0%	0%
	% of Responses	78%	22%	0%	0%
Support Staff	Number	2	4	8	2
	% of Universe	4%	8%	15%	4%
	% of Responses	13%	25%	50%	13%

8. Consultation summary and recommendation

The consultation with the key stakeholders of all four schools has been comprehensive.

The outcome of consultation is that in all of the schools, there was little objection to the proposal among any stakeholder group. Support staff at Barnes Farm Junior School and support staff at The Tyrrells School were the only two groups where there were more NO than YES votes.

Therefore, the Governing Bodies of Barnes Farm Infant, Barnes Farm Junior, Perryfields Infant and The Tyrrells Schools are advised that the consultation has not demonstrated any significant objection that should cause them to reconsider the proposal for the schools to become an academy (where appropriate) and establish a multi-academy trust.

APPENDIX A: Q&A from the parent consultation meetings

APPENDIX B: Q&A from the staff consultation meeting

APPENDIX C: Survey data table

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF PARENT CONSULTATION MEETINGS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Introduction

Consultation meetings were held for parents and carers at each of the schools on the proposal to join the Chelmsford Learning Partnership. The meetings took place as detailed below:

Barnes Farm Schools (Infant & Junior); 5.00pm, Nov 1st

Perryfields Infant School; 2.15pm, Nov 1st

The Tyrrells School; 6.30pm, Nov 8th

The meetings were attended by the Headteachers, Chairs of Governors, Paul Banks, CEO, and Philip Cranwell from Cranwell Consultancy.

This document is a summary of the questions asked at the meetings and the answers given. Where helpful, additional information has been provided in response to the questions raised.

STRATEGY

Is it your hope that other schools will join? (P)

This group of four primary schools, Barnes Farm Infant, Barnes Farm Junior, Perryfields Infant and The Tyrrells School, joining The Boswells School will be the founding schools of Chelmsford Learning Partnership. Roding Valley High School was mentioned as another secondary school that hope to join CLP. Paul Banks explained the model of sponsorship and the new school, Beaulieu Park was discussed. Other local schools may be sponsored in the future, if there was a need. There are no plans to become a wider geographical partnership. At our heart, we are a community partnership.

Who decides if another school can join CLP? (TS)

Generally, the trustees, although the DfE may approach the trust to ask for educational or leadership support and this would be funded. No changes can be forced that would disadvantage the current schools.

What status do Beaulieu Park and Roding Valley schools have? (TS)

Beaulieu Park will be a sponsored school, meaning CLP would run them with their allocated funding which would come into the MAT. Beaulieu Park would probably have a Head of School instead of a Headteacher.

Roding Valley High School are looking to join CLP but will not be a founding member of the MAT. Roding Valley High School has already been receiving leadership support from Paul Banks in the role of Executive Headteacher.

Where do children living in Beaulieu go to school now? (TS)

There is no space at Boswells, so they are allocated to the nearest schools that have places.

Would it make sense to get the reasons why the other schools from STEP haven't decided to join the MAT? (BF)

The other STEP school have decided not to join the MAT but it was up to each school to make an informed decision. There was no obligation for the other schools to join, it came down to a matter of choice.

Why didn't Perryfields Junior school join in? (P)

Perryfields Junior School pulled out of the STEP partnership approximately 2 years ago. It subsequently chose to become a MAT on its own.

The geographical closeness but the closest school is Chancellor Park but why are they not joining? (BF)

The schools have all formed part of STEP and could continue to do so but they have opted not to be part of this formal approach. It was up to the governing body of each school to decide what was best for their school.

Why are the other local schools not included? (TS)

We still have cluster meetings with the original STEP group but Chancellor Park and Springfield Primary are not interested in converting at the moment although they may want to join later. The 5 schools involved want to keep the STEP ethos rather than splitting up into separate MATs. Perryfields Infants could join their Junior MAT but feel more supported by the schools in this group. The cross phase between primary and secondary would benefit children's transition.

You mentioned about geographical location, would we be expanding the MAT in future? (BF)

Roding Valley High School are hoping to join the Chelmsford Learning Partnership. There is the possibility of sponsoring other schools in the future, but only if it felt right and at no detriment to us. The LA could ask us to sponsor other schools but it would be up to the trustees to consider such requests and make a final decision.

Can Tyrrells remain as a single academy? (TS)

A government proposal that all schools compulsorily join MATs has been dropped, however any schools converting from local authority now have to become part of a MAT. Our auditors and solicitors have predicted that the SAT model is not sustainable in the long term. The LA is also looking at forming its own MAT.

Are there other MATs we could join? (TS)

All the other MATs that Perryfields Infants have looked at involved top slicing their budget and having little control or influence at trustee level, so CLP was considered the best option.

What are the negatives in this decision, I don't feel from tonight's presentation that any negatives have been discussed? The presentation is all very positive. (BF)

The governors have been researching this proposal for over a year and decided that the Chelmsford Learning Partnership works. They consider this to be the best option for their school. Parents are able to

access the minutes of the GB meetings if they are interested in seeing more information on how this decision was reached. There is a risk associated with doing nothing and this could also have a potential impact on the school.

In the long term, once a school converts to academy status it cannot return to Local Authority maintained status. It is also quite hard to leave a multi academy trust once a school has joined, as it requires the consent of the Secretary of State for Education and the identification and consent of another multi academy trust. This is the key negative of the proposal, which is why the governing bodies have been considering the proposal so carefully. The aim is that everyone has a clear and consistent understanding of what being part of the proposed Chelmsford Learning Partnership will mean for each school before joining.

This seems too good to be true – is this a no brainer and this is why you are putting it to us? (BF)

It has been a long journey, taking over 6 years and the introduction through STEP, to reach this point. The STEP partnership had originally appeared strong, but movement of personnel showed that the structure wasn't as robust as had been hoped. This proposal allows us to put a stronger structure in place, with greater accountability and this will lead to greater levels of challenge and support. This model will be the best for the future of Barnes Farm Infant School. The direction we are going in is only positive whereas by doing nothing there were many more uncertainties.

Are there any other concerns? (BF)

There were originally concerns about potential changes to conditions for teaching staff but the trust have reassured the staff that they will ensure job security. The school ethos will remain and headteachers will continue to run their own schools and make their own decisions. There will be a single tier of employment for staff within the trust to ensure fairness and equal rights.

Is this going to be a partnership of equals with Boswells being a much bigger school with bigger funds? Will the teachers get paid more? (BF)

This will be a partnership of equals and Boswells is one of five equal schools forming this trust. All the schools will continue to get all their money allocated to them by the government and money will not be transferred from one school to another. Each school looks after their own money.

The Chelmsford Learning Partnership cannot automatically adopt future national collective agreements on pay and conditions because it would not be represented at those national negotiations. It is, however, committed to adopting, as a minimum, the national and local agreements for annual pay awards agreed between unions and employers for teachers and support staff respectively.

The Chelmsford Learning Partnership will continue to have a mechanism to consult with staff, unions and professional associations on future pay awards and changes to other terms and conditions of employment.

Any potential savings made by the schools in joining the trust could potentially be used to fund pay rises for staff in the future.

There have been lots of changes in the infant school (BF)

The aim was to get the school as stable as possible in terms of the medium and long term future of the school. The school is now in a good position to move forward.

Secondary schools – is this going to affect our choices for choice of secondary school? (BF)

The Boswells School is going out to consultation on their new admissions policy. We believe that if BF is part of the trust the children in BF should have access to secondary schools within that trust. BF are out of catchment but for 2019 entry BF will be listed at some point on the application criteria to Boswells. With regards to admissions, ECC will continue to administer admissions as before but the trust becomes the admission authority. The school governing body have to give permission to the trust before they give out an offer for a school place.

Would Boswells change their admissions criteria? (TS)

The north of their priority admissions area will eventually be taken by the Beaulieu school. They propose to name the MAT schools as feeders so, for example, a child attending Tyrrells but not in Boswells catchment would be granted a place. This could not start until September 2019 as the change in admission policy would need to be approved.

Beaulieu would eventually be a two-form entry for reception to year 6 then a six-form entry from year 7 and may take children from Broomfield and further towards Great Leighs.

What will be the impact of Boswells admissions criteria changes? (P)

Boswells admissions criteria will be adapting to the Beaulieu park development. Admissions area for Perryfields Junior will not be changed.

GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

What is the role of the directors/trustees? (TS)

The MAT board would have to have the right skills to operate at a strategic level for all the schools, working with the heads. Each of the five founding schools would have a representative on the board although this cannot be legally written into the scheme of delegation as the trustees need to be chosen because of their skills. The trustees will be confirmed w/c 13th November.

What job do the members do and what is their term? (TS)

The 5 members are the named people who would be legally responsible for the trust. They are accountable to the DfE and only meet once or twice a year. They decide their own term of office.

Who are the trustees? (P)

A number of trustees are already serving on the trust board for the Boswells School and will be established trustees of the Chelmsford Learning Partnership. There is a meeting due to be held on 13th November to appoint wider trustees from the founding schools.

How is the board of trustees accountable are they accountable to us or the secretary of state? (BF)

The Trustees are accountable in four ways. First, to the Secretary of State who has the power to intervene in the Trust and/or terminate the Funding Agreement that allows the Trust to run schools. Second, to

Ofsted which has the same rights of inspection. Third, the Trust is accountable under company law with responsibilities such as publishing audited accounts. Fourth, the Trustees are accountable under charity law.

Who will be the trustees for each school and how will they be chosen? (BF)

Each school has been putting forward their governor's names as potential trustees. They will be chosen on a skills basis, financial background, education background, HR background and those trustees will join the existing trustees. In terms of accountability, legally accountability sits with the board of trustees and the DFE. Each Headteacher and Governing Body is then accountable to the parents of his or her own school. The board of trustees will be decided in a couple of weeks and helps us keep what we think this partnership is special. The list of trustees is submitted to the DFE so they can see the skill set they have for them to agree.

FINANCE

Does all the funding still come from the Government? (P)

Funding will continue to come from the government. Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school. The whole of the school budget would come directly to the MAT from central Government and then be distributed to the schools, allowing each school to control the whole of its spending.

Within the trust there is the possibility of saving money with single contracts for services such as HR. There will be opportunities for joint commissioning or resource sharing. Joint commissioning is when the MAT buys services on behalf of the schools. The MAT will be able to secure savings against schools buying services individually because it will be a single contract with a single point of contact.

How does funding & budget planning change? (TS)

These stay the same for the founding schools. There are changes coming with the National Funding Formula anyway to all schools regardless of whether they are part of a MAT. Tyrrells' current good financial position can probably only be maintained for 3 or 4 years before cuts would need to be made if they remained as a single academy.

Will schools keep their own money? (TS)

Yes, there will be individual bank accounts.

Does sponsoring mean there is less money between each of the schools? (P)

Chelmsford Learning Partnership has received approval from the Department for Education (DfE) to support underperforming academies, as a sponsor. Sponsors work with the academies they support through the academy trust. Each school within the trust will be entitled to the same per pupil funding as they would as a LA maintained school. The whole of the school budget would come directly to the school allowing the school to control the whole of their spending. Each Headteacher will retain responsibility to develop their school budget, with oversight from the trust.

What happens if one school struggles financially? (TS)

All budget performance would be monitored by the trust and if mismanaged, the responsibility would be taken away. If there is a large unexpected cost, such as a premises matter, bids would be put in to the DfE to cover it.

Tyrrells' premises seems to be well maintained, how do we know what problems other schools may have? (TS)

Schools' 5 year asset management plans would be scrutinised during the second phase of due diligence along with the school Condition Surveys.

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Will we have better access to support services? (TS)

As a MAT we may be able to attract a better choice of outside agencies. For example, at the moment it is difficult to source counselling for half a day per week, but together we could procure 2 days or even be able to employ our own counsellor.

What is best for the children? (TS)

Local authority support will no longer be available. It would be easier to find and fund services as a group.

Might there be more movement for the staff? (P)

There would be no immediate plans to move staff but it did open up the possibility of secondments and other opportunities, which could enhance retention of good staff.

Staff will normally have a contract of employment to work in their current school and this is protected through the transfer of employment, therefore staff will continue to work in their existing school.

However, there are three circumstances where staff may work in another trust school. First, is when a job at another Chelmsford Learning Partnership school is advertised and an employee applies for and is appointed to that role. Second, when a staff member voluntarily agrees to work within another school in the MAT. Third, there may be new posts created in the future that are trust-wide and any staff member appointed to such a post would be expected to work across schools.

Would Free School Meals change? (TS)

No, that remains an entitlement.

Are MAT schools inspected together? (TS)

No, the schools are registered with Ofsted individually.

Why has Tyrrells not been inspected since 2008? (TS)

Outstanding schools are not inspected regularly and some local academies have been even longer without inspection. We constantly assess ourselves and Ofsted monitor our data and any safeguarding concerns on an annual basis and could inspect at any time. Under the new framework, Tyrrells assess themselves as "good". School led improvement is just as challenging but more supportive and regular than an Ofsted snapshot on a particular day. A MAT gives an extra layer of accountability to monitor each other. The cross phase aspect of peer monitoring has proved beneficial to all when schools have worked together in the past.

PROCESS

How much information and say do the parents have in the final decision? (BF)

The consultation period runs for four weeks and concludes on Friday, November 17th. How much say parents have will depend on how many parents complete and return the survey forms. Parents will need to complete a survey form to have their say on the proposal. Governors will review the survey responses and make a decision based on the level of support. Parents and staff will be given feedback on these.

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF STAFF CONSULTATION MEETINGS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Introduction

Consultation meetings were held for staff at each of the schools on the proposal to join the Chelmsford Learning Partnership. The meetings took place as detailed below:

Barnes Farm Junior; 3.30pm, Oct 31st

Barnes Farm Infant; 4.00pm, Nov 1st

Perryfields Infant School; 3.15pm, Nov 1st

The Tyrrells School; 3.30pm, Nov 8th

The meetings were attended by the Headteachers, Chairs of Governors, Paul Banks, CEO, and Philip Cranwell from Cranwell Consultancy.

This document is a summary of the questions asked at the meetings and the answers given. Where helpful, additional information has been provided in response to the questions raised.

Does this mean Boswells will be our main feeder school? (BFJ)

The Boswells School is going out to consultation on their new admissions policy. We believe that if BF is part of the trust the children in BF should have access to secondary schools within that trust. BF are out of catchment but for 2019 entry BF will be listed at some point on the application criteria to Boswells.

Pensions are as they are now but what about possibility of change in the future? (BFJ)

All employers can change terms and conditions but why would the trust do this to the detriment of staff, given the challenge of recruitment that schools currently face.

What about changing terms and conditions after trust formed? (BFJ)

This could only be done with a new role and contract but would be unlikely to retain or attract staff if this was detrimental.

How will some of the benefits be realised? (BFJ)

The trust has already started looking at marking and feedback for teachers.

The difference from the informal STEP model is the formal accountability of the trust versus the 'gentleman's agreement' we had previously. There are no plans in place at the moment but these will be implemented once the trust has formed. There will be more opportunities for enhancing CPD across schools. Syncing Inset days will allow joint training and there will be greater opportunities for resource sharing and access to subject specialists.

Continuity of service - would this continue if you moved from trust? (BFJ)

See FAQ sheet. Essex County Council will honour continuity of service but, for example, Suffolk may not.

Are there any draft/model new contracts for new employees available to view? (BFJ)

To be confirmed.

How will workload be reduced? (BFI)

Through opportunities for shared planning and resources. Other MATs have found that teachers working together on curriculum planning, schemes of work or project work has reduced time they have spent and they have felt the quality of work has been enhanced. Another example is where schools have to respond to new policies or guidance from DfE or Ofsted. Working together to prepare Trust wide responses will avoid duplication of effort and save time.

How will admissions work - will this still be done by ECC? (BFI)

With regards to admissions, ECC will continue to administer admissions as before but the trust becomes the admission authority. The school governing body have to give permission to the trust before they give out an offer for a school place.

Will we be forced to increase class sizes? (BFI)

No.

Could school holiday times be changed from standard Essex format? (BFI)

Technically, any academy can change their holiday dates, but most do not as it creates chaos with other schools and parents work commitments. There are no plans to deviate from the term dates set out by Essex.

Will there be a consultation committee within the trust teachers and staff for future issues? (BFI)

Yes. The Chelmsford Learning Partnership will continue to have a mechanism to consult with staff, unions and professional associations on future pay awards and changes to other terms and conditions of employment.

What rights and benefits are protected under TUPE? (BFI)

The TUPE Regulations sets out that employee terms and conditions such as pay and policies are protected at the point of transfer.

Who will be trustees? When will we know? (BFI)

Trustees will be informed w/c 13th November.

Who are the members? (BFI)

The current members are Ruth Bird, Gillian Box and Janet Wood who were originally governors at Boswells, although they are considering adding to this from interested parties (as we can have up to 5 members) but new members have to be approved by the DFE.

How will the school be represented at trust level? (BFI)

At least one governor from each of the founding schools' governing bodies will be represented on the board of trustees.

What opportunities will there be to share expertise/resources/planning? (BFI)

The Chelmsford Learning Partnership intends to develop collaboration between colleagues in the different schools, at all levels; this could take the format of regular subject/phase meetings and joint staff training opportunities.

Will my pay date change? *Pay date will be 26th of each month (BFI)***Will support staff be treated the same way as teaching staff? (BFI)**

Yes, all employee terms and conditions including pay are protected at the point of transfer.

Will I be forced to work for the trust if my role is seen as a 'trustwide' role? e.g. IT LSA. (BFI)

Staff will normally have a contract of employment to work in their current school and this is protected through the transfer of employment, therefore staff will continue to work in their existing school.

However, there are three circumstances where staff may work in another trust school. First, is when a job at another Chelmsford Learning Partnership school is advertised and an employee applies for and is appointed to that role. Second, when a staff member voluntarily agrees to work within another school in the trust. Third, there may be new posts created in the future that are trust-wide and any staff member appointed to such a post would be expected to work across schools.

If we choose not to join CLP what is the alternative? (TS)

Tyrrells could temporarily stay as we are but probably only for the next 3 or 4 years. There may be the possibility to join CLP later but terms would be different and we would not necessarily have representation on the MAT board. Other MATs could also be considered. Maintaining an informal group such as STEP would be a possibility but this is unlikely if most of the other schools do decide to join CLP.

Where do the 5 trust board members come from? (TS)

The option to use Boswells existing MAT status as the vehicle to set up CLP is far cheaper than starting from scratch, so some of the members are already established. There are 3 Boswells members and 2 vacancies. The articles of association and scheme of delegation will both be rewritten to reflect the new partnership. There is no "lead" school.

Who will be the CEO? (TS)

Boswells changed their MAT name to Chelmsford Learning Partnership to bid for the sponsorship of the new Beaulieu school. Therefore, Mr Banks (Headteacher of Boswells) is currently interim CEO until 1st April conversion date. Then the position will be advertised as a 2 days per week post, this will be the decision of the MAT board.

Are the trustees also from Boswells? (TS)

There are 7 current Boswells trustees, including the CEO, Paul Banks and 4 vacancies which will be filled by a representative from each of the four primary schools. A skills audit will establish which people would be the most appropriate.

If the majority of staff are against the proposal, would we still go ahead? (TS)

The governors are still undecided and have spent a great deal of time working through the pros and cons. Staff were reassured that consultation will be taken very seriously and will inform the final decision. Some staff felt they were not listened to during the original academy conversion process but at that time opinions were very close to 50:50.

Tyrrells is well staffed for support, can LSAs be pulled out to other schools? (TS)

Nobody will be made to move although there would be opportunities for CPD if desired by the individual and the school. When people retire or leave by choice, decisions would be made as to whether they would be replaced or whether the role could be covered differently.

How long can our current level of staffing last while other local schools are losing support staff? (TS)

Current levels would be maintained for longer if schools work together. Many other schools cannot afford to sustain such high levels of LSAs and so this is why some cuts have been made.

Can they restructure 2 years down the line? (TS)

The direct structure of the school can only be influenced by the headteacher and the local governing body. The MAT board will not be able to get involved with that level of organisation. Their role is to monitor the use of the school's budget as well as the school's academic performance as part of the Headteacher's performance management.

Will longstanding LSAs be able to earn more in the future? (TS)

Pay will still follow Essex Local Government scales to keep parity with other schools. There will always be a capped level for every job (for all teaching and support staff) regardless of the MAT.

Have we considered joining Perryfields Juniors? (TS)

They are looking to sponsor underachieving schools. Perryfields Infants could have joined them but they are choosing CLP. We have considered a primary MAT but prefer a cross phase approach with Boswells and Beaulieu as a diverse mix of schools we believe will be better educationally.

Tyrrells is the only primary school in the equation and naturally feed into Boswells. Barnes Farm schools are further out geographically, would the MAT mean they could go to Boswells? (TS)

Boswells admission policy would change to name CLP schools as feeders along with the local schools although this would need to be consulted upon first.

What are the main disadvantages? (TS)

Loss of autonomy – at the moment we are in control of our own affairs. Having a representative on the MAT board should add some protection.

Financial risk if other schools are struggling – schools would have their own bank accounts and budgets would be managed by the LGB and HT. Schools would be monitored by the CEO and MAT board who would step in if necessary.

Could other schools join later? (TS)

That would be the MAT board's decision. It is likely that there would be a different scheme of delegation for schools who join later (not founding members) particularly if they are sponsored.

If one school struggles academically, will there be pressure on the others to support it? (TS)

Expertise could be shared in an advisory capacity but staff would not be transferred without their consent. Good monitoring should prevent this situation as schools will be working together all the time on school improvement focuses.

Does Ofsted inspect a MAT as a whole? (TS)

Schools are not linked by Ofsted and are inspected individually.

If another school overspends, where will the excess come from if not from other MAT schools? (TS)

All schools are individually answerable to ESFA (Education & Skills Funding Agency), any transfers would only be short term. Emergency matters (i.e. premises) could be dealt with by applying for bids from the DfE.

What would Tyrrells have to pay to CLP? (TS)

The board is made up of volunteers who are not paid. There would be a share of the cost of the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) and CFO (Chief Financial Officer), each of which are estimated at 2 days per week initially. The CEO's salary would be in the region of £120k (full time equivalent). Support costs would be allocated on a per pupil or per staff ratio depending on category. Tyrrells trust contribution for this year is estimated at approximately £40k although this would change if more schools join the MAT. £75k will go into the trust from the conversion grants for the 3 current LA schools along with the set up funding for Beaulieu. Legal fees for us will be about £6k as our land transfer away from the Local Authority has already been done.

Could staff sharing mean we might get a teacher from another school who is not of the quality we would want? (TS)

Nobody would be made to move schools against their will. If vacancies were advertised across the MAT, normal recruitment procedures and standards would apply.

If we sign up and then change our mind, can we leave? (TS)

Our solicitors have advised us that they are breaking up as many MATs as they are forming and have said that the crucial factor is the time spent setting up and agreeing a secure vision. We could leave but would not have the option to come back to being a single academy as these are no longer permitted. The DfE

can also step in and remove a school from a MAT if they are not performing well as part of the trust that they are in.

How would a board of directors who do not know how we work affect us? (TS)

The scheme of delegation shows that there is no role for the MAT board in the day to day running of the school. The only staff post they would be involved in recruiting is the Headteachers; the board would predominantly be dealing with the MAT budget, effective governance and the performance of all schools within the MAT.

APPENDIX C: Consultation Survey Data

SCHOOL	STAKEHOLDER	UNIVERSE	RESPONSES (NO.)					RESPONSES (% OF UNIVERSE)				RESPONSES (% OF RESPONSES)					
			YES	MAYBE	NO	DK	TOTAL	TOTAL	YES	MAYBE	NO	DK	YES	MAYBE	NO	DK	TOTAL
Barnes Farm Infant	PARENT	267	28	10	8	7	53	20%	10%	4%	3%	3%	53%	19%	15%	13%	100%
	TEACHER	14	1	0	0	0	1	7%	7%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	29	2	2	1	2	7	24%	7%	7%	3%	7%	29%	29%	14%	29%	100%
	TOTAL	310	31	12	9	9	61	20%	10%	4%	3%	3%	51%	20%	15%	15%	100%
Barnes Farm Junior	PARENT	358	16	10	8	5	39	11%	4%	3%	2%	1%	41%	26%	21%	13%	100%
	TEACHER	18	3	7	1	0	11	61%	17%	39%	6%	0%	27%	64%	9%	0%	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	28	3	2	5	1	11	39%	11%	7%	18%	4%	27%	18%	45%	9%	100%
	TOTAL	404	22	19	14	6	61	15%	5%	5%	3%	1%	36%	31%	23%	10%	100%
Perryfields Infant	PARENT	179	12	3	4	3	22	12%	7%	2%	2%	2%	55%	14%	18%	14%	100%
	TEACHER	10	4	0	0	0	4	40%	40%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	30	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	TOTAL	219	16	3	4	3	26	12%	7%	1%	2%	1%	62%	12%	15%	12%	100%
The Tyrrells School	PARENT	446	23	8	5	7	43	10%	5%	2%	1%	2%	53%	19%	12%	16%	100%
	TEACHER	21	7	2	0	0	9	43%	33%	10%	0%	0%	78%	22%	0%	0%	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	53	2	4	8	2	16	30%	4%	8%	15%	4%	13%	25%	50%	13%	100%
	TOTAL	520	32	14	13	9	68	13%	6%	3%	3%	2%	47%	21%	19%	13%	100%
TRUST	PARENT	1,250	79	31	25	22	157	13%	6%	2%	2%	2%	50%	20%	16%	14%	100%
	TEACHER	63	15	9	1	0	25	40%	24%	14%	2%	0%	60%	36%	4%	0%	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	140	7	8	14	5	34	24%	5%	6%	10%	4%	21%	24%	41%	15%	100%
	TOTAL	1,453	101	48	40	27	216	15%	7%	3%	3%	2%	47%	22%	19%	13%	100%