

**Changing to Foundation School Status and Acquiring a Charitable Trust**

**Formal Public Consultation Summary**

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**1. Preamble**

To set this in a national context, the first group of schools became Trusts in September 2007. As of end of January 2011, there are 477 open Trust schools; 90 of those have chosen to become co-operative trusts (data on open trust schools/partners available at: - [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolorg/dsp\\_tsp-proposals.cfm](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolorg/dsp_tsp-proposals.cfm)).

The Eastern Region has 198 'live and acquiring' trust schools in 57 separate projects (97 Secondary, 88 Primary and 13 Special schools). In Norfolk, there are 2 live single school trusts and 8 schools exploring trust status in 3 separate projects. Norfolk already has 13 Foundation and 2 VA High Schools with 4 Foundation and 70+ VA & VC Primary Schools.

The Aylsham Cluster of schools has been developing a very strong collaboration, with all schools benefitting from an increasing number of networks and projects. The collaboration has been cited by the Local Authority, the Training Development Agency, the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and the National College for School Leadership as a model of excellent practice. There is potential to grow this collaboration even further, working with external partners for the benefit of all children and families in the cluster area. The Trust model was identified as a way of providing a mechanism for formalising the partnership between the schools in a way that would not compromise their individuality or autonomy.

This paper has been produced to give detailed information of our consultation process, to summarise the results and to draw conclusions.

**2. Summary**

Our formal consultation process began on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2011 and was completed on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2011 (4 working weeks during term time). During this period 2 open forum meetings were held. Prior to the formal consultation, an introductory presentation and a Question and Answer session had been held with the all cluster schools' staff on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2010  
130 Public Consultation packs were widely distributed.

A detailed analysis of the response forms is attached.

10 questionnaire forms were returned (7.6%).

1 email was received.

2 parents arranged a meeting with the nominated Parent Governor

0 staff had meetings with one of the nominated Staff Governor.

**3. Calendar of Events**

10.01.11	Public Consultation packs distributed / details 'live' on the website
30.01.11	Assemblies taken by HT on Trusts for all Year groups
27.01.11	Open Staff meeting
27.01.11	Open Parents & Stakeholders meeting
02.02.11	School Council meeting

#### 4. Summary of Consultation Returns

##### Distribution List

- a) Young people currently on roll at the school;
- b) Parents/carers of pupils currently on roll at the school;
- c) Staff currently employed at the school, both teaching and non teaching;
- d) The governing body, teachers and other staff of any other school that may be affected by the proposals;
- e) Families of pupils at any other school that may be affected by the proposals;
- f) Any trade unions who represent staff at the school and representatives of any trade union of any other staff at schools that may be affected by the proposals;
- g) The Norwich Diocesan Board of Education for the Church of England;
- h) The Young People's Learning Agency;
- i) Local Members of Parliament whose constituencies include the school (including MEPs)
- j) Local Borough, District or Parish councils where the school is situated;
- k) The Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership, or those who benefit from a contractual arrangement giving them the use of the premises;

##### Response Details - 10 Questionnaires returned

Stakeholder Group	Number of Responses
Parents, guardians, carers	7
Staff	1
Other / Anonymous	2

#### 5. Comments from Questionnaire Responses

##### Question 1: How do you feel about Buxton Primary School changing its status to become a Foundation School?

Yes – 10 (100%); No - 0 (0%); I don't know – 0 (0%)

Comments (1 received)

I like the idea of sharing resources. Headteachers will be able to do more teaching focused work. (P)

##### Question 2: How do you feel about Buxton Primary School acquiring a Trust?

Yes – 10 (100%); No – 0 (0%); I don't know – 0 (0%)

Comments (0)

##### Question 3: Do you think that Buxton Primary School should develop long-term partnerships and work with the following organisations to achieve its educational aims?

Organisation	Yes	No	I Don't know	Blank
Aylsham Cluster Schools	10	0	0	0
City College Norwich	10	0	0	0
The Sainsbury Centre	9	0	1	0

The National Trust	9	0	1	0
The Benjamin Foundation	9	0	1	0
Norfolk County Council Children's Services	9	0	1	0
The East of England Co- operative Society	8	0	2	0

#### Comments (2)

I would be nice to hear from the organisations involved and to understand more of the way in which the partnership would work (eg opportunities). (P)

I am not sure why these organisations have been chosen (P)

#### Other Possible Partners

UEA, Easton College, Performing Arts organisation, an agricultural organisation.  
Paston College, Norfolk Chamber of Commerce (a business, innovation, entrepreneur group)

#### **Question 4: Do you think this new Governing Body model is right for the school?**

**Yes – 10 (100%); Yes/Concerns - 0 (0%); Yes/More Trust Govs – 0 (0%); No – 0 (0%);**

**I don't know – 0 (0%)**

#### Comments (1)

The Trust needs to have representation on the governing body to help safeguard the interests of all concerned. (P)

#### **Question 5. Do you agree with the proposal to establish a Stakeholder Council?**

**Yes – 9 (90%); No – 1 (10%); I don't know – 0 (0%)**

#### Comments (1)

I fear bureaucracy and suspect that the community will not generate enough support/interest to maintain a vibrant council. Governance need not be too great to be effective. (P)

#### **Question 6. Do you have any other comments, concerns or suggestions that we should think about before we publish formal proposals?**

#### Comments (4)

Ultimately, I think the children will have more opportunities and it will make transition to high school much easier for all concerned. (P)

No, I do not have any other comments etc other than I think it's a really good idea (P)

Consultation meetings were poorly scheduled – I work! (P)

In this climate of economic cuts, all services need to work closely together. An Aylsham Cluster Co-operative Trust will ensure current provision for schools and families has more chance of remaining or developing. A great idea. (S)

## **6. Comments from Public Consultation meetings**

### **School Council feedback**

We like the sports games and competitions between schools.  
(Y5) we enjoyed having the lessons with Mrs Penfold last year.  
KS2: we like going to see the high school plays

### **Staff** (6 staff attended)

Key questions: -

How will teachers' pensions be affected?

Will the change to Foundation status affect continuity of service if anyone moves school?

What is the relationship between the Trust and the school's Governing Body?

When are these changes likely to happen assuming the GB give it the go ahead?

How will the GB make the decision to move forward or not?

### **Parents / Stakeholders** (2 parents and 1 District Councillor attended)

Key questions: -

How will the school be supported in future if it ever gets into difficulties again? (eg Special Measures)

How would support be shared across the cluster schools?

What is to be the focus of the Trust's future activities?

How are governors and trustees selected?

When are these changes likely to happen assuming the GB give it the go ahead?

## **7. Comments from Meetings with Governors / Letters**

### **Parent Governor**

2 parents made contact. Clarification was sought on specific points in the PC documentation and reassurance requested that it really was a proper consultation exercise and that Governors had yet to decide whether this was the best way forward.

### **Staff Governor**

0 staff made contact.

### **Letters/Emails**

Dear Mr Jackson,

Thank you for sending me the consultation document.

I am fully behind Buxton School's exploration of changing to Foundation Status and Acquiring Charitable Trust-becoming part of the Aylsham Cluster Cooperative.

I believe that to be part of a formal way of working is the way forward for all small schools and will buffer the effects of a vulnerable LA.

At the same time I believe that to maintain a partnership with the LA is important and this model of collaboration allows just that.

Whilst as you suggest, all schools will want to maintain their individuality ie what makes them special for their children, I believe that being part of the Trust will allow Buxton to do just that whilst also enabling it to look holistically at opportunities to strengthen wider aspects of education.

As a Head teacher of a school in the cluster, which has already decided to explore the Trust opportunity, I firmly believe that Buxton should do so also.