

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

### **1. Background**

The Governing Body of Roding Valley High School has been considering a proposal to join a new multi-academy trust being created by The Boswells School, Chelmsford Learning Partnership and for the school to convert to academy status.

The Governing Body agreed in September 2017 to consult upon the proposal for the school 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.

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. The 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 to convert to academy status.

### **4. Consultation Process**

The academy consultation ran from Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup> until Friday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, a period of 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"> <li>• Letter and Consultation proposal sent to all parents on Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• A consultation meetings was held on Monday, November 27<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• Survey forms were distributed at the consultation meeting</li> <li>• Meeting Q&amp;A summary published Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent &amp; Carer Letter</li> <li>• Consultation Document</li> <li>• Consultation presentation</li> <li>• Consultation survey</li> <li>• Meeting Q&amp;A summary</li> </ul>
Staff employed by the schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter, Consultation Document and FAQs sent to all staff on Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• A consultation meeting was held on Monday, November 27<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• Survey forms were distributed at the consultation meeting</li> <li>• Meeting Q&amp;A summary published Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff letter</li> <li>• Staff Consultation Document</li> <li>• Staff FAQs</li> <li>• Consultation presentation</li> <li>• Consultation survey</li> <li>• Meeting Q&amp;A summary</li> </ul>
Unions & professional associations for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter, copy of staff letter, consultation FAQs and survey sent to representatives on Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• Unions invited to attend the staff consultation meetings (See above)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Union letter</li> <li>• Staff letter</li> <li>• Consultation Document</li> <li>• Staff Consultation FAQs</li> </ul>
Other local schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter sent to Headteachers of local schools on Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community letter</li> </ul>
Local MPs and Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter sent to local politicians on Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community letter</li> </ul>

The range of documents and information were published on the school website with the URL detailed below:

<https://www.rodinvalley.net>

## 5. Consultation meetings

### 5.1 Parent/carers consultation meeting

A total of 12 parents/carers attended the meeting.

The format of the meeting was that the Chair of Governors, Tony Barritt gave an initial presentation on the proposal, Head of School, Sharon Jenner 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. A number of other school governors were also present at the meeting. 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 meeting

The staff meeting was well attended. A total of 49 members of staff attended the meeting.

The format of the meeting was that the Chair of Governors, Tony Barritt gave an initial presentation on the proposal, Head of School, Sharon Jenner, 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. A number of other school governors were also present at the meeting. Staff were then given the chance to ask questions and a summary of the Questions & Answers is attached as appendix B.

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

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

### Q2. What do you like about your school?

### Q3. Do you support the proposal of your school converting to academy status and joining Chelmsford Learning Partnership, a multi-academy trust, with The Boswells School?

### Q4. Please explain your response to question 3.

### Q5. Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposal?

By the close of consultation on Friday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, a total of 133 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 rate for parent/carers at Roding Valley High School was above the average for secondary school academy consultations (10%). (*Note: the number of pupils is used as the universe for parent responses.*)

The response rate for teaching staff at Roding Valley High School was significantly below the average for secondary school academy consultations (11%).

The response rate for support staff at Roding Valley High School was significantly below the average for secondary school academy consultations (1%).

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.

Stakeholder Group	Universe figures	Survey Results: Number (% Universe)
Parents (NOR)	1260	121 (10%)
Teachers	81	9 (11%)
Support Staff	82	2 (1%)

## 7. Analysis of survey responses

The survey responses are summarised in the table below.

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

Of the 9% of teachers that responded, there were no NO responses.

From the small number of support staff that responded, there were no NO responses.

Anecdotal feedback obtained by the school governors and Head of School has suggested that the low response rates observed for teaching and support staff did not indicate unvoiced objections to the proposal, that staff felt unable to share. In fact, it could be taken as tacit agreement to the proposal.

Audience	Data	YES	MAYBE	NO	DON'T KNOW
Parents	Number	44	25	22	30
	% of Universe	3%	2%	2%	2%
	% of Responses	36%	21%	18%	25%
Teachers	Number	3	3	0	3
	% of Universe	4%	4%	0%	4%
	% of Responses	33%	33%	0%	33%
Support Staff	Number	1	1	0	0
	% of Universe	1%	1%	0%	0%
	% of Responses	50%	50%	0%	0%

In terms of other stakeholder groups, there was one NO response from a first choice school for year 6 parent.

Comments in support of the proposal included:

- MATs are the best way forward and having a proactive approach protects our children from getting left behind in a school which is not attracting the best staff and funding.
- I think it will open up lots of opportunities to the teaching staff and will lead to more efficient use of resources for back office functions.
- If it creates opportunity to share and improve my child's learning and experience at school, then I am in favour.

Comments against the proposal included:

- The school has been achieving, without the need for academy status.
- I am worried that it will take away the personality of the school.
- I have only heard negative things about academies.

## **8. Consultation summary and recommendation**

The consultation with the key stakeholders of Roding Valley High School has been comprehensive.

The outcome of consultation is that there was little objection to the proposal among any stakeholder group. Although, low response rates mean interpretation of the survey results is statistically difficult for teaching and support staff.

Therefore, the Governing Body of Roding Valley High School are advised that the consultation has not demonstrated any significant objection that should cause them to reconsider the proposal for the school to become an academy 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**

A Consultation meeting was held for parents and carers at Roding Valley High School on the proposal to join the Chelmsford Learning Partnership. The meeting took place on Monday, November 27<sup>th</sup> 2017.

The meetings were attended by Sharon Jenner as Head of School, Tony Barritt as Chair of Governors, Paul Banks as CEO of Chelmsford Learning Partnership, and Philip Cranwell from Cranwell Consultancy.

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

**Question 1. How can Roding Valley High School benefit from sharing resources with primary schools?**

Roding Valley High School will benefit from working with the other secondary schools in the trust, The Boswells School and the new 'all through' school, Beaulieu Park. There is significant evidence that close collaboration between primary and secondary phases can improve the transition for pupils and this in turn, makes a significant difference to attainment and progress, ultimately leading to better outcomes at GCSE and higher level examinations.

**Question 2. Why not bring Roding Valley High School feeder schools into the MAT?**

The 15 feeder schools for Roding Valley High School have already decided to form their own, new, multi academy trust and are currently working on the proposal.

**Question 3. What is an inclusive admissions policy?**

An inclusive admissions policy means that there is no selection, admission is based predominantly on proximity to the school, with exemptions for 'looked after' children, siblings and children of staff.

**Question 4. Will Mr. Banks continue in the role of Executive Head Teacher?**

Mr. Banks' role as Executive Head Teacher of Roding Valley High School is not linked to the outcome of this academy consultation.

**Question 5. Could Chelmsford Learning Partnership block RVHS joining if they delay?**

There would be no reason for Chelmsford Learning Partnership to block Roding Valley High School from joining the trust at a later date, if there was a delay to the proposal.

**Question 6. How will RVHS move forward if there is only one secondary school in the trust?**

The governors at Roding Valley High School researched and visited a number of MAT's before selecting Chelmsford Learning Partnership. In their view Chelmsford Learning Partnership most closely matched the culture of Roding Valley High School. Joining a new, smaller MAT will allow the school to shape its own destiny rather than being consumed within a large, fully functioning MAT that

would impose their style upon the school. Joining with Chelmsford Learning Partnership will allow Roding Valley High School to:

- Establish a CLP hub within the West Essex area, providing closer links with local schools and our community.
- Take advantage of the economies of scale available that are not achievable by a stand-alone entity.
- Develop and extend extra-curricular activities.
- Ensure that our students and staff flourish in a broader and more stable environment.
- Minimise any dependence on supply teachers by gaining access to a wider, experienced teacher base.

Furthermore, whilst any changes carry an element of risk and short-term upheaval, these will be minimised by partnering with a team that the school already work closely with and whose senior leader has first-hand experience of how Roding Valley High School works.

#### **Question 7. How can parents be reassured that non-qualified teaching staff will not be used?**

The teaching staff are key to the success of any school and have the biggest impact on pupil learning. The head teachers will not want to do anything to jeopardize this within their school.

There may be circumstances, as now, where the use of non-qualified teaching staff is applicable, but this will not be in a primary teaching role.

#### **Question 8. What was the value of top slice?**

The incremental costs of running the trust have been estimated. Schools will be required to make a modest contribution, which represents a very small percentage of their current budget (2.5%). Each of the schools has budgeted its forecast contribution. All schools will pay the same per pupil amount.

#### **Question 9. If a school gets into difficulty, will staff be parachuted across from other schools?**

Expertise could be shared in an advisory capacity but staff would not be transferred from another school without their consent. If the Trust is required to provide support to an under-performing school, the CEO will lead the coordination of resources to deliver the improvement plan, working with the other Headteachers. They would ensure that the other schools would not be adversely affected by deployment of resources. Good monitoring should prevent this situation from arising in the first place, as schools will be working together all the time on school improvement focuses.

It is worth noting that there is wide evidence that supporting an under-performing school is a highly effective form of professional development that enhances the skills and expertise of teachers or members of staff. This benefits their home school as they apply newly learned insight and good practice.

#### **Question 10. What happens when Paul Banks leaves?**

Within any organization there is always succession planning for such an eventuality. The trust would look to recruit a suitable replacement.

**APPENDIX B**  
**SUMMARY OF STAFF CONSULTATION MEETINGS**  
**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

**Introduction**

A Consultation meeting was held for staff members at Roding Valley High School on the proposal to join the Chelmsford Learning Partnership. The meeting took place on Monday, November 27<sup>th</sup> 2017.

The meetings were attended by Sharon Jenner as Head of School, Tony Barritt as Chair of Governors, Paul Banks as CEO of Chelmsford Learning Partnership, and Philip Cranwell from Cranwell Consultancy. The meeting was also attended by representatives from NASUWT, UNISON and NUT.

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

**Question 1. How will staff/school voice be heard?**

The CEO, Paul Banks, as a trustee will be able to report and give guidance to the trust board on behalf of Roding Valley High School. All the members of the trustee board are current school governors and will represent their individual school's interests. Roding Valley High School is likely to have representation on the trust board.

The LGB at each school will still have an important role in the governance of their school. The composition of Local Governing Bodies will be a matter for each Local Governing Body.

**Question 2. Can the Board of Trustees override LGB decisions?**

The Governing Bodies of each school will become Local Governing Bodies and will continue to have an important role in the governance of their school. A Scheme of Delegation agreed by the Governing Bodies sets out their responsibilities and accountabilities. The Governing Bodies are satisfied they have the appropriate level of autonomy, balanced against the legal and regulatory responsibilities that Trustees must retain. The trust will only intervene in matters of safeguarding, financial mismanagement or poor Ofsted result.

**Question 3. Will pensions be with the same provider?**

Pensions will remain with the same providers; TPS for teaching staff and LGPS for support staff.

**Question 4. How will further questions be handled?**

Further questions can be emailed directly to the school or raised on the survey forms that have been distributed at the meeting. These will be answered directly and a summary of the Consultation Q&As will be published on the school website.

**Question 5. Will pay scales vary across the schools in the MAT?**

The current local government pay scales used by the schools will transfer across. The schools have committed that staff will have pay, terms and conditions at least equal to Local Authority maintained

schools and that the Trust will have a union negotiation agreement in place that involves unions in employment matters such as agreement of pay scales.

Any local variations will be investigated and in the long term there will be a move towards standardization across all the schools in the trust.

#### **Question 6. Will TLRs remain the same?**

The schools have committed to terms and conditions that will be at least equal to those in Local Authority maintained schools. The schools have committed to the Trust having a union consultation agreement that will set out the role of unions in consultation and negotiation of changes to terms & conditions.

#### **Question 7. What are the negatives of the proposal?**

In the short term, the drawbacks are the work involved for the school in setting up the new financial systems and new governance systems that need to be in place at the time of conversion.

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 five governing bodies have been considering the trust's governance, leadership and management 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.

The Secretary of State for Education has broad powers to intervene in a Trust where:

- The standards of performance of pupils at the academy are unacceptably low
- There has been a serious breakdown in the way the academy is managed or governed
- The safety of pupils or staff is threatened, including due to the breakdown of discipline
- There is financial mismanagement or failure to operate within the budget

There are cases where the Secretary of State has removed a school from one trust and 're-brokered' it to another trust. There are also a few examples where a trust has shut-down. There are, equally, plenty of examples of local authority maintained schools failing. That is why the governors and Headteachers from the schools have examined the trust's governance, leadership and management so diligently and are confident that the trust will enable each school to sustain and improve pupil outcomes and school performance.

#### **Question 8. Will trust wide roles be created that will impact the Senior Leadership Team?**

Any trust wide roles are likely to be part-time or staff taking on additional responsibilities, rather than full time roles. This will have no significant impact on the role and responsibilities of the Senior Leadership Team within the school.

#### **Question 9. Will trust jobs be advertised internally?**

All trust wide roles will be advertised internally.



**APPENDIX C: Consultation Survey Data**

SCHOOL	STAKEHOLDER	UNIVERSE	RESPONSES (NO.)					RESPONSES (% OF UNIVERSE)			RESPONSES (% OF RESPONSES)				
			YES	MAYBE	NO	DK	TOTAL	TOTAL	YES	NO	YES	MAYBE	NO	DK	TOTAL
Roding Valley High School	PARENT	1260	44	25	22	30	121	10%	3%	2%	36%	21%	18%	25%	100%
	TEACHER	81	3	3	0	3	9	11%	4%	0%	33%	33%	0%	33%	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	82	1	1	0	0	2	2%	1%	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	100%
	TOTAL	1423	48	29	22	33	132	9%	3%	2%	36%	22%	17%	25%	100%