

Appendix 3

Proposal to establish the Bottisham Education Trust: feedback on initial consultation process

The Governors of Bottisham Village College would like to thank all those who took the time to respond to the first stage of consultation.

In setting up the consultation process, which ran from Monday 18th January to Friday 26th February, we followed the DCSF guidelines in full, to ensure that we:

- ✓ Consulted widely throughout the process
- ✓ Explained our proposals clearly and considered who may be affected
- ✓ Ensured that all communications were concise and accessible
- ✓ Committed to provide feedback after the consultation had finished.

During the consultation process:

- ✓ We consulted with members of staff and students at Bottisham Village College, parents and carers of students at Bottisham Village College and our partner primary schools, other local schools and colleges, local Parish Councils, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils, Cambridgeshire County Council, relevant Trades Unions and professional associations, local members of Parliament, Learning and Skills Council and the Diocesan Board.
- ✓ Meetings were held for staff, students, parents/carers and members of the broader community, together with a number of individual consultations.
- ✓ During these meetings and discussions, interested parties were able to put forward their views, whether supporting or opposing the proposals, as well as having the opportunity to ask questions.
- ✓ 23 written or e-mail responses were received.

The governors have reviewed all of the responses received, together with the minutes of the meetings held. Their responses to the issues raised are summarised in the attached tables.

Although there have been many positive points made by a significant majority of respondents who are fully supportive of this proposed development, we also recognise that a number of areas of concern have been identified by a minority of respondents. For example: (a) the long term future of the site; (b) the funding of the school should a Trust be created, (c) the relationship between the Trust Board and the Governing Body and, (d) the position of staff, if such a change took place. These included a detailed response from UNISON on behalf of non-teaching staff members.

We hope that we have been able to allay those concerns in the responses attached to this letter. Please do take time to look at the responses to all of the questions/issues raised; note that these responses need to be read with reference to the consultation documents which are all to be found on the school's website at www.bottishamvc.org

Having carefully considered all feedback and after extensive discussion by the Full Governing Body, we have resolved to move to the next stage of the consultation process. We will therefore be publishing a Statutory Proposal to change the status of Bottisham Village College from a Community school to a Foundation school and to acquire a Foundation Trust, called the Bottisham Education Trust. It is likely that this Statutory Proposal will be published after the Easter holiday and more details will be available via our website in due course. There will be further opportunity for people to comment on the proposals during the statutory notice period.

Yours sincerely

Philip Hodgson
Chair of Governors

Topic	Key Questions / issues raised	Responses
Foundation Trust status (FT)	What is the need? Why now?	Bottisham Village College is a very successful school with a strong community ethos. The school has benefited from significant development and improvement in recent years. However, we are an ambitious organisation, committed to achieving excellence in all aspects of our work. We are in a good position to enhance the conditions for further collaboration and joint working with external partners, which will support further improvement to the benefit of all students.
	How will it impact on students and standards?	The school's most recent Ofsted report gave a 'Good' grade overall with many 'Outstanding' features. The school wishes to drive to the next level, with an overall 'Outstanding' grade. FT status will bring new learning opportunities for students, raise levels of engagement with learning and raise standards. We believe the Trust would make a significant contribution to raising standards of achievement and further improve student well-being.
	How will this be monitored?	<p>The Governing Body will remain responsible for the performance of the school and will develop targets with the partners to monitor the impact of the trust to include: (i) Increasing the breadth and quality of Work Experience placements for students and staff (ii) Partner involvement in contributing to PSHE days (iii) Increasing student understanding of the application of their learning in the workplace (iv) Improving students' understanding of the skills necessary to be successful in the workplace (v) Increasing students' empathy and emotional resilience and thereby contributing to higher levels of student well-being .</p> <p>Governors intend to seek an external consultant to monitor the performance and impact of the Foundation Trust. The LA and Ofsted will also continue to monitor the performance of the school and will therefore monitor the success or otherwise of the new arrangements.</p>

	<p>What are the drawbacks?</p> <p>Is the development of a Trust in conflict with the College's Community role?</p> <p>How could the trust contribute to community cohesion?</p> <p>Is Trust status reversible?</p>	<p>A theoretical drawback would be if a Trust were formed with partners who did not share the ethos of the School. The Governing Body have been careful in the selection of partners and are convinced that they understand and subscribe to the ethos of the School and the vision of the Trust as set out in the original Consultation Paper.</p> <p>Under the proposed arrangements the Village College would be statutorily termed a 'Foundation Trust School' rather than a 'Community School'. This should not be taken to imply any diminution in the school's commitment to Community Education or its role in the community. The College, its feeder primary schools and the Locality Team have been recognised by the LA for outstanding practice in delivering a range of services to meet the needs and interests of the students, their families and the wider community. This commitment to the objectives of the 'Extended School' initiative demonstrates the commitment of the College to its wider role.</p> <p>Governors believe that the full implementation of the challenging Every Child Matters agenda will help to ensure that all of our students leave school, equipped with the broad range of skills, qualifications, attributes and experiences which will enable them to take up their roles as responsible, young citizens who are able to make a positive contribution to society.</p> <p>Creating a Trust is intended to be a permanent relationship. However, there is a process to remove the Trust if there is real dissatisfaction at the Trust's performance. The school would then revert to becoming a Foundation School and publicly-funded land and assets held by the Trust would transfer back to the school's governing body.</p>
Partners	How were they chosen?	The school has selected all partners after careful consideration about the extent to which they share our vision and commitment to the full implementation of the Every Child Matters agenda. They will be involved in helping us shape the future development of these important aspects of our work.

	<p>How much say will they have?</p>	<p>The day to day running of the school will still be the responsibility of the Governing Body. The partner organisations were required to show an understanding of the work of the College. They have all signed Memoranda of Understanding to that effect. The organisations will be permanent members of the Trust Board unless they are voted off by a majority of the members. Each organisation is responsible for nominating a senior executive representative to attend three key strategic meetings per year.</p>
	<p>What payback do they expect?</p>	<p>There is mutual benefit to be derived for the partner organisations as long-term involvement with us helps them to meet some of their own priorities, such as contributing to increased community cohesion and improving the skills of the future workforce. However they are not expecting commercial gain or benefit.</p>
	<p>Why move to FT status if partnerships already exist?</p>	<p>In our choice of Trust partners we aimed for a balance between educational, public and business organisations to provide a blend of new skills in order to move the school forward in a formal, legal, sustainable long-term inter-organisational relationship. In contrast, many of our existing partnerships rely on individual personalities/relationships and short term objectives. They therefore do not offer the degree of sustainability that we feel is essential to fully secure continual improvement.</p>
	<p>Is there the opportunity for additional partners to join the trust in the future?</p>	<p>Yes, the legal framework associated with the establishment of the Trust would ensure that the membership of the Trust could be reviewed in the future. It would be the Trust Board who would be ultimately responsible for any such changes, in consultation with the governing body.</p>

Governance	Would a less accountable body run the school?	<p>The Governing Body would retain responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school. The Trust is designed to support the school not to take it over and run it. The Trust has a different, yet complementary, role to the Governing Body. The vision and ethos of the school remain untouched. The Trust will elect only 2 governors out of a governing body of 20.</p> <p>The stakeholder groups will still be represented on the Governing body in very similar numbers as at present, i.e. 7 Parents, 4 Staff, 4 Community and 3 LA, plus the 2 Foundation governors nominated by the Trust members.</p>
Relationship with LA	Trust status	<p>The LA is fully supportive of this proposal. A FT school is still a LA maintained school within the local family of schools. Some powers (land, employment, admissions) do transfer to the Trust and Governing Body. In a FT school, the land and buildings are transferred from the LA and held 'on trust' (ie for the purpose or benefit of the school) by the Trust.</p>
	How is access and cost of LA services affected?	<p>The access to and cost of LA services remains unaffected by the change of status</p>
	Would this change affect the admissions policy?	<p>The governors remain absolutely committed to Bottisham Village College remaining a fully comprehensive school, designed to meet the needs of its local community. A move to FT status does not enable a governing body to become selective. We will retain the Cambridgeshire admissions criteria and the LA will manage admissions on our behalf.</p>
School Site	Who owns the land?	<p>The land and assets would transfer to the Trust, to be held in trust, by the Trust.</p>

	<p>How will the land and assets be managed?</p> <p>Can the land be sold off?</p>	<p>The Governing Body would remain in day to day control of the management of the assets of the school and for all major decisions about the school and its future. The funding arrangements for this purpose from the LA would remain exactly as they are at the moment</p> <p>There is no proposal to sell land. There is the theoretical possibility that some of the land could be sold in the future, but there are many protective clauses and restrictions to a potential sale. If the Trust wanted to sell land, there would have to be full consultation with the Governing Body. The Trust itself cannot profit from any such disposal –any proceeds would have to be used for the benefit of the school. The LA could object to the proposed sale of any land.</p>
Finance	How will FT status affect how the school is funded?	<p>The annual funding of the School would remain the same as for all LA maintained schools i.e. it is based on the number and age of students at the school.</p> <p>Similarly access to Capital funding for development would come through the LA in exactly the same way as it does now.</p> <p>Therefore, in the case of both Revenue and Capital funding, the College would be neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by Trust status.</p> <p>However the Trust could potentially apply for some funding streams (e.g. charitable) not currently open to the School.</p>
Staff Employment	Will conditions of service change?	As a Foundation school, all staff will be employed by the Governing Body, rather than by Cambridgeshire County Council and therefore new contracts would be issued at the point of transfer. Staff pay and conditions will be fully protected at transfer and, in addition, the Governing Body has made a commitment to abide by any national agreements for future appointments to both teaching and support staff.

	<p>Who is responsible for redundancies?</p>	<p>As with other categories of school, the Local Authority will normally pay for early retirement and voluntary redundancy in line with the criteria set out in the Local Authority's policy.</p>
	<p>Will FT status increase workloads?</p>	<p>There will be a minor impact on the workload of some senior staff and governors with regard to the servicing of the Trust Board. The developments that would emerge from FT status would have some impact on the areas of responsibility for key members of staff, as is the case with any new whole school initiative, e.g. the work necessary following the achievement of our applied learning specialism.</p>
<p>Community Provision</p>	<p>Will collaboration with primary schools be altered?</p>	<p>Not at all. The College with its primary school partners is proud to have developed a broad provision of 'extended school' services of outstanding quality which meets the needs and interests of the students, their families and the wider community.</p>
	<p>Will the change from 'Community' to 'Foundation Trust' status undermine the village college ethos?</p>	<p>Not at all. The College remains wholly committed to Henry Morris' vision of the school at the heart of the community. This has been exemplified through the continuation of a broad adult education programme despite the drastic reductions in funding available to support this work in recent years. The improvements to the Sports Centre facilities and the development of a Locality Team base on the college site are further indications of the importance of this aspect of our role, as is our hosting and support of both the community library and the Red2Green charity base.</p>

Summary of key points/issues raised through the consultation process

FOR	AGAINST	GENERAL POINTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secures long-term commitment of partners around a clear vision for the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships could be developed without the move to Trust status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and publish success criteria to monitor the impact of the trust
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for new partners to join in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust status undermines a democratically accountable education provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the contributions of the partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships build on Cambridge’s strengths with reputable organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight of the school and its land should not be in the control of commercial organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will trust status affect the community aspects of the school?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening of the link between education and the workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust status is not reversible and fixes the partners for the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorities ill-defined and meaningless
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased opportunities for training and work placements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing in the Every Child Matters agenda requires an external partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate communication with local community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for cross-fertilization between partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The prospect of Academy status will be more likely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Await the outcome of the General Election to see if there is a change in policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased opportunities for apprenticeships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns that the land could be sold off in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time scale of consultation too short
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will give students a better understanding of career opportunities and the skills needed in the workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LA has a crucial role in securing coordinated admissions arrangements; local admissions criteria could lead to selection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only the positive view presented
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and expertise of partners add breadth to students’ education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Henry Morris/community vision has been lost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification requested about the impact on terms and conditions of employment for existing staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will help students in the transition to the world of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial organisations will always act in self-interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An independent ballot should be held to determine the outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide range of opportunities for staff and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BVC already a successful school –why change status when there is no evidence that it will raise 	

- Support for applied and vocational courses
 - Will help to keep the school focused on the potential of each individual child
 - Increased opportunities could help to motivate students to do better in school
 - Links will benefit students both academically and socially
- standards?
- Increased workload for staff
 - Trust partners would have a disproportionate influence
 - Children's education should not be driven by commercial organisations