

# Coastal Alliance Co-operative Trust

## Summary of Consultation Responses

1. In total, over 250 adults and well over 500 children were involved in meetings to discuss the proposal. Union representatives also attended a meeting to discuss the proposals and some attended the staff meetings to support their members.
2. The overall tone of the meetings indicated good levels of support for the proposal.
3. In total there were around 20 written response forms returned before the consultation closed.
4. A very clear majority were fully supportive, with others making constructive suggestions to consolidate the potential impact of the Trust proposal.
5. A number of responses included comments, concerns, questions or requests for further information. These responses tended to cover three main areas of interest, without rejecting the proposed initial structure:
  - a. The general educational landscape was discussed openly and the possibility of further development of the partnership at a later date was clearly under consideration;
  - b. The way the schools will work together and support each other, how the staff will gain from these partnerships were matters of considerable interest;
  - c. The options for becoming involved in the work of the Trust and the importance of an evidence-based approach to school performance and school improvement.
6. Among the responses there were no indications that consultees held a preference for the status quo. Most contributions clearly indicated a strong appetite to support the idea of working with other schools and partners to support school improvement.
7. It is clear from the responses of staff and the views expressed at the meetings that there was generally a supportive response. The main reassurances sought by staff were understandably related to any potential impact on their contractual arrangements, or their pay and conditions. It was made clear that there would be no change to contractual arrangements following the formal assignment of full employer responsibilities to the respective governing bodies.
8. Additional assurances were provided in the consultation documentation and in the meetings with staff that the governing bodies intend to continue to abide by national and local agreements for pay and conditions for so long as these apply.
9. A number of questions at the consultation meetings also sought to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of the Trust Board and the Governing Bodies of the schools. It was made clear that the schools will retain their respective Governing Bodies and continue to run the school in the same way as previously, it was also explained that the Trust model is a minority one, in other words that the Governing Bodies will undergo relatively minor changes and cannot be dominated by the Trust nominees.
10. A number of respondents asked how the Governing Bodies had investigated or explored the background to the Co-operative Trust model. Governors have explored a number of options for the future of their schools, and chose this as their preferred model.
11. The issue of partnership and greater engagement of key stakeholders was a central theme of the discussions at meetings. The schools have identified this partnership approach as having real benefits to educational improvement work.
12. The proposed initial partners – notably those in the Coastal Alliance - remain firmly committed to the proposed Trust and working within the charitable aims of the Trust. The Trust and the partners, as well as the mutual co-operative membership dimension, including the proposed Stakeholder Forum, are likely to have a positive impact on the schools and their communities and further assist in the raising of standards.
13. All the statutory requirements were met or exceeded and it was made clear through a variety of channels how further information could be obtained. This information was available in advance of public meetings to allow people to consider the proposal, decide whether or not to attend meetings and ask questions.
14. The meetings arranged for parents/carers and the general public allowed those present to be reassured there were no adverse implications for the education of the students. Those present were persuaded there were positive opportunities to develop even stronger working partnerships which would support the work of the schools, and benefit the children.
15. In this case the attendance at the meetings and the number of formal written responses is proportionately in line with other similar consultation exercises; the commentary on the majority of returns received was favourable and the feedback during consultation meetings was extremely positive.
16. The consultation process has introduced no substantial concerns around the proposals in responses from the learning community.
17. The majority of questions and queries raised have been addressed during discussion sessions and there are no outstanding significant issues that have not been addressed or that will not be resolved once further information has been provided.