

TARPORLEY HIGH SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

GOVERNING BODY PAPER – OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION

DATE:

12 March 2020

Background

Following the Regional School Commissioner's approval for Tarporley High School and Sixth Form College to proceed as a sponsor for a MAT which would include Eaton and Tarvin, the Governing Body entered into a consultation on the proposal.

Form of the Consultation

A letter and "Frequently Asked Questions" (see Appendix 1) was sent to all parents at the high school, our partner schools (including Tarvin and Eaton), the Cheshire West and Chester Council, Cheshire East Council, all relevant admission authorities and schools.

Copies of the documents were also sent to the recognised employee's representatives, for both teachers and support staff.

A newspaper advertisement was also placed in Tarporley News, Issue 192, Thursday 13 February 2020, to invite comments from the wider community.

Assemblies were held within school to brief students on the proposal and invite their participation in the process. In addition, all consultation documents and information were placed on the school's website.

A full staff meeting was also held on Wednesday 4th February at the High School to brief all teachers and support staff on the proposal and invite them to take part in the consultation.

The consultation period ran from Wednesday 4th February 2020 until Wednesday 4th March 2020 and all consultees were invited to participate either:

- **By e-mail** matconsultation@tarporleyhigh.co.uk
- **In writing to:** MAT Consultation, Tarporley High School and Sixth Form College, Eaton Road, Tarporley, Cheshire, CW6 0BL
- **At our Stakeholder Information Evening:** Thursday 13th February 5.00pm-7.00pm at Tarporley High School.

The Results of the Consultation

Tarporley High School and Sixth Form College's MAT Sponsor Consultation closed on 4 March 2020.

There were six respondents to the consultation, five by e-mail all of which are included along with one respondent who attended the Stakeholder Information Evening.

Respondent 1: Supportive of the proposal to become a MAT sponsor for Eaton and Tarvin Primary Schools. The respondent included a statement concerning the local authority's transport policy, which affects families from that area.

Response: The trustees would like to thank the respondent for taking part in the consultation and for their support of the proposal. Whilst the trust agrees that the local authority's transport policy disadvantages rural communities and Tarvin residents in particular, unfortunately the local authority's transport policy for schools does not form part of this consultation and we are not able to comment on it further.

Respondent 2: Very supportive of the proposal and saw the formation of a Mat between the three schools as means to improve educational provision in the locality and standards. Praised the leadership of both Mr Lowe and Mr Davies.

Response: The trustees would like to thank the respondent for taking part in the consultation and for their support of the proposal.

Respondent 3: The respondent seems to suggest that the schools should join Delamere (presumably they mean North West Academies Trust) as more teachers are needed.

Response: The trustees would like to thank the respondent for taking part in the consultation. The proposal being consulted upon is that Tarporley High School and Sixth Form College to convert from a Single Academy Trust to a Multi Academy Trust, (MAT), which would include Eaton and Tarvin Primary Schools. The trust is unable to comment on the effectiveness and abilities of another MAT.

Respondent 4: Students at the high school were consulted and one tutor group responded to the consultation via their tutor Mr Pringle. The students asked how the schools would be run and would each school have its own headteacher? They expressed the view that schools were run most effectively with their own headteacher.

Response: The trustees would like to thank the students of 7MP for taking part in the consultation. The proposal to form a MAT means that despite this proposed change in legal status, Tarporley High School and Sixth Form College will maintain its unique identity, ethos, curriculum and school uniform as, in most foreseeable circumstances, would any other school joining the MAT at a later stage.

Respondent 5: I have reviewed your FAQ's but could find no reference to this question-

My understanding is that the principle or executive head of the MAT is not able to also be the headteacher of one of the schools in the MAT. SO if you were to become a MAT what is the proposed leadership of the MAT - not from a governance point of view - but on an organisational stance??

If Mr Lowe, you became the exec head - what effect could this have on the high school?/ You have only been headteacher there for a short while and have brought in some changes which need embedding.

What effect will a change in headteacher have on the High school - both on attainment and behaviour and progress of all students?

Most parents will not realise that this could mean a change in day to day leadership of the high school and so I feel this needs to be openly discussed.

Secondly - on your FAQ's you talk about a positive effect this could have on transition and ensuring there is no dip in attainment from year 6 to 7.

Your present transition is one of the best and most effective within CWaC. I know this from a professional point where the local authority is trying to learn from best practice and spread this through the local area.

I am not sure what a MAT with only 2 feeder schools can bring positively to the transition.

On attainment, one of the primary schools has no choice but to join a MAT due to its latest Ofsted rating. I can only presume that you are fully aware of the attainment scores from that school. Benchmarking data makes it easy to compare their stat to all the feeder schools. I believe last year they were in the bottom 10%. A focus of any MAT would need to be on improving the teaching and learning in that school - to allow those pupils to progress. I am aware over the years that many young people have felt they have coasted - or gone back in learning during year 7 and 8. I have two theories

Either staff in the high school are not aware of the curriculum now covered in primary schools

Or - and my preferred hypothesis, that teachers have to go back over subject content to ensure all pupils are at a level to move forward.

I cannot see how creating a MAT will have a short term outcome of stopping dips in year 7. It is going to take some time to fill the gaps in learning for some of the pupils in the primary school mentioned above.

Thirdly - behaviour. You have made great improvements on expectations of behaviour in the high school - but as we are all aware there is still some way to go. What assurance can you give me that the standards in the high school will be maintained and those same standards will be accepted and followed by any existing heads - or new appointees to the MAT schools?? We all wish for our children and young people to feel safe in school and happy - so that they can learn.

Thank you for considering these questions and I look forward to hearing the response

Response: Thank you for your response to the trust's consultation regarding the change from a single academy trust to become a multi-academy trust sponsor.

You raised three areas of concern in your response which we will seek to answer. Firstly organisational structures. The trust will put in place organisational structures to effectively manage the organisation, building on the strengths of the single academy trust and Tarvin and Eaton primary schools, whilst at the same time addressing areas that require improvement, specifically in relation to Eaton Primary School.

The CEO of the academy trust will be accountable for the performance of all schools within the trust. We are sure you will agree that effectiveness and sustained improvement are delivered by strong teams. The trustees and CEO will build on the expertise and skills of colleagues within both the primary and secondary sectors, and utilise the trust's Teaching School to drive forward improvement in all three schools.

The headquarters for trust will be the Tarporley Campus and the CEO will be based at the High School and continue to provide strong leadership to that school as well as across the trust.

Secondly the Trustees recognise the challenges that will need to be faced to return Eaton Primary School to its rightful place as an Outstanding Primary School. The Regional School Commissioner agrees with the trustees, that through the detailed plans they have submitted to that office, that our trust is best placed to address the issues inherent in that school so that outcomes for its young people are improved and Eaton becomes embedded as the school of choice for parents within its locality.

Finally, the trustees are gratified by your support for Tarporley's behaviour strategies, which we believe are building on an already strong position. The movement to a multi-academy trust will have no negative impact on the application of behaviour strategies in any of the schools.

The sixth respondent attended the Stakeholder Information Evening on Thursday 13th February 2020. They were a parent of a student currently attending Tarporley High School and expressed their support for the proposal, as in their view the High School was best placed to work with and support Eaton and Tarvin Primary Schools.

Representatives of Tarporley High School and Sixth Form College, the Headteacher and Director of Finance and Operations, also attended a staff meeting for Eaton and Tarvin Primary School staff which took place at Tarvin Primary School on 12 February 2020. Where they outlined the process for staff at the schools and answers any questions from those present. The staff were positive and sought clarification on the Transfer of undertaking Protection of Employees (TUPE) regulations in relation to the process. Reassurance was given that all staff would transfer on existing terms and conditions, pension arrangements would remain unchanged and no material changes were proposed as a part of the transfer.

In addition, the Headteacher and Director of Finance and Operations attended two parental drop in sessions at Eaton (27 February 2020) and Tarvin (12 February) from 17:00 until 19:00.

Two parents attended the Tarvin session. One parent was concerned about the whole academy agenda and government policy. He was given reassurance that the proposal would not mean a change to the school uniform, the name of the school or the teachers that taught his child. Governance of the all the schools would be enhanced by different tiers in place as a result of the conversion to a MAT.

The second parent who attended the consultation evening at Tarvin Primary School asked about school admissions and transport to the high school. It was made clear that the change to a MAT would not change the admission or transport arrangements for any of the schools.

No parents attended the Eaton Primary School “drop in” session.

Next Steps

Following the consultation and having considered the responses received, Governors determined at their meeting on the 12 March 2020, that as the consultation generated no responses or concerns which would necessitate a reconsideration of the proposal, the Trust would continue with the process of converting from a single academy trust (SAT) to a multi-academy trust (MAT).