



## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION- PROPOSAL TO BECOME AN ACADEMY AND JOIN CAMS - 16th JANUARY 2018 - NOTES OF MEETING**

### ***Background***

Parents and carers of pupils attending Everton Heath Primary School (EHPS) were informed on 11 December 2017 of a proposal that EHPS become an Academy and join the CAM Academy Trust by Spring 2018.

They were advised that the consultation period would run from Monday 11 December 2017 until 17 January 2018, including a public meeting to be held on Tuesday 16 January 2018.

These are the notes of that meeting.

It was impractical to record the meeting verbatim, but it is considered that these notes reflect the tone and content of the meeting.

### ***The CAM Academy Trust***

The CAM Academy Trust was formerly The Comberton Academy Trust and established in 2011. The Trust has the following member schools:

Comberton Village College (2011, rated Outstanding since 2000); Melbourn Village College (2013, rated Good in 2017); Cambourne Village College (2013 starting with Y7 only and adding 1 year group each academic year. Rated Outstanding in 2015); Gamlingay First School (2016. Now Gamlingay Primary School); St Peter's Huntingdon (2016. Rated Good in 2017, having improved from Inadequate); Hartford Infant School (2017); Hartford Junior School (2017), Jeavons Wood Primary School (2017) and Gamlingay Village College (2017).

### ***The Meeting***

The meeting was chaired by Nabeel Mardi, Chair of Governors of EHPS.

The following were in attendance:

N Mardi - Chair of Governors EHPS

D Gurney - Vice Chair of Governors EHPS

B Hutchinson - Governor EHPS

V Eke - Governor elect EHPS

A Russell - HT EHPS

D Kirby - School Administrator EHPS

F Wing - Parent EHPS

K Johns - Parent EHPS

E Darlow - Parent EHPS

S Munday - CEO CAM Academy Trust

C Jukes - Primary Executive Leader of CAM

D Tall - Clerk to EHPS Governing Board. Notetaker.

Mr Mardi opened the meeting at 5.32pm and welcomed everybody.

He covered fire safety instructions and domestic arrangements before introducing the Panel to the audience.

Mr Mardi informed the meeting that the Governors had undertaken a strategic view of the school, following a Government directive that all schools are to be Academies by 2022.

The first conclusion the Governors reached was that the school, despite its change to Primary phase would never be large enough to operate as a single entity in the future. There are a number of models the school could adopt - Federation being one of them and Trust membership another.

The most important consideration has always been how to ensure the children receive the best possible education to allow them to fulfil their potential.

The Governors had taken note of annual standards in local schools / Federations and Trusts and concluded that CAM was the Trust which most aligned with the Governors' vision and ethos of being local; being successful in providing education for all types and abilities, understanding the rural context and the school's position in the community and embracing the principle that each member must work positively in partnership with others for mutual benefit. We will eventually be joining a Trust and it is the Governors' view that it is better to choose one than be allocated to one.

Presently the Governors are often distracted from their primary responsibilities and are spending too much time on operational matters because there is not the staff or expertise to undertake certain tasks. Recent examples include the time and effort to get the new toilet block (successful), upgrade IT provision (partially successful) and fitting a new dining room, ultimately, and at the last minute unsuccessful. Joining a Trust will allow, amongst other things, access to a professional Facility Manager, IT specialists, SEN expert, language specialists and experienced assistance with Staff development to the highest common, standard.

The school budget is approximately £300000 and is allocated by the Local Authority. It would be more, but the Local Authority takes a sum from the DfE allocation. Were we to join a Trust we would receive the complete sum directly and, even after paying a 4% levy to cover the procurement of services, which the Trust can oversee with economy of scale, there would be more money available to improve, further, the children's education. In addition the Trust has Charitable Status and therefore can apply for Grants, which can then be allocated throughout the Trust on a needs assessed basis. Currently we can only apply for funding from the LA's very tight budget. The process is long, time consuming and distracting.

Having completed his outline presentation and reminding the meeting about the comprehensive letter sent to every parent, he invited questions and observations from the floor.

The following questions were asked:

- Noting that the meeting was being held at 5.30pm was this the most convenient time for parents to attend? Had due process been followed correctly?

Mr Mardi replied that the letter had gone out 5 weeks earlier to allow arrangements to be made should people wished to attend.

Mr Mardi said that he, the other Governors and the HT had been available to respond to any immediate questions or concerns since the letter had gone out.

Due process had been strictly observed.

- Did we become a PS in order to join the Trust?

No. We became a PS because many different studies, and examination of SATs' results, had shown conclusively that a 3 tier system was the least successful.

- Do CBC offer financial support for the process?

No. They offered moral support, noting that it is for each GB to determine its future.

- What has happened to Gamlingay?

This question, though not directly related to this meeting, was answered by Mr Munday.

- Will the Trust shut the school?

Protections are in place to prevent this.

Noting the expansion of housing in Pottton and potential in Tempsford, the aspiration is to enlarge EHPS.

- Will we lose children?

Unlikely. Only one unsupportive comment had been received.

The higher standards we anticipate from joining an established and successful Trust and local housing expansion, will hopefully lead to an increase in numbers.

What is more certain is that if we do not choose a successful Trust soon, we could be forced to join one not sharing our values, ethos and aspirations.

Mrs Gurney outlined the current difficulty of allocation of \$106 money by CBC. EHPS had seen none from the recent expansion of the local solar farm. The school was in no position to follow this up. It is anticipated the Trust will be able to look at such matters in the future.

- Do we have enough space?

Always do with more. The Trust's Facilities Manager and Financial Director will be in a position to advise. One aspiration is to acquire land adjacent to the school so to have sports' facilities immediately to hand.

- What is the next step

There is a Governors' Meeting tomorrow (17 January) to decide way ahead.

If the decision is to seek membership of CAM and convert to Academy then the Trust will be informed and due process followed which will hopefully see a decision by the end of the Financial Year in March.

Mr Mardi introduced Mrs Eke as the new Parent Governor and encouraged others to fill an existing vacancy.

Mr Mardi thanked everybody for their attendance and reminded those attending of the open nature of the school and welcomed further questions outside the meeting and through e-mail.

The meeting closed at 6.20pm.