

Temple Newsam Learning Partnership Co-operative Trust – Parent and Community Consultation Events

First Community and Parent Consultation Event

Held at Temple Moor High School - 1st November 2017

Present:

Matthew West, Principal Temple Moor High School

Richard Sheriff, CEO Red Kite Learning Trust

Steve Howell, CFO, Red Kite Learning Trust

Julie Wellacott – HR Director, RKL

Eleven Parents/Carers attended the event from a number of schools within the TNLP Trust area.

Matthew West introduced the event by explaining why all schools in the TNLP Trust were considering conversion to academy status and joining the Red Kite Learning Trust (RKL). There followed by a presentation by Richard Sheriff on the vision, values and structure of the Red Kite Learning Trust. There was then an opportunity for staff to ask questions.

Questions:

Q: What will happen to the existing staff at primary schools?

A: All of the staff will transfer over.

Q: Will staff have to rotate where they work?

A: It is not something that will be enforced, but this could also be a very positive thing as it can be about career development and giving opportunity to work in different settings. This would only be to meet the person's own interests.

Q: Could a number of schools choose to join and not joining?

A: All Head Teachers have been working on this over the past few months and Head Teachers have decided to do this as a collective. This would give the Trust the opportunity to continue to work as a hub of RKL.

Q: What is the timetable for this?

A: It is likely to be 1 April 2018.

Q: What input would there be from parents – would they get a vote?

A: The Governing Boards for each school who are the representatives for parents and it would be their decision. The consultation process would feed into this decision making process.

Q: In terms of the use and spending of budgets, what safeguards are in place?

A: Having Trustees on the Board who have financial management experience is key. We have some Trustees with strong finance backgrounds. RKL staff are accountable to the Board of Trustees. We have to provide regular financial reporting. We are subject to the scrutiny of a full external audit on an annual basis, including a robust look at regularity (how we apply the principles of public life). Local Governing Boards will also receive regular updates on the financial position of their schools.

Q: Do you have the capacity to take on as many schools as this all at once and do you have the capacity to address the schools that need support, and do you know what these issues are?

A: There is capacity in terms of Finance and HR. In terms of school improvement, there is lots of expertise across the Alliance. We have just appointed two School Improvement Directors at secondary level who are very experienced Head Teachers. We will be doing the same at primary level. They will tap into expertise across the Trust.

Q: In terms of finance, will the Trust scrutinise finance (spend of budgets) within the Trust schools?

A: Looking at resources, structures, efficiencies etc. is an everyday function of all schools, but there the Trust will have protocols in place to ensure that each student across the Trust is getting the best value for money and the Trust will challenge schools appropriately, where needed.

Q: It all seems upbeat, what are the downsides? How will staff morale be protected?

A: It would be wrong in our duty of care to pupils to enter into something if there huge negatives or downsides. The National Schools Commissioner holds me to account and that chain of command has become much more robust in the past number of years; the scrutiny is now much more robust than was the case in previous years. In terms of staff morale, there has been a staff consultation meeting this afternoon where some good points of clarification and probing questions were asked, all in a positive manner.

Q: How do you cover for absent teachers – do you use supply agencies?

A: There will be no change to these arrangements in schools. In terms of recruitment, if there was difficulty in filling posts, that is where the Trust can step in, using the expertise of the HR Team and employer brand in being a good employer and by offering good packages and working environments?

Q: Do you feel that your staff absences are less within the Trust than they are nationally?

A: There are all sorts of reasons for absences nationally. The HR team would work strategically with Head Teachers, looking at absence trends etc. The Trust HR team has become involved in facilitating confidential exit interviews for staff.

Q: Does the Trust take on the responsibility of the fabric of the school buildings? E.g., the school ovens broke at Colton and the PTA had to fund its replacement?

A: The Trust has responsibility for all of the buildings within the Trust, including maintenance and its assets. This is managed within the Trust financial budget. There is a separate pot for capital. We are keen to have a benchmark standard, which applies across the Trust; this would include the standard of catering experience for all students and the condition of premises.

Q: Would you own all of the buildings?

A: The lease would transfer to the Trust for 125 years.

Q: Would the transfer be permanent?

A: It is permanent. If the Trust were failing, the Regional Schools Commissioner would intervene and deal with this appropriately.

Q: Currently, an outstanding school does not get as much support as other schools, what support would an outstanding school get from the Trust.

A: There are more outstanding schools in Leeds than there are in North Yorkshire. If a school was outstanding, there is no guarantee that it would be next year or the year after. We would listen to Head Teachers and provide support where needed. The outstanding schools can also help to support other schools within the wider Trust.

Q: Would there be a guarantee that a pupil at Colton would get a place at Temple Moor?

A: We are not proposing to make any changes to the Admission Policy. The Trust would be the Admissions Authority, but the Trust must work within the National Admissions Code and it will adhere to that. What we can do is look at numbers on roll and admissions numbers (taking local housing growth in account). We employ the LA as the agent to administer the admissions process.

Q: How does SEN provision work across the Trust?

A: Each school has its own provision, but we would work together to look at how we can share that provision, especially where there are specialisms in place such as the HCP. The LA would retain the responsibility in terms of SEND to ensure children receive the support they need.

Q: Is the plan to retain the Sixth Form at TMHS?

A: Any future review or decision on the Post 16 provision at Temple Moor would not relate to the Trust conversion process. Nationally there are huge changes happening in terms of the economics of the depth of provision. This is a discussion we would have with colleagues at Temple Moor about Post 16. The Trust would do the right thing for students and provide a solution that was viable.

Second Community and Parent Consultation Event

Held at Meadowfield Primary School 30th November 2017

Present:

Helen Stout – Head Teacher, Meadowfield Primary School
Richard Sheriff, CEO Red Kite Learning Trust
Julie Wellacott – HR Director, RKL
Dave Noble – Business Director TNLP Trust
Karen Patel – Head Teacher, Temple Newsam Halton Primary
Joe Mitchell – Head Teacher, Whitkirk Primary
Matthew Browne – Co-Principal Temple Learning Academy
Richard Hadfield – Co-Principal, Temple Learning Academy

There were 11 parents in attendance from a number of schools within the TNLP Trust area.

Helen Stout introduced the event by explaining why all schools in the TNLP Trust were considering conversion to academy status and joining the Red Kite Learning Trust (RKL). This was followed by a presentation by Richard Sheriff on the vision, values and structure of the Red Kite Learning Trust. There was then an opportunity for staff to ask questions.

Questions:

1. How are the Members and Directors appointed to run the Trust?

RS stated that the Directors are appointed by the Members based on their career experience and the skills required for the Trust Board i.e. finance, legal, HR etc. The Members are interviewed and appointed by the Chair. RS explained the background of the current Members which is available on the RKLK website.

2. If the proposed Governance structure is all in place how did the example of WCAT happen?

RS explained that in the early years of the Academy world the requirements of financial management of governance were not well developed by the DfE and Education Funding Agency. In recent times the DfE have implemented much improved controls and audits on academy finances and governance. The Regional Schools Commissioners are now focused on resolving such issues. Within RKLK we have a very safe and secure Governance structure to safeguard against such issues.

3. Stories in the media about company cars and bonuses are worrying, this never happened in Local Authority structure for schools. How can we be assured this won't happen here?

RS replied that there have been such concerns both in the Academy and Local Sectors in the past. The important focus must be on robust financial management and governance arrangements. Where these have failed then such abuses of public money have occurred. However this is not the case in RKLK where the governance structures are such that the CEO is accountable to the Members, Directors and Regional Schools Commissioner. It is not the case that the CEO has overall control of such matters.

4. Are Members and Trustees salaried?

No. They are all volunteers.

5. What are LGB's?

These are the Local Governing Bodies in each individual school in the MAT and typically have 9 to 11 Governors. They include the Head Teacher, staff members, parents and members of the community. They have powers delegated to them by the TRUST Board to run the school. If all is going well then the LGB gets on and runs the school with the Head Teacher. If however there is a problem then the Trust is duty bound to step in and change the scheme of delegation and have more involvement in running the school. This is no different to how Local Authorities can act. Once the issue is resolved the Trust will move back and the normal scheme of delegation operates.

6. Our school is already a member of the Red Kite Alliance, why does it have to join a Trust, is it not already working in this way?

RS explained the structure of the RKA and its links with the RKLK. RS explained how the RKA had operated for seven years with many schools, with shared values working together. However there is a fundamental issue with the structure of the Alliance in that member schools do not have any powers to intervene. There is no protection for a failing school which could then be taken over by a sponsor MAT from outside the Alliance. This was the main reason for forming a MAT. Overtime it is inevitable that more schools will join MAT's.

7. How do Local Authorities feel about this?

RS replied that in some areas Local Authorities do not exist at all to support schools e.g. Doncaster and Pontefract areas. Nationally 76% of secondary schools are academies. Overall Leeds LA do not like academies on political grounds, however they do take a pragmatic view and can see how the national education landscape is changing. RKLTL has good contacts within the Leeds LA as there are still very important links between the LA and schools in areas of SEN, school admissions etc. This is a change in our relationship with the LA not a breakdown.

8. I'm not interested in the politics of this, what difference does this make for children in the classroom?

RS replied this was key to why this is being proposed. He outlined the key benefits for both parties in terms of TNLP Trust and RKLTL. He stressed TNLP have demonstrated a great track record of working together for the benefit of the children in their schools and their community. However the proposed conversion to academy status and joining RKT would help secure the existing partnership for the future. This will give staff in TNLP access to CPD and collaborative learning groups to help enhance teaching and learning thus benefiting children's education. In addition there will be opportunities for children to engage in joint enrichment activities e.g. shared music and sports events across all our schools in the Trust.

9. How does the Trust ensure it has a joined up approach with the Local Authority in terms of specialist medical services e.g. child mental health service?

By joining the RKLTL RS stated schools would not be cutting themselves off from such services from the LA. If there were gaps in these services the opportunity of being in RKLTL would help in trying to meet these needs by working together.

10. I have concerns about how the MAT may well constantly move teachers around schools leaving children without stability of their regular teacher in the classroom, can you assure us this won't happen?

RS stated that what makes for great teaching and learning in the classroom is definitely consistency of teaching staff for pupils. RKLTL will not be constantly moving teaching staff schools for the sake of it. However where there are opportunities for career development for staff between schools then these will be managed in an organised and structured way. The Red Kite Teaching School does provide the Trust with a strong pipeline of new and currently has 94 talented trainee teachers coming into the profession. They have been attracted by the Red Kite brand and its values. However it is worth noting that new teachers these days are a lot more focused on career development and progression. London has seen the biggest improvement in pupil outcomes but also has the highest turnover of teaching staff in the UK.

11. To take part in MAT wide events children will have to travel and that will cost, some parents cannot afford this?

RKLTL are very sensitive to this pressure and will do what it can to ensure there are no difficulties in giving these opportunities to all who want them.

12. How the MAT treats its staff is really important in terms of effectiveness in the classroom. If a teacher is not happy then they will not deliver great lessons if their terms and conditions have been reduced. Will this be the case?

JW stated the TUPE process protects staff when transferring to a new employer. RKLTL has a good track record and clear evidence of not reducing staff terms and conditions when transferring staff into the MAT. RKLTL wants to be the employer of choice for new talented teachers coming into the profession. This would not be achieved if the MAT'S reputation were damaged through poor employee relations.

RS stated the RKLTL had recently used its powers as a MAT to implement a 2% pay increase for teaching staff as did schools in Leeds. However North Yorkshire LA maintained schools only implemented 1%. LA'S and Academies had a choice on this and RKLTL took the view it was affordable and the Trust wanted to attract and retain the best teaching staff possible.

13. What happens to the money schools receives for Pupil Premium and SEN?

RS explained the money received by each individual school for pupil led funding e.g. pupil premium and SEN stays with the school.

14. From researching the schools within the RKLTL you don't seem to have much experience of managing high levels of disadvantaged children. Where will you get this from?

RS stated he himself, along with staff at RKLTL schools had previous experience of teaching in areas of high disadvantage. RS himself had taught at City of Leeds School, in Bradford schools and at Temple Moor. The MAT gives schools to access and share experience with schools from the country who have done great work in closing the gap for disadvantaged children.

15. How will a move to the MAT affect the curriculum and access to a broader based curriculum, especially in Europe?

The curriculum a school follows is determined by the Head Teacher and the LGB. RS stated he would wish for it to be as broad and balanced as possible to give children a wide range of experiences. RKLTL has linked with other MAT'S both nationally e.g. Harris MAT in London and internationally e.g. maths in Singapore to research curriculum development. However as stated the final decision is with the individual school Head Teacher and LGB.

16. Temple Moor currently has a good partnership with Brigshaw and Royds High Schools for Post 16 provision, will this continue?

RS stated the Post 16 partnership will continue. Whilst Head Teacher at Temple Moor RS was instrumental in establishing the partnership with Brigshaw. However the future for Post 16 provision, nationally, is uncertain. There will more than likely be fewer school sixth forms as more and more Post 16 Colleges develop. It is important that children have a really good Post 16 provision. However being part of the RKLTL does not stop Temple moor working with Brigshaw on developing its Post 16 provision.