

## PLYMOUTH CAST CONSULTATION RESPONSE

### INTRODUCTION

The Board of Plymouth CAST are very grateful to all who took the time to respond to our recent consultation on the proposed organisational structure of CAST. A summary of the statistics is as follows -

### SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

	<b>GOVERNORS</b>	<b>PARENTS</b>	<b>STAFF</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>In support</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Objecting</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>37</b>

The responses were very varied and although many did acknowledge the need for change it was clear that even where there was support it was felt that there needed to be more information about the "how" before "what" could be agreed. The concerns mentioned were analysed as follows:

<b>TYPE OF CONCERN</b>	<b>GOVERNORS</b>	<b>PARENTS</b>	<b>STAFF</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
Federated GBs	143	65	57	265
Executive H of school	56	71	58	185
School Improvement	31	33	25	89
Human Resources	36	7	36	79
Community	20	22	11	53
Academy Councils	24	11	13	48
Financial	12	8	11	31
Catholicity	16	2	9	27
Miscellaneous	30	23	19	72

N.B. Responses in italics

More than 30 concerns were related to the anxiety that the governors on a federated governing body would find it difficult to gain sufficient knowledge of each school. Other concerns were similar, for example, the loss of school identity and a questioning as to how the current level of knowledge of existing governing bodies could be replaced and how a federated governing body or Executive Headteacher could understand the problems facing individual schools and families better than an existing Headteacher. There were however constructive suggestions that we need to consider, a response has been given in italics against each listed suggestion:

Consider an overarching trust and 3 MATs to address school improvement, raise standards and increase rates of progress.

*Clearly as a company a MAT cannot only focus on these aspects however our plans include the creation of regional hubs and we will do more research before making our final decisions.*

Federation may work well for schools close to one another but not for far flung ones that may need to remain as singletons.

*We need to consider the criteria for remaining a "singleton" as many of the responses indicate that a lot of our schools would wish to continue on their own.*

Finance and economics are more important to CAST than school improvement.

*This was implied in a number of the responses and whilst it is not believed that this is true we are faced with a financial situation that, if not addressed, could result in school closures.*

The Catholicity of the Trust was referred to in many different ways, the most intriguing being "Restructure does not 'locate responsibility and accountability with the local parish priest".

*It is clear that a great deal of work that needs to be done to ensure that the excellent partnerships that are evident in some schools and parishes become the norm.*

Another point made in many different ways related to the timescale for the process. It is clear that this concern has influenced our response.

## **WAY FORWARD**

The Board has been left in no doubt by the RSC and the ESFA that doing nothing is not an option however, the Board decided not to proceed with the proposals presented for consultation at present because it was very clear from the responses that this way forward did not attract the support needed.

In addition the proposals would not deliver a financial position acceptable to the ESFA within the timescales required. That being the case the board has decided not to proceed at this present time. We had hoped for a longer timeframe in order to balance the budget but that is clearly not acceptable to our regulatory bodies.

It was also clear from some of the responses that there is a lack of understanding concerning the scheme of delegation and we shall be providing more information about this in due course.

We accept that these decisions may result in adverse comment but we have listened to the concerns expressed. We need to insist that all schools revisit their budgets in order to make savings, the exact timeframe for achieving a balanced budget is likely to be set for us if we receive the expected Financial Notice to Improve from the ESFA. We shall need to consider the Scheme of Delegation again in light of the RSC's comments about strategic and executive responsibilities but I think that it is better that we are absolutely clear at this stage about the best way forward rather than acting in haste and repenting at leisure. It may well be that we shall be able to establish a pilot scheme to check our propositions.



Kate Griffin  
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