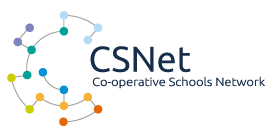
Braunton Learning Co-operative



**Report on the Consultation of**

**Caen Community Primary School**

**Kingsacre Primary School**

**Marwood School**

**and**

**Southmead Primary School**

In association with their partner schools:

Braunton Academy

Georgeham C of E Primary School

  [](https://www.marwood.devon.sch.uk/) 



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1. **Introduction**
2. This consultation report was produced on behalf of the Governing Boards of Caen Community Primary School, KIngsacre Primary School, Marwood School and Southmead Primary School by CSNET (Co-operative Schools Network), who also facilitated the consultation.
3. The report summarises the feedback from a public consultation exercise for the Governing Boards in respect of a proposal to establish Braunton Learning Co-operative (a co-operative education Trust).
4. The decision to consult and the process was agreed by governors in line with the requirements of the guidance on School Organisation for Maintained Schools (SOPAM 2007 and 2013) which was updated in April 2016.
5. The report and the consultation process take into account the requirement, in the guidance for decision makers, that the proposal that the school should change status from community to foundation be rooted in a commitment by the Governing Boards to continuous school improvement.
6. This guidance states that

“Decision Makers should consider the impact of changing category to foundation and acquiring or removing a Trust on educational standards at the school. Factors to consider include:

* + the impact of the proposals on the quality, range and diversity of educational provision in the school;
  + the impact of the proposals on the curriculum offered by the school, including, if appropriate, the development of the school’s specialism;
  + the experience and track record of the Trust members, including any educational experience and expertise of the proposed trustees;
  + how the Trust might raise/has raised pupils’ aspirations and contributes to the ethos and culture of the school;
  + whether and how the proposals advance/have advanced national and local transformation strategies;
  + the particular expertise and background of Trust members. For example, a school seeking to better prepare its pupils for higher education might have a higher education institution as a partner.”

1. Governors have taken these matters carefully into account in developing the proposal and will further consider them before coming to a final decision. The schools see the best route to achieving further school improvement as lying through engagement with a strong education sector of co-operative schools and a formal partnership between schools within Braunton and the surrounding area. Caen, Kingsacre, Marwood and Southmead primary schools would become co-operative foundation schools with Braunton Academy and Georegeham C of E Primary School becoming partner schools within the co-operative trust.
2. Governors also considered other possible models for school partnership including that of developing a Multi-Academy Trust. On balance, they decided that forming a Foundation Trust with the potential to formalise the existing partnership of schools within what was the Braunton Learning Community was the preferred way forward.
3. Copies of the consultation documents were published on the school websites and distributed widely to consultees including parents/carers, staff, teacher associations and support staff trade unions, members of the Countryside and Coastal Schools’ Partnership, staff and users of Southmead Preschool and Springfield Nursery, Devon Local Authority and Diocese of Exeter.
4. In addition, separate consultation meetings were arranged for Trade Union representatives, school staff and parents/carers of those attending the schools and members of the local community.
5. Arrangements for these meetings were well publicised.
6. The views of the learners at the schools were sought via meetings and discussions with pupil representative groups.
7. This document summarises the responses received for the consultation as a whole.
8. Included within this report are a summary of the key points and comments received from individuals.
9. All responses will be made available to the Governing Boards for examination when they consider this consultation. Individual responses are also available for examination by contacting the school.

**2 Executive Summary**

1. The consultation process relating to these proposals has involved significant efforts on the part of the governing boards of the schools and school staff to provide good quality information and an opportunity to comment for anyone with a legitimate interest in the proposed development of a co-operative Trust as a foundation for the schools.
2. Caen Community Primary School, KIngsacre Primary School, Marwood School and Southmead Primary Schools are maintained by Devon County Council and are located in Braunton and the surrounding area in Devon. The schools serve approximately 1,072 pupils in total and work with other schools in what was known as the Braunton Learning Community.
3. The schools are seeking to strengthen their existing clear values system and to develop strong partnerships over time that will increase the engagement of its learning community and the formulation of a sustainable approach to educational provision; this consultation can be seen as the beginning of that process.
4. A summary of the proposal together with a covering letter and a consultation response form were issued to all the required consultees.
5. A consultation pack including a detailed explanation of the proposals, the rationale behind them, as well as information about the partners and the implications of becoming a Co-operative Trust school was made available to anyone who requested a copy.
6. It was made clear in the summary letter issued to all stakeholders how to obtain copies of this information.
7. Consultation documents were made available on the school websites and additional copies were also available at the school for collection by visitors and interested parties.
8. The consultation was promoted widely and over 2,000 letters inviting participation in the consultation were distributed.
9. Responses could be made during the consultation meetings, through written responses, completion of the form on Smart Survey and by email.
10. Staff, parent and public meetings were held across the consulting schools and partner schools.
11. Representatives of teacher and support staff Trade Union and Associations were invited to attended a specially convened meeting and were also invited to join the staff or public meetings.
12. In total, around 80 people attended meetings to discuss the proposal, including 15 family representatives and 55 staff representatives.
13. The overall tone of the meetings indicated support for the proposals, with a very wide range of questions being addressed.
14. In total there were 64 response forms returned before the consultation closed.
15. A clear majority were fully supportive, with others making comments regarding the use of resources, funding, support staff work practices, the role of leaders and managing change following the appointment of new headteachers – these issues were discussed during consultation meetings and governors will need to provide information as part of their desire to create an ethos of mutual support and transparency across the partnership.
16. There were no written responses to the consultation from the trade union group and from the discussion with the union representatives from the National Education Union and the NASUWT it is fair to assume that their representatives were in favour of the proposal.
17. 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 governing boards. Staff would not be directed to work in other schools but as cooperative schools, by mutual agreement, staff may be asked to share their expertise with others.
18. Additional assurances were provided in the consultation documentation and in the meetings with staff that the governing boards intend to continue to abide by national and local agreements for pay and conditions for so long as these apply.
19. A number of key questions came up at parents/carers consultation meetings, the main focus was on the following areas:

* How feedback from the consultation will be provided for governor consideration
* Use of resources and funding
* Maintaining the unique identity of individual schools, including their own governing board
* Expectations regarding staff working across the partnership

These areas were discussed openly and notes from each meeting are documented in Appendix C.

1. The work of each governing board will be strengthened by the addition of two trust appointed governors. This will give the governing boards an additional pool of expertise to draw on when appointing new governors. This means that the composition of the governing board will otherwise be largely unchanged.
2. The proposed initial partners are committed to the proposed Trust and working within the charitable aims of the Trust to raise standards and promote community cohesion. The Governing boards of Braunton Academy and Georgeham C of E Primary School have agreed formally at FGB meetings to join the Braunton Learning Co-operative if this proposal is implemented. The Atlantic Coast Co-operative Trust (ACCT) agreed formally at their Trust Board meeting on 12 June 2019 to become a partner of Braunton Learning Co-operative if the proposal is implemented. (See letter from ACCT Chair in Appendix D). 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 its community and further assist in the raising of standards.
3. Devon County Council are supportive of schools who wish to work together formally for the benefit of children in the local community. Dawn Stabb, Head of Education and Learning stated in a letter to the consulting schools that she is “pleased to support you with this proposal and delighted that you will remain as a maintained school and retain close links with the local authority”. (See further comments from the letter in Appendix D).

**3 Overview of the Consultation Feedback**

1. As can be seen from the summary above 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.
2. Eight meetings were arranged for parents/carers and the general public. These were not particularly well attended but those present asked a very wide range of questions and were reassured there were no adverse implications for the education of pupils. Following detailed discussions, it was clear that they were persuaded there were positive opportunities arising from the proposal which would help to develop positive working partnerships which would support the work of the schools.
3. In this case the attendance at the meetings and the number of formal written responses is in line with other similar consultation exercises. The majority of returns received were favourable and attendees at consultation meetings used the opportunity to gather information and clarification.
4. The consultation process has introduced no significant or substantial concerns around the proposals in responses from the learning community.
5. The majority of questions and queries raised have been addressed during discussion sessions and the governing boards should feel satisfied that there are no significant issues that have not been addressed or that will not be resolved with further information should the proposed Trust go ahead. Governing boards may need to provide further information where any questions have not been addressed.

**General issues**

42 A respondent asked how the Governing Boards had investigated or explored the background to the Co-operative Trust model. Governors have, together and separately, explored a number of partnership options for consideration since May 2018.

**Partnership**

43 The current proposal sets out the initial partnerships which will support the Trust including Georgeham C of E Primary School, Braunton Academy and ACCT. Georgeham and Braunton Academy already work informally with the consulting schools and have made a commitment to be full contributors to, and beneficiaries of, the work of the Trust if the proposal goes ahead. ACCT is an established co-operative based in the Bideford area and would bring expertise to the new Trust in terms of establishing the Trust, developing successful collaborative working across schools and, possibly, engaging in joint initiatives if appropriate. Over time, additional partners will be invited to join the Trust – these will be identified in relation to the Trust’s action plans.

44 As the proposal states, governors and headeachers believe that the best way to secure continual improvement in teaching and learning in Braunton and the surrounding area is to work collaboratively and transparently to support one another. Governors will need to communicate how the aims and ambitions of the proposal support individual school improvement.

**Staff engagement**

45 The staff Q&A sessions pointed out that there would be no significant implications arising from the technical change of employer as the school governing boards already exercises the key functions of the employer through the existing delegated arrangements from the local authority.

46 In addition, written assurances have been sought from the local authority confirming that the arrangements for continuity of existing terms and conditions will be maintained.

**Trust Membership**

47 The Trust will provide the schools with the opportunity to extend the engagement of members of the school community and wider partnership through membership, to be offered to parents, pupils, employees and community groups and individuals.

48 This will not only identify benefits for each of these groups, but also enlist their support in achieving the aims of the Trust. The Trust will be a mutual co-operative membership trust which will be democratically accountable to its members consisting of pupils, parents, staff, local organisations and others interested in supporting the schools. This membership base will strengthen links with the local community and lead to greater involvement with the local community through the co-operative nature of the trust.

**Statutory Requirements:**

49 The three statutory requirements that each Governing Board should satisfy itself that it has met through the consultation process are:

1. That the proposals are likely to enhance (and definitely not adversely

affect) standards

1. That the consultation exercise complied with regulations and guidance
2. That the views and comments from respondents have been properly considered.

50 In the view of the writer, on behalf of CSNET as the facilitator for this process, it is clear that all three statutory requirements have been well met.

51 It is reasonable to say that the pupils, families and staff are supportive of the proposals.

**4 Recommended Action**

52 It is clear that the view of those consulted tends to support the proposal for adopting the Trust.

53 No substantive objections have been raised to the proposal.

54 It is recommended that no changes need to be made to the Proposal and that

Governors should consider the following formal resolution:

1. Each Governing Board notes the content of the report provided by CSNET and the predominantly positive responses received in written form and during meetings, discussions and debate following the publication of the Proposal to establish a Co-operative Education Trust.
2. Each Governing Board welcomes the support from the local authority.
3. Each Governing Board, having carefully considered its statutory responsibilities hereby resolves to proceed to implementation of a change of category from Community school to Foundation school and simultaneously acquiring the Foundation to be known as Braunton Learning Co-operative.
4. Each Governing Board further resolves to delegate to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors, to work in partnership with the local authority and other bodies where appropriate in order to complete the work required as set out below. To work together with CSNET to develop the necessary documentation and formal registration for:
5. The model Articles (legal constitution) for the Trust
6. The reconstitution of each Governing Board, providing for two Foundation Governors to be appointed
7. The appropriate initial arrangements for meetings of the Trustees
8. To confirm the appointment of Stone King as legal advisers to each Governing Board subject to contract, to undertake the formal incorporation of the Trust through registration at Companies House and the oversight of, and guidance for, the Governing Board in respect of matters relating to Land and Asset transfer from the local authority to the Trust
9. The Headteacher and Chair of Governors will report back to the full Governing Board on progress towards the proposed implementation date of 1st September 2019.

**Appendix A: Response forms received - Summary of responses**

55 A total of 64 response forms were returned following distribution of consultation documents to parents/carers, staff and governors of the school as well as to a significant number of interested parties.

56 These broke down as follows – 41 from parents/carers; 17 from staff; 11 from governors; 0 from ‘others’.

57 Copies of all responses are available for governors’ perusal. The comments are reproduced verbatim.

58 The number of responses for each question is given below with the comments received. The background of the respondents, where known, is also given. The totals may not always tally with one another, as it was possible for respondents to indicate multiple answers to questions and some respondents also left some questions blank. Parents who had children at more than one school have been counted once. Parent governors, staff who are parents and staff governors have been included in both categories. 9 parents had children at a primary school and Braunton Academy, 3 respondents were parent governors, one respondent was a staff governor and one member of staff was also a parent. Comments have been included in the order in which they were received.

**Summary of response forms returned**

**Q1. How do you feel about Caen, Kingsacre, Marwood and Southmead primary schools changing their legal status and establishing a Trust?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Parents/  Carers | Staff | Governors | Other | Don’t know |
| I support the proposals | 31 | 13 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| I am not sure and would like more information on …. | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| I do not think the school should change category and acquire a co-operative trust because …. | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| I support the change of category, but not acquiring a co-operative trust because….. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**Comments received:**

* I do not believe pupils will benefit (Southmead staff/governor)
* If this benefits our school in terms of resources and taking pressure/admin away from the teachers so they can focus on teaching then I think it’s a great idea. I would like to understand how it will affect the school day to day eg what changes might we see and understand more about how it works. (Southmead parent)
* Further details and information are needed for an educated option to be given (Marwood parent)
* How the Trust will affect funding. Is Marwood the smallest school on the Trust? (Marwood parent)
* The Trust would still fall under government funding for buildings but it is unclear how funding changes regarding the rest of school finances. (Caen parent)
* How would it affect support staff and work practices? How would it affect the different IT systems and who would be leaders? (Southmead staff)
* Church values from the partner schools do not and should not apply to all schools. Independence of schools which gives greater choice for parents would not be limited. We chose to send our child to Caen not the other schools. There is a reason for this. I really hope this is not a finalised decision where our views and opinions will not be heard/listened to. Distance between the schools in our location means that we would not easily be able to access resources as implied. There is no more on offer than what is already in action. Why change when there is not need? (Caen parent)
* I like we see individuals. (Caen parent)
* Our school has recently gone through a period of change with having a new headteacher. I firmly believe that the school needs time to adjust to these changes before any major agreements are made. Maybe the co-operative trust might be something that will be appropriate in the future but at this current time I believe the school needs to remain as it is. (Southmead staff)
* I support in so far as the information I have been given and that I feel it would be more beneficial to our school to be part of the co-operative trust from the start rather than delay and possibly join in the future (or not). (Southmead staff)
* I’m not really sure what this change will mean. (Caen parent)
* I’m not sure of the benefits and am concerned about the changes to my job security/contract. (Southmead staff)
* The local schools will be stronger working in partnership than in competition. A Co-operative Trust in which all schools retain their own full autonomy but commit to working together for the good of our children, and supporting each other to improve, is the best possible model of co-operation. We should grasp this opportunity with both hands. (Caen parent/governor)
* There have been too many changes in many of the schools recently, with new leadership in recent years in three of the four schools. The schools are already working together and could continue to work on this without forming a trust at this time. I do not feel that this is the right time for this. (Southmead staff)
* I do not see the need to do so as I do not see any additional benefit by formalising an already existing and working relationship where, mutual support appears to be very strong and the benefit of sharing activities is already apparent and appreciated. (Southmead/Braunton parent)
* Both Southmead School and Braunton Academy are functioning perfectly well as they currently are, having already long established a strong bond based on mutual respect and support that supports independence and resilience. By tethering both schools to a shared legal, financial and commercial position, the flexibility and sovereignty they currently enjoy will be compromised. Furthermore, paragraph 3 of the Braunton Learning Co-operative Proposal Consultation Information Pack states: “The process of change will not result in noticeable day to day differences for our schools, but we believe that setting up this partnership will allow us to continue to work together as a group of like minded schools and learn from the shared expertise and experience we can offer each other.” The deduction from this statement is that if the change was worth making then there would be a noticeable day to day difference for our schools, and for the better. The statement as it stands currently undermines the whole premise of the argument to move to a trust. Moreover, the schools are already operating as described in the second half of the sentence anyway. (Southmead/Braunton parent)

**Adviser Comment:** Governors will need to provide further information to clarify some of the questions raised, for example on funding and employment assurances which have been provided by the LA. The one change would be that each Governing Board would become the employer of staff, but terms and conditions would remain the same.

There is some urgency for schools to consider working within formal partnerships as it remains government and LA policy for schools to work within partnerships, and, more importantly, the headteachers within the consulting schools and the two partner schools wish to work together in a more formal arrangement to ensure that joint working is fundamental to school improvement in each school. Governors have, since May 2018, researched a number of models including Multi Academy Trusts. They have decided to consult on forming a co-operative trust as it allows consulting schools to remain LA maintained schools, have their own governing boards which are accountable for the performance of individual schools, and, enables Georgeham, as a church school, and Braunton as an academy, to be equal partners and contribute to collaborative working across the local geographical area.

**Q2: How do you feel about the proposed partners in the Trust?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Parents/  Carers | Staff | Governors | Other | Don’t know |
| These are the right partners | 31 | 15 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| I am concerned about the school working with one or more of the other schools because ….. | 9 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| I think the school should also think about working with … | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**Comments received:**

* I think the school should also think about working with the parents as well and parents who have care and needs (Caen parent/carer)
* Not sure I understand the academy and Georgeham being partners rather than part of the Trust. Needs further explanation. (Southmead parent)
* I believe it is good to have a variety of schools practising slightly differently as it offers more choice. (Caen parent)
* The Braunton Academy has different needs for IT. (Southmead staff)
* Church schools have (naturally) a different view point/ethos that I do not want for my child. Working with ACCT is not an option I would like our school to consider for numerous reasons. What can the Academy offer to us? (Caen parent)
* We are all different carry on working as you are as you already work together. Do not need the academy. (Caen parent)
* I do not have any comment about the proposed partners. I just feel that it is not the best action for our school at this time. (Southmead staff)
* We are aware that some of the schools that will be in the trust have come across as not very positive towards Christianity. We are a Christian Family, and even though we don’t want to force our beliefs on anyone, we would like our local schools to be open to other beliefs (of all religions), so that anyone feels welcome in school. (Caen parent)
* How lovely that the new headteachers want to work together – a great improvement on days gone by. (Kingsacre parent)
* I would not want a detrimental Ofsted report impacting on Marwood School and Kingsacre currently requires improvement. (Marwood parent)
* We are so lucky to have all schools in our local learning community eligible to work together in the proposed Co-operative Trust. It is a unique opportunity to develop a really strong, effective and inclusive local education partnership. (Caen parent/governor)
* The consulting schools are all primaries. The Academy has already acquired a different status and could have a different outlook. Also the primary schools already work very closely together, these are links that could be developed and should be led by the primaries not the secondary school. (Southmead staff)
* In line with my previous response I do not see the need for a formal relationship with any other local school. (Southmead/Braunton parent)
* There is no option here to support my previous answer. (Southmead/Braunton parent)

**Adviser Comment:** Georgeham C of E Primary School, as a Church school already has a foundation and so cannot become a co-operative foundation school. However, the Diocese of Exeter is supportive of the school collaborating formally with other local schools. Braunton Academy also has a foundation and so will be a partner school within the proposed Cooperative Trust.

Links between the primary schools and the academy are important to ensure a smooth transition between the two phases in numerous ways. The schools wish to work together in a mutually beneficial partnership with equal representation – the Academy is not driving this proposal but has been an equal partner during discussions and creating the proposal for consultation.

Governors will need to provide details to show that the aims and ambitions outlined in the proposal address concerns raised. As well as focusing on school improvement, pupil outcomes, curriculum and enrichment activities and sharing expertise and resources, the proposal includes the desire to develop co-operative values and encourage communities to be inclusive and outward looking.

**Q3: Are you happy with the Trust appointing a minority of two governors to each governing board?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Parents/  Carers | Staff | Governors | Other | Don’t know |
| Yes – this sounds like a good idea | 34 | 14 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Yes, but I’m concerned about …. | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No, I would prefer the Trust to appoint more governors because … | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No, I do not like this proposal because | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

**Comments received:**

* I do not agree with the Cooperative Trust proposal (Southmead Staff/Governor)
* Explain further – two of our governors will become Trust governors? Or where are these governors coming from? (Southmead parent)
* I don’t understand what the implications of this decision might be so I cannot comment. (Marwood parent)
* More governors because it would give a wider perspective of the needs of IT. (Southmead staff)
* I do not agree with the whole Trust. (Caen parent)
* Nothing further to comment on this as I don’t feel the school should be part of the Trust at this time. (Southmead staff)
* Yes, this sounds like a good idea as far as I understand it from the meeting for staff held on 23 May 2019 (Southmead staff)
* Schools are all different sizes and although there could be two key governors from each, larger schools could appoint more governors to the trust to reflect the size of the school and the children and staff they represent. (Southmead staff)
* My understanding from the information given is that each school would still govern themselves independently from the Trust. To have the Trust appoint some governors is not being independent and I do not understand the need for it. It makes me question how independent individual schools will be able to remain, suggests a level of control from the Trust (which doesn’t sit with the ethos of schools being allowed to govern themselves and makes me question the reasons) and leaves no independent space for the schools to govern themselves without the ‘Trust’ permanently being a presence. (Southmead/Braunton parent)
* There is no option here to support my option at question 7.

**Adviser Comment:** As a governing board of a foundation school with a ‘minority’ Trust as its foundation, the legal requirement is for the governing board to have two foundation governors. Tin this case, they will uphold the co-operative values on the governing board. As each of the consulting schools currently have governing boards of between 10 and 15 governors and have between 4 and 8 co-opted governors, it is likely that two co-opted governors on each governing board will become foundation governors. Each governing board that decides to go ahead with the proposal in July, will discuss the future composition of their governing board following the vote to implement the proposal.

**Q4: How do you feel about this vision?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Parents/  Carers | Staff | Governors | Other | Don’t know |
| This is right for the school | 32 | 14 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| I do not think …. should be a priority in the vision because … | 6 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| I would like to see …. included in the Trust’s vision | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**Comments received:**

* I do not agree with the Cooperative Trust Proposal (Southmead staff/governor)
* Improve progress and outcomes for all children, young people and staff by analysing data across the partnership to inform how we work and how we measure success. This feels very results driven, appreciate that you want the children to do well but is it just another form of testing and showing results like SATs? (Southmead parent)
* Hoping any efficiencies of scale don’t mean impact on operational performance. (Caen parent)
* I would like to see a focus on children’s wellbeing. (Marwood parent)
* These are generic and suitable for all schools. Caen have our own views, vision and ethos and too many will lose our identity. (Caen parent)
* I feel that this is a vision that already happens. (Southmead staff)
* Develop stronger partnerships between the local schools. (Marwood parent)
* As a governor I feel that being able to be transparent and open with trusted partners, sharing both the good and the bad, is essential to allow us to offer and accept the support necessary to underpin great educational opportunities for all our children. If this partnership doesn’t result in improved school performance, more fulfilled staff and richer opportunities for our children I will eat the proverbial hat. (Caen parent/governor)
* What are the problems with the existing arrangement between these schools? It sounds like the proposal is to become one big school spread over many sites. I do not understand Braunton Academy’s role within a team of primary schools. (Southmead/Braunton parent)
* I think that even Lord Sugar’s apprentice candidates would be hard pushed to top this absolute “verbage”. (Southmead/Braunton parent)

**Adviser Comment:** The proposal states that the vision for the Trust is for a shared commitment to hold one another to account, share best practice, provide mutual inspirational and tangible support with a view to improving opportunities, progress and outcomes across all the schools. This may involve sharing data to identify groups of children who might benefit from a particular activity, may identify how the expertise from one school might help another school make rapid progress in a given area, or identify training required across the schools which might be cheaper if purchased for a larger number of staff – it will not involve additional testing for pupils.

As Headteachers reported at the consultation staff meeting, they wish to work collaboratively for the benefit of children and staff within a formal partnership whilst maintaining individual school identities.

As mentioned in the comment in response to Q2, it is important for the primary schools and Braunton Academy to work together so that transition is smooth for all children between the two phases. Secondary phase staff need to understand what children have experienced in the past and primary staff need to know what is required in the future so that children progress across phases and have the opportunity to have individual needs addressed.

**Q5: Do you have any other comments, concerns or suggestions?**

* I do not agree with the Cooperative Trust Proposal (Southmead staff/governor)
* I would love to see a sensory room like Southmead for autistic children who need their down time so they can process (Caen parent)
* I hope it will be as positive as it has potential to (Southmead parent)
* Can we have an organogram of roles – what sight can we get of proposed level of leadership? Would prefer the roles to be strategic rather than added layer of management and above existing – bigger picture ‘what to do’ rather than directive ‘how to implement’. Schools are capable of this bit already. (Caen parent)
* I agree that shared resources and knowledge is hugely advantageous but I’m not sure that a Trust needs to be formed to do this as I believe the schools have strong enough relationships to do this already. (Caen parent)
* Please listen to parent feedback and do not rush into this decision. This may have been discussed previously but from May to creating the Trust in September is too soon. (Caen parent)
* I think parents still need more information, but I’m sure the plans are very positive and schools will be stronger in partnership. (Caen parent)
* The schools already work together a Trust is not needed. I do not see any benefits as the primary schools and secondary already work together. A big red flag is that the land becomes property of the Trust the land should always belong to Caen’s pupils. I think it sounds a waste of time. (Caen parent)
* Southmead is a positive school that has had a number of significant changes over the year. I believe that we already work well with other schools in the learning community and I feel that it is important that we are in control of our decision making. (Southmead staff)
* Having experiences of working in a co-operative trust previously, I know how many advantages there are of working in a trust. We have been working together since September and this will just formalise the working together we have been doing. (Kingsacre staff)
* Sounds great. Assume you attract more funding being a charity. (Kingsacre parent)
* This is a really exciting opportunity for BLC. (Marwood governor)
* I can see a number of potential benefits to the formalisation of this collaboration and therefore support the idea. (Georgeham parent)
* I am fully in support of this proposal. If all schools get fully behind the Trust it will represent a really significant investment in educational opportunity for our young people. Let’s do it! (Caen parent/governor)
* This is the right thing for us to do. We will be stronger together for our children and their families. It makes so much sense to work together, share expertise and create a professional, open working relationship. (Caen staff)
* I think this is a very positive move and will support continued links between the schools. (Caen staff)
* As a parent connected and interested in the well being of our school, but not involved in the day to day processes that help it function, this proposal is challenging. Instinctively I like it. I like the idea of working with other schools in the area, I like the idea of sharing best practice, I like the idea of developing expertise across the schools and working together with a shared ethos to improve the educational experience for all. (Marwood parent)
* Each school is unique with its own character. Different places appeal to different people. Relationships (within individual settings and between local schools) are already established and are working well. Why does a relationship have to be legally bound to make it work better? (Southmead/Braunton parent)
* If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it. (Southmead/Braunton parent)

**Adviser Comment:** The schools will continue to be led by their existing headteachers and governing boards – they will continue to be accountable for their school’s performance and managing their budget and their school buildings. The headteachers and Chairs of governors will become trustees of the Trust if schools decide to implement the proposal. As the Trust develops, additional partner organisations might be invited to join and they would have one trustee on the Trust Board. It is likely that the headteachers will form an operational group to develop and implement the Trust’s action plan, whilst all trustees would meet at least once a term to monitor the impact of the activities against the agreed plan developed from the vision and aims outlined in the proposal.

As headteachers stressed at the staff meeting, the partnership needs to be sustainable with schools giving a formal commitment to the longevity of collaborative school improvement activities.

**Feedback from children and young people**

The following comments were received during an Assembly at **Kingsacre**:

* Teachers can help one another
* Sharing topics
* Share rules between schools
* Learning flexibility
* Working with children (our friends) at other schools
* Visit and use the secondary facilities such as science labs
* Children helping each other
* Borrow resources

Other comments from the follow-up during Family Group Time at **Kingsacre** were:

* Will be good to share topic things
* Looking forward to seeing people you pass on the way to school
* We could buddy up with someone in a different school
* You could share teaching techniques
* Share ideas and skills
* We could have subject weeks and challenges
* We could compare work standards and learn from each other eg Greater Depth is it the same?
* Make friends with children at different schools by classes going to different schools

An assembly took place at **Marwood**, where children discussed the co-operative trust. They were in favour – voted by hands up! They wanted more sport especially competitive football matches. They were keen on doing curriculum work with other groups of children and would like to visit other schools.

Comments from **Caen**: we asked the children and they were in favour of doing lots of things together such as themed days like: sports, art, history, dance, fun days eg beach visits. They also thought of teacher swaps and trips as well.

Comments from **Southmead:** Some of our representatives were very positive and loved the idea that we might be able to work with children from the other schools more often – they have friends in other schools and hope we might work in partnership with them more.

Others were more focussed on the fact that we might get to share equipment/resources as they know that the other schools have things that we don’t have at Southmead.

The Year 6s were less bothered as they are moving on and don’t feel that they will benefit from the collaboration when at the Academy.

None of them could see anything negative apart from concern that we might have to ‘switch schools’, that teachers and children may have to move around when they don’t want to. (We clarified and discussed their concerns.)

The following comments were received from **Georgeham**:

Q: What if we, remaining as our own school, were to get together with the others as one big ‘team’ of schools?

* It would be good to see ideas from other schools
* It would be good to work together
* Children could come to our school and we could do something together. Maybe Big Write together
* We could share what we do about being Plastic Free
* We could go on different trips ….. maybe together with another school…maybe competing with them at something like coasteering
* If we work together, we’d be making more friends. To make friends, we could challenge them to a Rock Slam on TT Rockstars
* We could compare our play equipment
* It would make a bigger community – our not so good readers could be helped by their better readers
* We could make some friends before we get to meet them again in Year 7.

**Appendix B – Consultation documents**

The set of consultation documents forms part of this report (published separately) and includes:

* Invitation letters to stakeholders and summary of proposal
* Proposal consultation response form
* Proposal Consultation Information Pack
* Statutory Notice

**Appendix C – notes of key points raised and discussed in consultation meetings**

1. **Meeting with trade union representatives on Thursday 23 May 2019 at Southmead Primary School**

Present: Tim Hodge (National Education Union), Viv Brett (NASUWT), Marguerite Shapland (Chair at Southmead), Claire Cole (Headteacher at Kingsacre), Nick Plumb (Headteacher at Southmead), Briony Tuohey (Chair at Kingsacre) and Julie Stuchbery-Ullah (CSNet).

Apologies: Katherine Darcy (GMB) and Nigel Williams (NASUWT)

Tim and Viv reported that they have read all the consultation paperwork and that they approve of the model and the proposal.

Tim raised a question about Braunton Academy being part of the co-operative trust and it was explained by the meeting that they will remain an academy, but will be a partner school within the co-operative trust. They will have equal rights within the articles of association as the schools want equal representation. Many children within the area transfer to Braunton Academy and the primary schools want to work more formally with the secondary school. All the primary schools, including Georgeham VC Primary School will remain LA maintained schools.

Viv reported that the NASUWT have no concerns about the proposal as there will be no changes to teachers’ contracts.

Tim and Viv explained that they would like trade union representation across the co-operative trust. Tim reported that at the current time, they do not have a relationship with the academy. The maintained primary schools already have de-delegated funding for the Union Facilities Service. The scheme allows schools and academies to meet all statutory and procedural entitlements to union representation for a fee per member of staff and an admin fee. Julie said that she would pass this information to the Chair at Braunton for their consideration. The meeting agreed that they would hope that all members of staff across the co-operative trust would have the right to individual representation and to participate in statutory consultations. The meeting stressed this is not an issue for the four consulting schools.

Tim and Viv stressed that the trade unions and professional associations have an obligation to support staff wherever they work.

The meeting discussed the fact that all employees will transfer with entitlement to retain existing terms and conditions and that there is no break in service. Teaching staff will automatically continue with the national pension scheme and support staff will be able to continue with the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). Staff will need to opt out of the LGPS if they do not wish to participate as they will automatically become members of the scheme if governors decide to implement the proposal. The consulting schools’ governing boards will set terms for support staff and they will continue to enjoy as a minimum entitlement the same terms and conditions of employment as staff in any maintained school.

There will be a TUPE-like process later in the summer term if the governing boards decide to proceed.

Tim asked for clarification regarding the structure of governance. The meeting explained that each individual school will continue to have its own governing board which will continue to be accountable for the performance of that school. Governors wish to work together with a focus on school improvement, but also want to maintain the unique identity of schools. The meeting explained that they wish to develop greater links with the local communities. In response to questions about school improvement, the meeting explained that school improvement and building capacity to do this efficiently was the ‘whole point’ of formalising the partnership. There are three newly appointed headteachers who have been used to working in partnership in previous jobs and want to bring the advantages of collaboration to their current schools. Some activities such as moderation, training and headteacher links are now taking place but a formal commitment is needed to make this sustainable.

Tim asked where the schools are in terms of Ofsted cycles. Two schools are Outstanding, three are Good and Claire reported that Kingsacre is currently a school that requires improvement.

There was a short discussion about implications of the new Ofsted Framework from September 2019 and the meeting agreed that it will be advantageous for the primary schools to work together in preparation for future inspections.

Tim invited support staff to contact him if they should need advice. As Katherine was unable to attend today at short notice (she had planned to attend), there is the possibility that she may arrange to meet GMB members after half term.

Julie thanked everyone for attending.

1. **Meeting with parents at Southmead Primary School on Thursday 23 May 2019**

Present: one member of staff, five Chairs of Governing Boards, most of whom are also parents at at least one school, two Headteachers and Julie Stuchbery-Ullah

Nick Plumb welcomed everyone to Southmead and gave an overview of the proposal and consultation process.

Q: Who is collating the input from the consultation responses?

A: Response forms may be returned to individual schools by hand or by email. Jo Howard has set up the Smart Survey. All responses will be sent to Julie Stuchbery-Ullah to be recorded as part of the report she will write for governors in advance of their decision-making meeting on Thursday 4 July 2019. The consultation and statutory period ends at noon on Thursday 27 June 2019 and Julie is intending to send the report for circulation to governors on Friday 28 June 2019. Responses will be sent to Julie weekly so that she can write the report over a period of time and have it ready as soon as possible at the end of the statutory period.

Q: Can we raise accuracy and interpretation issues in the report?

A: Yes, the report will be a draft report for governors to read prior to the July meeting and Julie will take questions prior to decisions being made. Any amendments will be agreed, the report will be amended and then it will be published on school websites during week beginning 8 July 2019.

Q: Will results be shown by school?

A: In the report the results are shown by parents/carers, staff, governors and others and are not identified by school. It was agreed through discussion that written comments will be identified by school in the report. Jo Howard agreed that she can produce a summary of responses by school for information for individual governing boards.

Q: Is the Diocese supportive of this proposal?

A: Yes, the Diocese are supportive of Georgeham being a partner school within this co-operative as they want us to collaborate with other local schools and focus on school improvement.

Q: How will we encourage people to respond if no one is attending the meetings today?

A: Schools need to keep reminding parents through their newsletters, blogs, twitter etc. They need to be reminded that they do not have to write detailed comments, but answering the questions is useful. Julie reminded the meeting that parents from Southmead are invited to attend any meetings at the other schools after half term.

Q: What is the membership of the co-operative trust?

A: It offers membership to parents, children, young people, staff and local community groups and organisations who will be involved in meeting the aims of the Trust outlined in the proposal. Overtime, this will become more organised so that a forum for the whole co-operative will be set up and that group will elect a trustee to the board. Some schools already have school councils and parents forums which may be developed to increase the involvement of local communities.

Q: How does the funding work?

A: The four consulting schools (and Georgeham) will continue to be funded as LA maintained schools. This means that each governing board receives its delegated budget from the local authority and oversees how this is used for their individual school – this will continue to be the case. Schools can choose to pool resources, provide funding for joint activities and purchase from the same supplies when appropriate. It is possible for the Trust to employ staff to work across the school in future eg some Trusts have employed an Educational Psychologist to work with all their children and families. Each governing board will make its own decisions about which activities it participates in – not every school will take part in every activity. Activities will be arranged to support governing boards and leadership to meet their school priorities as well as those agreed by the Trust. Each school will have two trustees on the co-operative trust board – these trustees are likely to be the Headteachers and Chairs and they will monitor the impact of the agreed collaborative activities.

Q: How will the joint activities be paid for?

A: If the proposal goes ahead, the trustees and individual governing boards will discuss and agree how much money will be placed into a ‘collective pot’ based on, for example pupil numbers, or other agreed criteria to fund identified activities.

Q: Will the schools keep their identities as the schools are all different?

A: Yes, the schools will maintain their individual identities, and there is no intention to ‘clone’ a particular way of working, nor have the same uniform etc. We will work together using the co-operative values to underpin our work (self-help, equality, equity, democracy, solidarity and self-responsibility). Our main aims and ambitions, outlined in our proposal, show that we wish to work collaboratively with school improvement as the main driver.

Q: Will there be a CEO?

A: There will not be a CEO. Headteachers and Chairs, and other trustees would be volunteers – they would not be allowed to earn an income from this role. The Trust board will, together, monitor the activities of the Trust and the existing Governing Boards will remain accountable for the performance of their school.

Julie thanked everyone for attending and asked them to encourage parents and staff to complete response forms.

1. **Meeting with staff from all schools at Southmead Primary School on Thursday 23 May 2019**

Present: Approximately 50 members of staff from across the schools, Chairs of Governing Boards, Governors, Headteachers and Julie Stuchbery-Ullah

Apologies: Julian Thomas (Headteacher at Georgeham), Mick Cammack (Headteacher at Braunton Academy), Tim Hodge (National Education Union), Viv Brett (NASUWT), and Katherine Darcy (GMB).

Nick Plumb welcomed everyone to the meeting and Headteachers and Chairs introduced themselves. Julie Stuchbery-Ullah explained that the above union reps had sent apologies. Tim and Viv had attended a meeting with some Chairs and Headteachers earlier this afternoon and had reported that they are in favour of this proposal and pleased to see that governors were proposing that the primary schools would continue to be LA maintained schools. She explained that Katherine Darcy had been unable to attend the meeting this afternoon and a member of staff confirmed that she is to meet with GMB members after half-term but the date was not finalised.

The panel of Chairs, Headteachers and Julie Stuchbery-Ullah gave the following information as an introduction based on slides provided by Nick Plumb:

* Clarification about difference between consulting and partner schools
* The role ACCT would play as a partner organisation if the proposal goes ahead – ACCT Trust Board will discuss this proposal at their meeting in June 2019
* An overview of why the headteachers and governing boards have spent time developing the vision and aims of the proposed co-operative trust in a collaborative manner
* The importance of Braunton Academy being a partner school to develop relationships at all levels to improve transition between primary and secondary phases
* The importance of colleagues to complete the response forms by noon on 27 June 2019 and participate in debate today

Chairs, governors and headteachers were invited to give additional information:

* Mark Juby, Chair at Braunton Academy, confirmed that the proposal is for a co-operative trust and not a Multi-Academy Trust. It is being led by the primary schools and is not, in any way, the secondary school ‘taking over’ the primary schools in the locality. The Academy wants to work in partnership with the primary schools

Q: Will this stop us becoming academies?

A: Julie explained that the government and LA policy continues to be that schools should be working in partnerships to enable schools to build capacity for school improvement. If a school has an unsuccessful inspection ie it is judged to be inadequate, a school would be required to join a MAT – the Regional Schools Commissioner would be involved in the selection of the MAT.

* Jo Howard, Chair at Caen, stressed that governing boards want to hear staff views and explained the use of Smart Survey and how responses will be sent to Julie each week for inclusion in the report she is writing for governors.
* Briony Tuohey, Chair at Kingsacre, declared that she is a teacher at Instow, one of the ACCT schools, and that she has found this to be a very positive experience in terms of shared training, being a member of a Literacy Leads team, participating in moderation and developing the teacher training programme to train, recruit and retain local people.
* David Morton, governor at Georgeham, explained that Georgeham is the smallest school within the group and that collaboration brings benefits to the work of the school. The schools are already part of an informal grouping and this proposal builds on the work of the local learning community so we are not starting from scratch. We believe we need a formal approach which is more focused and has a greater commitment to school improvement. This will not ‘just happen’ it will depend on headteachers and staff to make it work. People need to believe in the vision in the proposal and work collaboratively on the aims and ambitions with openness, honesty and trust. Things will not change immediately, it will take time to develop and will not involve everyone all the time, but a commitment to the principles is necessary.
* Alun Dobson, Headteacher at Marwood, explained that the Braunton Learning Community used to be funded by the LA – action plans had to be agreed to release funding and it had to be spent on LLC activities. It was the funding that brought us together. More recently, this funding has been delegated to individual school budgets and, as there is no formal agreement in place, many learning community activities have not continued. Sports activities have continued, again partly because we all receive funding to spent on these activities only. Some funding will be needed, but the headteachers and governing boards will be participating because they have identified the activities needed to improve outcomes for children and staff. By forming the Trust we shall be formalising the partnership for now and in the future. Alun explained that as foundation schools, we will not be required to pay the Apprenticeship Levy (£3,000 at Marwood) so this money might contribute to co-operative trust activities – this will be for each school to decide. We can still access the apprenticeship scheme. Apprenticeship Levies have already been paid until April 2020.
* The headteachers stressed that the partnership needs to be sustainable and offer longevity. With three headteachers having recently been appointed to the schools, all headteachers wish to work collaboratively for the benefit of all children and staff. It is the responsibility of the Governing Boards to make strategic plans and ensure schools are able to thrive in future years.

Q: What will change if we become a foundation school?

A: The governing board of each consulting school would become the employer of staff from 1 September 2019 if governors at each consulting school decide to proceed. The meeting discussed the fact that all employees would transfer with entitlement to retain existing terms and conditions and that there is no break in service. Teaching staff will continue to be contracted, as they are now, in line with the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions document and will automatically continue with the national pension scheme. Support staff will be able to continue with the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). Staff will need to opt out of the LGPS if they do not wish to participate as they will automatically become members of the scheme if governors decide to implement the proposal. The consulting schools’ governing boards will set terms for support staff and they will continue to enjoy as a minimum entitlement the same terms and conditions of employment as staff in any maintained school. There will be a TUPE-like process later in the summer term if the governing boards decide to proceed – HR1 advice and support will be sought regarding this matter. Each Chair of Governors has sent Dawn Stabb, Head of Education and Learning at Devon County Council a letter asking for assurances about pension rights, tribunals, retirement and redundancy arrangements – it will be essential, as it is now, that HR and finance advice is taken and adhered to by governors. A copy of the response will be available for governors and staff to read.

A: Each Governing Board of the consulting schools would become responsible for pupil admissions, and would continue to work with the LA to ensure there are places for all our children under the National Schools Admissions Code. Claire Coles, Headteacher at Kingsacre, reported that she had previously worked in a VA Church school and that the Governing Board was the employer of staff and was responsible for admissions – if any staff would like to discuss this she is willing to do so at the end of the meeting. All consulting schools will continue to be maintained schools and will continue to work with HR1 and Devon payroll as they do now.

Q: Will another secondary school be involved?

A: This is not being considered at present as Braunton Academy is a member of other partnerships with secondary schools to support its school improvement work. Headteachers stressed that existing partnerships with other schools can continue if they bring advantages that the co-operative trust is unable to bring in the short-term.

Q: Will new partners join the Trust?

A: If the proposal is implemented, headteachers and trustees will create an action plan outlining in detail how the aims are to be met. Once this is done, the Trust may wish to approach additional partners to support specific projects. Such partners will be invited to have one trustee on the Trust Board.

Q: Has a lot of money been spent to set this up?

A: No. Costs have been shared equally amongst the six schools. There has been a cost of £3,000 for support provided by Julie on behalf of the Co-operative Schools Network and the use of their templates (£500 each school) during the consultation process. It cost £381.00 for the statutory notice to be published in the North Devon Journal – again this cost has been shared across the school. It will cost approximately £750 for the legal incorporation to be undertaken by solicitors if schools decide to proceed – this cost will also be shared. The transfer of land and assets are likely to cost approximately £1500 for each consulting school, but we have received advice from the LA that they are continuing to pay these fees for co-operative schools at the present time.

Q: If a school votes not to proceed, can we still go ahead?

A: Yes, so long as one consulting school decides to proceed, the Trust can be formed. It is the governing board of each school who makes the decision. Although the LA, DfE and Diocese have been consulted, they do not need to approve the proposal.

Q: If a governing board votes not to join the Braunton Learning Co-operative, will they still join in joint activities?

A: The panel felt that the whole point of the proposal is that schools are making a commitment to work together and participate in a formal co-operative partnership with agreed aims and ambitions. It was stressed that if schools are not involved at the beginning, they won’t have the opportunity to shape the work of the Trust – if schools join later they will join a Trust with agreed priorities and practices. It was explained that governing boards want to bring the wider communities together for the benefit of Braunton and the surrounding areas. It was stressed that Braunton Learning Community would no longer exist as this formal partnership would replace it. PE activities might be able to sit outside the Trust as Sports Premium is received by all schools and can provide a greater range of activities by working together.

Q: What happens if a headteacher leaves?

A: When governors recruit a new headteacher they will be looking for someone who wishes to work in a collaborative way with other schools and believes in the co-operative values and principles. Claire Cole, Headteacher at Kingsacre, explained that when she left a school which is a partner school within ACCT, headteachers across the Trust were invited to attend presentations given by candidates and had the opportunity to give informal feedback to governors.

Q: Is the Trust responsible for the school buildings?

A: If the proposal is implemented on 1 September 2019, the land and assets of the consulting schools who have decided to join the Trust, will transfer to the Trust automatically. The Trust holds the land and buildings in trust for educational purposes. There will be liaison between the solicitors appointed by the Trust and the LA to negotiate the transfer and this can take some time. The Governing Board continues to be responsible for spending their delegated budget from the LA on their maintenance priorities, H&S etc. Should additional capacity be required for places in a given area, the LA will work with the school as it would now.

Julie thanked colleagues for attending and encouraged them to ask other members of staff to complete response forms during the consultation process that closes on Thursday 27 June 2019.

1. **Public meeting on Thursday 23 May 2019 at Southmead School**

No one attended this meeting.

1. **Meeting with parents at Kingsacre Primary School on Tuesday 11 June 2019**

Present: Claire Cole (Headteacher), Briony Tuohey (Chair), Helen Potter (staff governor) and our after-school club worker who is also a parent. As a parent, she is very happy about the proposal and is pleased that the schools will be strengthening their working partnership. She couldn't see any reason to be negative about the proposal. There weren't any questions asked.

1. **Meeting with parents at Caen Primary School on Wednesday 12 June 2019**

No parents attended this meeting.

1. **Meeting with parents at Marwood School on Thursday 13 June 2019**

There was a low turn-out for this meeting.

1. **Braunton Academy meeting with parents during week beginning 3 June 2019**

Two interested parties attended, both enthusiasts for collaboration/partnerships and could see the reasoning for going down the co-operative trust route.

1. **Georgeham C of E (VC) Primary School on Tuesday 11 June 2019 at 2.45pm and 6pm**

Present: one attendee at both meetings. Both attendees were parents but also wore 'other' hats - one being a governor and the other being a future teacher trainee who will be doing part of their training at the school.

We used the presentation prepared by Nick Plumb as the basis for an informal discussion.  Both parents were supportive.  Questions were around technical issues and included:

- will each school retain its own governing body and budget

- what is the role of ACCT in the list of schools (page 1 of the presentation)

- will staff ever be seconded to other schools because of the structure (the scenario here was 'lets say a Head leaves is there is a risk we end up with a shared head as you could in a federation or MAT')

- how will the schools work together

- will schools retain their own values and vision and, for Georgeham, our church distinctiveness

Both parents will complete the online survey but the meeting was positive and the feeling from one parent was that attendance was so poor because the move is not concerning to parents.

**Appendix D – Letters of response**

1. Each consulting school sent a letter to Dawn Stabb, Head of Education and Learning at Devon County Council, before the start of the consultation process to inform her that their governing board had “voted to consult on the school formally changing school category from community to foundation and simultaneously acquiring Trust Status, in this case a co-operative membership trust with a strong mutual dimension”. Each consulting school received a response which included the sentence “I am pleased to support you with this proposal and delighted that you will remain as a maintained school and retain close links with the local authority. I do hope that you will give careful consideration to the partners in the Trust and be sure that the Trust will be able to make a positive impact on the experiences and outcomes for children attending schools within the Trust.” The letter also refers to notifying the DfE and the changes to governance responsibilities and the need for close liaison with the Governance Consultancy Team at Babcock LDP. Governors will have access to the letter.
2. The Chairs of the consulting schools sent a letter to Dawn Stabb regarding assurances from the LA regarding pension arrangements, costs of early retirement and redundancies and related matters. Schools have received a reply and copies will be available for governors and staff to read.

1. A letter was received from the Chair of the Atlantic Coast Co-operative Trust (ACCT) dated 13 June 2019 which reads as follows: “I am pleased to confirm that at the ACCT Trustees Board meeting yesterday, it was unanimously agreed that the proposed Braunton Learning Co-operative should become a partner with reciprocal Trustees as outlined in your consultation documentation”.
2. Consulting schools sent consultation information to the School Organisation Notification email address as required. A standard email has been received by the schools. It states that each governing board will need to inform the same email address of the decision following consultation within one week of the decision.
3. A letter was received from The Exeter Diocesan Board of Education (EDBE) to the Chair of Governors at Georgeham dated 13 June 2019 which states that “the EDBE supports the proposed formation of the Co-operative Trust with Georgeham VC being a partner in the Trust”. The letter goes on to say that “the EDBE also acknowledges that within the Trust Georgeham will:
4. continue to be led by Mr Thomas as Headteacher and no changes will be made to the terms of conditions for staff
5. the structure, functions and responsibilities of the Governing Board will be unchanged
6. the Christian ethos, Christian distinctiveness, vision and values of the school are unchanged and with the collaboration of other schools will continue to be developed and strengthened
7. Georgeham will remain as a Voluntary Controlled School, maintained by the Local Authority.

The EDBE wishes you well in your plans in the formation of this Co-operative Trust, and please be assured of our continued support and help”.