

**Notes of the NUE Staff Consultation Meeting held at Cyril Jackson Primary
School on Tuesday 24th June 2019 at 3.45 p.m.**

PANEL

Sue Stollery (SS) Chair of Governors
Gill Kemp (GK) Headteacher
Ross Tranter (RT) Co-Opted Governor
Philip Moss (PM) Independent Consultant
Christine Whatford (CW) Interim CEO to UST
Victoria Green (VG) Interim Director of Finance and Estates to UST
Louise Howard (LH) Director of HR to UST
Hodo Dirir (HD), Head of School
Hollie McDonough (HM) - note taker

An attendance list was taken by HM. 18 staff attended the meeting.

1. INTRODUCTION

GK welcomed attendees to the meeting and asked the panel to briefly introduce themselves.

GK introduced her presentation Consultation with Teaching Staff and asked SS to provide a brief summary of the Governing Boards actions to date.

SS provided the following details:

- Governors had had conversations around academisation for a number of years with an overview of the current landscape in mind
- For the past two years a working group of Governors including parents and staff Governors had explored the possibility in more depth
- They had looked at academies across the country and drew up a criteria
- Part of this was to ensure that a chosen academy had representation in Tower Hamlets due to the unique children and diversity
- The working party drew up a short list of five and the group held interviews with the CEO of each
- Governors felt that maintaining school Governance was important for the school therefore decided to eliminate some prospective academies based on their view to losing Governance when joining their Multi-Academy Trusts
- One academy felt that it was not the right time for them to take on an additional school due to having recently taken on new schools
- Governors met with Graham, the CEO at UST, and felt comfortable that UST met the criteria of the school
- UST also had the added benefit of GK's experience working with the school

GK noted that she had not taken part in any of the meetings and that the process had been led by Governors.

GK provided staff with an overview of local context relating to schools within the London Borough of Tower Hamlets:

- There had been £68 million of cuts to the Local Authority which had had a significant effect on children's services and the support they now offer
- The LBTH were carrying out a Phase 1 review to establish future principles of sustainability, optimising resources, an even spread of pupil places and the re-organisation of schools to reduce the number sites no longer deemed fit for purpose
- Headteachers and schools had been discussing for some time the need for reorganisation and collaboration to provide an opportunity to improve the sites and the premises that children attend
- licensed deficits were only to be given where financial plans for the future were robust

GK listed the main considerations for Governors in light of the local developments:

- Were LBTH's principles right and to feedback if they did not agree
- Who could the school be part of educational community group with
- Evaluation of the school's viability at present, in 3 years, and in 5 years – in terms of pupil numbers and finances
- If a deficit budget was likely at the school, application for licensed deficit would be necessary
- When to meet in the summer to discuss refined proposals
- Given falling rolls and limited budgets was your school financially viable?
- Which were your neighbouring schools and how could you work with them to reduce reception places and improve the educational offer for the wider community (beyond your own school)?
- What might be the best solution for your community?
- What might a transitional process look like?
- When and how would you communicate this to staff/parents/the community – bearing in mind the LA timetable and the importance of business being paramount?
- How would you manage the anxiety that change brings?

GK informed the meeting that in September there would be four federations within Tower Hamlets that would merge to combine pupil rolls with the addition of 10 proposed forms of entry to close by 2022.

GK reported that Tower Hamlets was one of the top boroughs in the country for school funding cuts which had impacted heavily on schools' access to support services. She noted that the borough saw per-child funding reductions of between 45% - 52%.

2. WHY UST?

GK presented the reasons why Governors believed UST would be a good option for the school.

2.1 For our children

- the range of opportunities in terms of teaching and facilities
- would preserve teaching staff and levels of support staff
- possibility to use Secondary school links to provide resources

- consideration for Secondary school places as many pupils currently have to attend schools all over the borough
- school to school support with Key Stage 2 to 3 transition

2.2 For our staff

- The School of Education (SoE) was set up in 2014 when St Paul's Way Trust School became a National Teaching School
- it would bring professional development opportunities
- SoE was able to train teachers and provide accreditations for NQTs
- there were bespoke packages of support outside of the trust
- there were bespoke career stage and training courses at all levels
- THEP was unlikely to be able to support and provide training for much longer

2.3 TUPE

GK noted that all exiting staff would transfer under TUPE regulations and that the University School Trust had no plans to introduce different pay and conditions.

2.4 Our Governors

GK reported that Governors and school leaders would be able to promote and drive their own vision and brand whilst being united by a shared set of aims. She noted that trustees would be actively involved in the Local Governing Board.

2.5 Structure

GK presented a diagram representing the structure of UST head office and provided an overview of their roles.

GK presented a list of the members and trustees of UST and noted that it was quite unique to have the LA represented on Trust Board.

2.6 Values

GK provided a list of the UST values:

- a belief in inclusive, comprehensive education
- a track record showed that we welcome all students and seek to ensure that all students achieve their potential
- a strong track record of supporting SEND students. St Paul's Way Trust School also has special provision in place
- a strong track record of supporting young people by providing an excellent range of learning pathways
- a belief that young people should enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum and actively seek to ensure that subjects such as music, drama and art are valued and accessible to students
- an excellent track record of supporting young people, including disadvantaged young people, into Higher Education
- an excellent track record of providing continuing professional development for our staff so that they can deliver excellent lessons. We established the School of Education in order to provide our staff with ongoing training and support.

GK noted that 200 pupils from the Greenwich area had been accepted to retake their GSCE's with the UST.

GK opened the meeting up for questions.

2. STAFF QUESTIONS

Staff Question/Comment – SQ
 Panel Response/Comment - PR

SQ	Will the Governing Board remain the same size?
PR	SS confirmed that it would and that it worked well at the current size. CW noted that other schools' Governing Boards had remained the same also.
SQ	Would the powers of the Governing Board remain the same?
PR	CW explained that if the school and Governance remained Outstanding then the maximum amount of delegation would be given to the Governing Board. GK noted that for example if the Governing Board were to approve a spend of over £30,000 it would also need to be reported to the Trust. CW noted that the trust would also sign off the budget but that it would come from and be developed by the school.
SQ	What would be the financial impact of an Outstanding school joining a MAT?
PR	GK noted that if they did not join the school would need to find an extra £100k to settle the budget. She noted that if they do join, they could look at economies of scale and that without the MAT they could not guarantee best value. RT noted that this was the initial dialogue process with parents and staff before Governors decided whether or not to take the step which would be due diligence of UST by the school and vice versa.
SQ	Were there plans for UST to take on further schools?
PR	CW noted that there were not at present as they were concentrating on their current schools. She noted that they did not plan to be a very large and were looking for 5-6 schools so no large expansion was planned. CW emphasised that any new schools would need to share the UST ethos.
SQ	Would the trade unions still be represented?
PR	CW confirmed that they would. GK added that the Unison Union rep at SPWT was very good. LH noted that there was a number of Unison and NEU school based reps working within the Trust.
SQ	Would LA services still be used by the school?
PR	GK reported that there were not many services left but that she would not want to remove any that the school deemed useful and of good quality. She noted that they had been forced to pay for their Educational Psychologist due to the large amount of need in the school. GK informed attendees that they were also paying for THEP services.

	CW acknowledged that it was a difficult time for the LA but noted that they would continue to work with the LA if the services were of good quality. She reminded attendees that UST had LA representatives on the Trust Board.
SQ	Where else would services be bought from?
PR	GK noted that there was some concern regarding the sustainability of the THEP services and that schools were currently buying into a subsidised subscription. GK reminded attendees that the LGB would work on the budget and would welcome the opinions of staff as to which services they wanted to keep and which could go. CW informed attendees that the schools that were currently part of the Trust had been consulted and the Chair and Head of each agreed that it would best to have one service across the two boroughs.
SQ	What would happen if the Trust fell into financial difficulty?
PR	VG explained that the Trust submitted 3-year forecasts to the DfE and all budgets were approved by the Board so if it looked as though there may be an issue action would be taken well in advance.
SQ	What if another school within the Trust had a deficit budget – would money be taken from one school to support another?
PR	VG noted that it was part of the UST ethos that budgets stay with the individual schools.
SQ	Would extra money be used to support RI schools?
PR	VG noted that it hadn't in the past. GK explained that they had discussed how staff sharing would work but without money exchanging between schools. CW noted that staff support between schools would not be a financial transaction.
SQ	What would happen if a school was failing?
PR	PM noted that UST could provide support but in extreme circumstances a school could be re-brokered in necessary.
SQ	What would be the educational impact of this for a school?
PR	PM noted that it would depend on the circumstances of the school but that it would be a long way down the track in a system of support. GK noted that this was happening in the LA currently and that ten Primary Schools in TH were in scope for closure or amalgamation. PM noted that this was happening in all areas currently.
SQ	What about the Tower Hamlets Future Project?
PR	GK explained that Tower Hamlets had provided the borough with figures that had wrongly promoted increased pupil numbers. She noted that she was not currently concerned with pupil roll at Cyril Jackson but that it was next year would be the first year where there were no LBTH paid Full time Nursery pupils.

	GK noted that the Nursey had 120 pupils less than five years ago, we now had less than 60. She noted that the school would be in a stronger position if linked with St Paul's Way Trust.
SQ	Is the school not considering a hard or soft federation because of our location?
PR	GK noted a number of natural partnerships that had made sense with retiring head teachers but that school had not had any amalgamating opportunities. SS noted that there would still remain issues within the LA if they did federate. RT noted his work with schools and trusts around the country and noted that the MATs were a legal entity and that the lines were clearer than with federations.
SQ	Would the school's curriculum change?
PR	HD confirmed that there would no changes but that it may evolve directed by the school.
SQ	Would the school keep the language resource provision?
PR	GK noted that St Paul's had a hearing impairment provision but that she would want them to maintain the LA provision and this is reviewed annually.
SQ	How many people would be involved in decision regarding procurement?
PR	CW provide the example of the cleaning contract that had recently been procured. She noted that the Trust had paid for an expert who worked alongside the School Business manager which was followed by an initial discussion with the Heads, LGB and SBM. The options were then determined by the schools and the Heads, Governors and Trust collaborated on the decision. Schools had the option to review and appoint independently.
SQ	Were there plans to sell off school land? Would the school stay as two sites?
PR	PM explained that the Trust would not own the land and that it would still belong to Tower Hamlets. GK noted that SS believed that the Children's Centre fell within the school's red line but would explore further. CW noted that due diligence would explore this thoroughly on both sides.
SQ	Would there still be plans to let the school premises with space already at a premium? There have been concerns regarding resources going missing.
PR	SS noted that Canray Wharf music group had already made an enquiry to hire some of the school on a Saturdays but that they would look into lettings carefully. GK informed attendees that part of the contractual agreement when accepting the lottery funding was that they would lease out parts of the school. GK noted that if the school wanted to retain staffing levels etc that they would need to explore other income options.
SQ	What is the involvement of the Drapers within the Trust?

PR	<p>GK noted that a member of the Draper's Company was represented on the Trust board and that SPWT had provided support for a number of RI schools within London and had been involved in supporting Draper's in the past. CW noted that they shared good practice with the Trust.</p>
SQ	<p>Is the movement of staff between school likely?</p>
PR	<p>GK explained that some staff at St Paul's had contracts that say they could be deployed elsewhere when necessary but that Cyril Jackson staff would not be moved. These members of staff had applied directly for positions within the SofE or as Lead Practitioners, knowing this was an expectation. RT noted that if there were staff that wanted to move they could enable this. CW noted that the Trust would not seek to move anyone against their wishes but that sometimes staff decided that they wanted to.</p>
SQ	<p>Is it right that in the initial meeting it was noted that there would be a one year period before which terms would change?</p>
PR	<p>LH noted that in theory contracts could be changed at any time but only in consultation. GK noted that the LA was already doing this. RT noted that Governors wanted to select a Trust with the same terms and conditions as the LA and that would abide by local agreements. PM noted that this was a questions that was often raised. He noted that the Trust would not want to change contracts as this would be detrimental to their business. He noted that when changes have been made in Trust it is to improve contracts and to provide more flexibility. CW noted that the Trust had been in existence for two years and that they planned to continue to stick to LA pay agreements including Maternity and Annual Leave etc. She noted that TUPE also gives staff legal protection. GK noted that LH had been heavily involved with changing and improving conditions for teachers and support staff in Greenwich.</p>
SP	<p>Will staff need to reapply for the jobs?</p>
PR	<p>CW stated no. GK noted the recent appointments that had been made including HR, teaching staff, admin. Additional TA support was allocated in the budget. She noted that the school would continue to review internally based on their individual needs. CW confirmed that the Trust would not be involved in that at all and that this would be decided on at school level.</p>
SP	<p>Would school policies change?</p>
PR	<p>GK noted that some would change and that there were a number of Trust wide policies including Health and Safety that would include an appendix for each school. She noted that the curriculum policies would remain the same. SS noted that in most cases the school policies of SPWT and UST already followed the LA examples.</p>
SP	<p>What would the whistleblowing policy be?</p>

PR	GK Yes. She then explained that any concerns would be taken to the Trust. She added that if these concerns were around safeguarding the LADO would be informed and the ESFA for finance related issues. LH noted that UST had a standard whistleblowing policies
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3. CLOSING REMARKS

GK noted that she would circulate the slides to attendees for their information and presented a number of questions that she recommended teachers consider.

GK explained that Governors had been exploring the list of questions over a long period of time and that some may not have been considered on the ground level by teachers.

GK thanked staff for attending and for their time and emphasised that the process was about securing and maintaining Cyril Jackson School.

The meeting finished at 5.05 p.m.

CHAIR'S SIGNATURE:.....

DATE SIGNED:...../...../.....